

August 2017

Bend Southeast Sewers

FOCUS GROUPS

For: Barney & Worth, Inc.
City of Bend



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Introduction & Methodology 1

DHM Research conducted two focus groups with Bend residents to assess attitudes related to city sewer issues in southeast Bend and to determine preferences for future planning and funding decisions.

Research Methodology: The two focus groups were held on August 12, 2017, in Bend. Seventeen people participated in the groups. One group consisted only of homeowners in the southeast Bend Kings Forest project area with septic tanks (“in area”), while the other group included both citywide homeowners using city sewer and those in the project area with septic tanks (“mixed”). Participants with septic systems were recruited from lists of homeowners in southeast Bend, and were contacted by telephone and in-person recruitment. Participants connected to the sewer system were recruited from a list of randomly chosen City of Bend sewer customers. Efforts were made to ensure diversity by gender, age and geographic area. See Appendix A for complete participant demographics.

Statement of Limitations: The focus groups were led by a professional moderator and consisted of both written exercises and group discussions. Although research of this type is not designed to measure with statistical reliability the attitudes of a particular group, it is valuable for giving a sense of the attitudes and opinions of the population from which the sample was drawn.

This report highlights key findings from the focus groups. Each section reviews a major topic from the group discussions and includes representative quotations, as well as evaluative commentary. The quotes and commentary are drawn from both written exercises and transcripts produced from recordings of the group discussions.¹ The referenced appendices provide the complete responses to all written exercises.

DHM Research: DHM Research has been providing opinion research and consultation throughout the Pacific Northwest and other regions of the United States for 40 years. The firm is nonpartisan and independent and specializes in research projects to support public policy making.

¹ Quotations were selected to represent the range of opinions regarding a topic, and not to quantitatively represent expressed attitudes. Some have been edited for clarity to ensure correct punctuation and to eliminate non-relevant or intervening comments.

Summary & Observations 2

Participants report predominately positive experiences with their existing septic systems, but they are aware of that they may need to connect to city sewer in the near future.

Nearly every participant had previously heard that southeast Bend residents may need to connect to city sewer. Most were under the impression such connections would only be required if a septic system failed, and most were also confident in their septic system.

Participants described only minor issues with their septic tanks, although some noted that their neighbors had experienced problems. As such, the cost of maintaining their systems was quite low. For these reasons, some participants bristled at the idea of connecting to city sewer while their tanks were still functioning. Yet, all seemed to understand that it would be required at some point—but perhaps that time would not come in their lifetime or during their time on the property.

Participants are confused about how much connecting to sewer will cost, and they are frustrated by what they see as a lack of communication and guidance from city leaders.

Local newspaper, county commissioners, and neighbors have provided residents with widely-ranging cost estimates. Many participants guessed connecting to sewer might cost about \$40,000, but they expressed confusion and frustration with the various numbers. Specifically, several noted that the cost has skyrocketed, as compared to quotes from around the time that southeast Bend was annexed into the city.

The confusion around cost is compounded by the perception that the City is intentionally leaving residents in the dark. One participant explicitly stated that the City knows what it wants to do, but doesn't want to tell anyone, lest they anger residents. While that opinion may have been an outlier, many participants showed at least some frustration about the process.

Choice is important to affected homeowners, who resist the idea of being “forced” to connect to sewer while their septic system remains functional.

Homeowners are in an unenviable position: they know they will need to connect if their septic system fails, but they don't think it's particularly fair to be stuck with a large bill. When presented with two options, one which would only require connecting after a septic failure and one which would require all residents to connect at roughly the same time, the majority of participants chose the former. They recognized that their choice might cost more, and that those costs may never be known until it came time to connect, but they most participants prioritized maintaining control of the process.

The few participants who preferred the certainty of a large-scale, coordinated sewer connection project were clear that their preference might change depending on the ultimate cost. They saw a coordinated approach as a possible cost saver, but were hoping for an “affordable” option.

Additional education about why state regulations and the relationship between septic systems and public health may build more acceptance of the need for replacement.

Participants sometimes said that connecting to sewer was unnecessary, and many thought protecting public health was only somewhat important. Relaying to residents some background on why state laws require connection and how sewers can better protect their health may improve perceptions.

A few residents were also aware that their septic systems limit the types of development possible on their properties, such as decks, pools, and garages. Being able to expand the uses of their properties may be a benefit to communicate to build broader acceptance.

Although reluctant, many participants agree that homeowners should share in the cost of connection—but nearly all agree that extending sewer mains in the public right-of-way should be the City’s responsibility.

Participants were often upset by the notion of paying for connecting to sewer, but most seemed to accept the reality of it. Some participants were open to sharing in the cost of connection, especially when it was a project that took place on their private property, such as decommissioning their old septic tank.

Yet nearly everyone agreed that the City must be solely responsible for installing sewer lines in the public right-of-way. Participants felt strongly that this is exactly the type of service their taxes are intended to cover.

Ultimately, affected residents are likely to appreciate a straightforward process with clear costs.

At the end of the discussion, cost was still the top consideration. Participants hoped their city leaders would consider ways to ease the financial burden of connecting to sewer, perhaps through payment plans, liens, or by securing grants to help cover costs.

To the extent possible, sharing costs with homeowners will help them make arrangements to best afford these improvements.

DHM Research conducted two focus with Bend residents about the city's sewer system.

3.1 COMMUNITY ISSUES

Bend residents appreciate the city for its natural beauty and access to the outdoors.

Residents choose to live in Bend for its location, weather, and outdoor recreation opportunities. Participants described a connection to their natural surroundings, and nearly every participant mentioned these factors in describing the reasons they live in Central Oregon.

"The views. I like to fish. I like to ride bikes. I also like that it doesn't rain as much as it does on the west side." –In Area

"I'm here for the recreational opportunities. I'll be honest, that's the [biggest] reason, and it's also really beautiful, open space." –Mixed

Participants' strong connection to the outdoors revealed itself throughout the discussion and colored opinions about open spaces, parks, land use, and development. Many participants were long-time residents of the area and watched Bend grow from a small city to what it is today. Additionally, many participants moved to their current home before it was part of the City of Bend, and they were later annexed into the city's boundaries. These backgrounds are important to remember, as they have an impact on participants' values.

Residents are somewhat dissatisfied with the direction of the city, in part because they have negative views of growth and development.

Participants tended to lean negative when asked about the way things are going in the City of Bend. Of the 17 participants, eight said they were somewhat dissatisfied, while three said they were very dissatisfied. Only one participant was very satisfied.

Most were soft in their opinion, opting to say they were somewhat satisfied or somewhat dissatisfied. Regardless of where they fell on the scale, nearly all participants pointed to impacts of growth when describing the direction of the city. The sole participant who was very satisfied thought that Bend was "doing well to handle progress," while others felt that city leaders had not adequately planned for the surge in population.

"What's the plan with this city? I don't know." –In Area

"It's getting too busy. The growth feels unplanned." –Mixed

Lukewarm feelings around growth pointed to a variety of issues, mostly related to development or infrastructure. Participants noted that affordable housing is scarce, that traffic has worsened, and that neighborhoods are now denser than they were in prior years.

These opinions about growth are likely tied to the high value residents place on open spaces and access to the outdoors. Negative opinions or reservations about growth almost certainly impact residents' perceptions of efforts to expand the sewer system to serve more households.

Growth and planning is a primary concern for many residents, and they connect population growth to housing and infrastructure.

In addition to citing growth as a reason for their opinion of where the City of Bend is headed, many participants also said it was an issue they would like their city leaders to address.

Participants pointed again to housing, traffic and roads, and “unchecked growth.” Several participants noted that neighborhoods have absorbed hundreds of new residents without additional capacity on neighborhood streets, while others thought that homes were now built too close together, changing the character of the neighborhoods and city.

“If we’re going to do this infrastructure and let everybody build a million houses in an acre lot, at least plan for the road structure.” –In Area

At this point in the discussion, a few participants mentioned city sewer issues, unprompted.

“I see more emphasis on appearance than function, so the infrastructure is definitely suffering. We’re growing faster than we’re allowing for growth. The roads and sewer. I mean all this talk about adding it to the sewer, yet the plant that we have is barely holding its own for the capacity it’s taking.” –Mixed

Notably, participants were not asked about their sewer or septic system when they were screened for the focus group. Accordingly, early mentions of the City’s sewer system were organic.

3.2 QUESTIONS ABOUT CONNECTING TO SEWER

Although some residents point to issues in their neighborhoods caused by septic system, most report minimal problems or costs associated with maintaining their tank.

For the most part, participants with septic systems reported a positive experience with few problems. Their success in maintaining their septic tank stood to intensify their feelings about being “forced” to connect to the city sewer system.

“Mine is functioning, and it has for 42 years. And I take care of it.” –Mixed

“I take care of my septic tank. We do it every two years. We started out with one leach line, we put in two others, and switch it. Every six months, we switch which leach line we’re going to do. So we are accountable owners of our septic system.” –Mixed

“We know how to use a septic. There are guidelines, and if you do them properly they should never fail and you should never have problems.” –In Area

A few participants shared that their neighbors had experienced problems with their septic tanks, or that they had seen tanks replaced. Two made a point of noting that these issues had occurred many years ago, while one said that septic issues “occur often.”

Predominately positive views of septic systems may present a challenge when working with community members. Participants had a much easier time accepting the reality of connecting to sewer in the event of a septic failure. Alternatively, they feared a situation that would require them to make a significant investment in their property before failure. If, moving forward, connections will only be required for failing systems, residents will appreciate hearing this message upfront. Such an assurance may reduce skepticism and lead to a more productive conversation about what to do when systems do fail.

When it comes to connecting to city sewer, residents have numerous questions about the cost.

All participants but one had previously heard of the septic-to-sewer issue in Bend, and nearly all had questions and concerns about the cost of connection.

How much will it cost?

Confusion about the cost of connecting to the sewer system is understandable. Participants had heard figures in the news, from local leaders, and other sources that ranged wildly in price. Furthermore, many remembered discussions about connecting to the sewer that took place nearly 20 years ago, when southeast Bend was annexed into the city. The numbers at that time were reportedly much smaller.

On average, participants thought it would cost about \$37,000 to fully connect to the sewer system, but there were differences by group. In the In Area group, comprised only of septic users, the average was \$43,000. In the second group, comprised of both septic and sewer users, the average was \$29,500.

“I wanted to put an offer on a house and found out that to hook up to the sewer, which they were going to require, it was going to cost about \$40,000. I can’t imagine a homeowner being responsible for \$40,000.” –Mixed

“Most of us are retired, so it’s pretty difficult for us. So somehow we need to come up with some kind of solution because you just can’t afford \$80,000.” –Mixed

Why is it so expensive?

In addition to desiring a specific cost figure, participants wanted to know why the cost was so high. These participants again noted that during annexations, figures were much lower.

“Why is it five to ten times what it cost ten years ago? I mean, that’s not normal inflation. It’s such an outrageous number that I have no idea why. I just can’t conceive of why it’s that high.” –Mixed

“Where is the city getting these numbers that are showing up in the newspaper articles? Are they talking to companies that would do this work? Are they saying that this is what it costs for the city to come out and do this work?” –Mixed

The latter comment also highlights confusion among participants about who would complete the work. Many seemed to believe that, since connection may be required, that the City would do the work and bill residents. Others seemed to believe that they would hire a contractor to comply with any requirements.

Shouldn't my city taxes cover these costs?

The discussion brought forth some bitter feelings about annexation in general, which several participants had opposed. Some participants thought it would be fair to charge *all* Bend residents for the cost of extending the sewer to southeast Bend, for example, through a city-wide property tax or through increased sewer fees. They justified this opinion by noting that it was other Bend residents who voted to annex southeast Bend into the city, not southeast Bend itself.

"We have been paying city taxes since '99, when they said they would pay." –In Area

"At one point, they expected us as a neighborhood to corral together and make the arrangements to get it done. What do you we pay taxes for? Isn't that a city service that we were supposed to get when we were annexed in?" –In Area

"They want us in, they can help us pay for it." –In Area

Although the vote for annexation has come and gone, some residents still do not feel heard on the issue. Regardless of whether their opinions inform any decisions, it may be helpful to acknowledge their position when working with the community in the future. A simple showing that city leaders understand where these residents are coming from may help build goodwill.

Notably, one participant already connected to city sewer seemed to support this idea, noting that if the burden was small, the community should step up to benefit the greater good.

"[Is it] a \$2 a month cost or is it \$50 a month cost? At \$2 a month, everyone can handle [that]. We're supposed to work together as a community, so it benefits the community." –Mixed

Is public funding available?

Some participants were hopeful that public funds could help defray the cost for individual homeowners.

"Could the city help us pay, or could there be matching funds?" –In Area

"When they put the sewer in Sisters, they got millions in grants from the Farmers Home Administration to pay for that." –In Area

One participant was more realistic about the availability of grants.

"There's no state money. There's no county money. There's no city money. It's just gone. So those of us that are in this situation, they're looking at potential assistance from different arenas, and there is none." –Mixed

Do homeowners have to pay the cost in a lump sum?

Participants were quick to note the financial position of affected homeowners, who would not necessarily have the means to pay for the sewer work. Some wondered about, hoped for, or expected financing options, such as payments over time, a lien on the property for the work, or the ability to wait until the house was listed for sale before connecting so that proceeds could fund the project.

"In my neighborhood, there's a lot of people who are older and retired and have been there a long time, and it's a concern. So just because you live in a certain area doesn't mean that you might have the financial ability to pay." –Mixed

“If they can’t pay it, will they just have a lien against their home?” –Mixed

“It is much easier when you sell the house to say, ‘I’m willing to take \$40,000 less’ than to take \$40,000 out of your income and pay for it.” –In Area

Southeast residents also want assurances that they aren’t being singled out, and that the City can serve additional sewer customers.

In addition to cost, participants had a few other questions for city leaders about the future. Related to their concerns about growth and development, they wanted to be assured that the sewer system was ready to accept new residents. Some had heard that the system was already strained, so they approached the issue of adding homes to the system with skepticism. Some also felt like southeast Bend was being singled out, even though many homes in other parts of the city are not connected to the sewer system.

“How is the current plant going to accommodate all the new homes being added to it?” –Mixed

“There’s septic all over this town. So right now, they’re beating up on us. What about the rest of these harder-to-access areas?” –In Area

Addressing these concerns may be as simple as a map showing where sewer mains are being constructed and some simple explanations of the current sewer system’s capacity.

Some participants also wanted to ensure that consumers are adequately protected through the process, perhaps aided by the City.

“Are there going to be scam artists that are going to become part of this? My older generation feels that way. I mean, so this is going to charge you \$10,000, but oops, it’s not \$10,000 because we forgot this, or I broke my drill.” –Mixed

“Have a counselor or something to guide [people] through this to help save those costs. That would be an excellent idea.” –In Area

Providing a resident liaison for the issue, a robust website, and a list of vetted contractors could help residents feel confident as they complete their sewer connection.

3.3 COMMUNITY VALUES REGARDING CONNECTION

In weighing several values, affordability remains the primary consideration for residents.

Participants rated the importance of a series of values regarding sewer connection. Affordability was far away the most important value. Overall, 15 participants said it was very important to *ensure financial solutions are affordable for area property owners in the unsewered areas*, and 14 said it was the most important value.

What does it mean to *ensure financial solutions are affordable*?

“[Affordability] is very subjective, isn’t it? It means being able to maintain your quality of living while paying this responsibility to the City, and also maintaining the marketability of your home should you choose to sell it.” –Mixed

As many participants hoped aloud, financing options or other methods of spreading the cost out over time are likely to have positive impacts on perceptions.

Residents hope to limit various interruptions of a large-scale construction project, such as traffic and noise, and they also hope to keep their landscaping and driveways intact.

Participants were sensitive to the chaos that could occur if major improvements were made across southeast Bend. They hoped for limited interruption for traffic, especially for safety reasons. In all, 12 participants said that it was very important to *maintain access for emergency vehicles during construction*, while the remaining five said it was somewhat important.

Most participants also said it was somewhat or very important to *mitigate sewer construction impacts in neighborhoods, such as noise and street closures* (14).

Landscaping issues also came up a few times. One participant was concerned about the trees and shrubs in the neighborhood, while another worried about the placement of the tap, which could disrupt a homeowner's yard or create additional digging costs.

"Our neighborhood has some of the most mature landscaping in Bend. When they ran the main thing, that was a big concern because they took out trees. I mean, they ruined our shrubs in front by cutting them back." –In Area

"It's not clear to me that the homeowners had a choice as to where their tap got put into their lot. And in a lot of cases, it looks like it got put on the side of the driveway, where you would have to chisel across the driveway to actually get it into the house. That seems a little unfair to me." –In Area

The importance of these ancillary issues pales in comparison to affordability, but they are nonetheless important to consider. Seemingly minor details can have a sizable impact on residents' experiences connecting to sewer. Residents rely heavily on their neighbors' experiences, and a few negative comments early on could sway public opinion in the area for years to come.

Protecting public health and the environment is important, but some residents may benefit from additional education about the impact of septic systems on water quality.

Participants didn't bring up the "public health" unprompted, but several alluded to it when they spoke about septic systems. In their own terms, a few participants expressed concern about the environmental impact of septic tanks and whether they could contaminate the local water supply. These comments were woven into discussions about cost and the relationship between Bend's lava rock terrain and the water table below.

"As long as people have a functioning septic system that's not polluting the groundwater, I don't see that there's really a problem with that." –Mixed

"Are we going to hit the water table, [and] are we going to contaminate it? I see that. I understand that. So that is a concern for me too, but then you're going to charge me \$50,000 to hook up?" –Mixed

"I have this environmental side of me also. . . It's the best water in the whole, wide world, but it's—are we seeping down?" –Mixed

When asked to rate the importance of *protecting public health for area residents and pets*, eight participants said it was very important, and another eight said it was somewhat important. In this exercise, some participants may not have considered contamination of the water table as those quoted above clearly did. In fact, one participant expressed confusion about the statement:

“What do you mean when you say protect health?” –Mixed

Other research shows that residents are typically very concerned about public health when it is related to their drinking water, and that clean drinking water is a top priority for communities across Oregon. In the future, it may be helpful to tie discussions of public health specifically to drinking water to best connect with resident values.

All participants also said it was somewhat (seven participants) or very important (ten) to *be environmentally sensitive* during the sewer construction. While people are certain to hold disparate opinions regarding how to balance cost and environmental protection, it is clear that Bend residents appreciate the natural beauty of their city and value the environment.

Other values, such as *providing timely solutions* and *finding solutions that are replicable in other neighborhoods* received middling scores. Additionally, half of participants said it was not important to *promote opportunities for economic development and jobs*.

“The things that involve bringing jobs, I’m like, really? These are temporary at best, to do the work. Then where do those jobs go?” –In Area

As the economy has recovered, jobs messages have become less persuasive. Other research shows that there is considerably less emphasis on jobs and the economy in Oregon than there was a few years ago. Instead, community issues like traffic and affordable housing have bubbled to the top of the list.

3.4 PLANNING AND COSTS

Most residents see improvements to the public right of way as the City’s responsibility.

Participants weren’t entirely opposed to homeowners sharing in the cost sewer connections, but there was broad agreement that the City should cover the cost of *extending sewer lines in public right-of-way*. Only a few participants thought homeowners should chip in, and on average, participants thought homeowners should cover 6% of this cost.

The feeling that the City should pay for this portion of the project was directly connected to its location in the public right-of-way. Participants also reiterated their belief that the taxes they pay should cover these types of projects.

“I guess I do think that it’s the city, county, or state’s responsibility to build the infrastructure. We pay a lot of taxes for it.” –Mixed

“The sewer system is an infrastructure that is the government’s responsibility to provide. Yes, hookup from main system to home is an owner share, but that should not be insisted on.” –Mixed

It was also helpful for participants to explain their reasoning by comparing sewer service to other public utilities. Throughout the conversations, they referenced costs and processes related to gas and electric lines.

“Because that’s the city’s project. If the city wants to put a gas line down the road, I shouldn’t have to pay for it.” –Mixed

One participant, who owns one house on sewer and another with a septic system, recalled connecting to the sewer several decades ago. He referred to this experience a few times throughout the group, and felt that the process used in the past was appropriate.

“[In 1980], the City did not put the line from your street. They put the street in at no cost. From that point on, the homeowner paid for it. They hired a person to come and hook it up, and then you didn’t have to pay for it all at once. We could pay over time. I think that’s the way it should be done now.” –Mixed

The more control homeowners have over an element of connection, the more likely residents are to say the homeowner should share in those costs.

Individual expectations of the homeowners’ share of connection costs ranged from 0-100% for nearly every element of the connection process, but opinions about homeowner responsibility shifted as elements fell under the homeowner’s control. On average, participants thought homeowners should pay just over one-third of the cost of *system development charges paid when new sewer users connect* (37%). Similarly, they thought residents should only be responsible for 39% of the cost of *extending the sewer line onto private property*.

“I just feel it’s my responsibility [to pay for extending the line onto private property]. Although, I sit here and think about it, the electric company pays for everything up to and including your meter socket. So, I might be changing my mind.” –In Area

Although some participants were still staunchly opposed to paying for any portion of connecting to the sewer, opposition softened for projects like *decommissioning septic tanks* and *connecting private property to sewer*. On average, participants thought homeowners should pay for more than half the cost of decommissioning tanks (62%), and they thought homeowners should pay for about half of connecting to the sewer system (51%).

“The connecting I definitely put 100% because historically I understand that’s what it has been around the county. Extending the sewer line onto private property, I would have to say, again, if it’s affordable and the owner’s choice and needed, 100%.” –Mixed

“Connecting, I saw as least expensive of all of it. I thought, ‘Well, I’d be willing to do 100% of that,’ because in my mind, again, that’s probably the least expensive.” –Mixed

There were differences in opinion between the two groups. The group of only septic tank users thought that residents should have to pay a smaller share of the expenses than did the group of both septic and sewer users. These differences were considerable when it came to the actual connection to sewer (30% to 75%) and system development charges (26% to 54%).

Most residents prioritize choice as much as possible, and would prefer that the City only require hookups as septic systems fail—not before.

For the most part, participants reluctantly accepted the fact that they would likely need to connect to sewer in the future. They felt stuck in this position, and accordingly, placed a high value on maintaining choice in the matter.

When presented with two different scenarios, most participants (11) preferred a scenario in which septic users only connected to the sewer system when their tank failed. They acknowledged that the individual cost may be higher, and that it may take much longer for the City to complete the entire sewer project. Participants also realized that this would cause interruptions over a longer period, but these drawbacks were less important to them than the ability to plan ahead and budget. And some remained confident that their septic system would work for quite a while longer.

“It would give homeowners time to budget and plan. If you’re thinking the cost is high no matter what you would do, I would go with that one.” –Mixed

“I think I’m kind of like, why should you replace something that works?” –Mixed

One participant also noted that a longer timeline could give people the option of doing the job in pieces. For example, some area residents have installed a dry sewer line while completing large landscaping projects so that they can avoid digging up their property a second time when the sewer main is extended to their area.

There were some downsides, and participants knew that costs will only rise as times goes on, creating even greater uncertainty. But, they noted that they “may never have to hook up.”

Fixed costs that can be known in advance are appealing to some residents, but those who prefer this scenario hope for a low figure.

Some participants preferred a second scenario, which would require all residents to connect to the sewer even if their septic systems had not failed. However, under this scenario, costs would be lower for each affected resident, as the project could be completed efficiently over a period of a few years.

Knowing costs upfront was the most appealing part of this scenario for the three participants who chose it, but they explained that the ultimate expense would be the determining factor.

“The only reason I would favor [scenario] two is if the costs were quite low for the whole population.” –Mixed

“I think there’s a benefit to getting the job done sooner rather than later. I do say it with a reservation: it depends on the cost and depending on timeline.” –In Area

Others seemed sure that even if the cost were equalized among affected homeowners, it would present an insurmountable financial burden—with little to no time to plan for it. One participant said if connections were mandated for residents with working septic systems that it would require “selling our house in the next year, as we would not be able to pay.”

The notion that the City would mandate such a large cost, irrespective of residents’ preferences, and with no exception for residents with working septic system was a difficult pill to swallow for many participants.

3.5 COMMUNICATING THE NEED TO REPLACE SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Protecting public health and meeting state regulations are top reasons to support replacing septic systems, and residents would likely benefit from details as to how these issues impact them.

Although residents were lukewarm about the importance of protecting public health in a previous written exercise, 12 said it is a good or very reason to support replacing septic systems, and three said it was the best reason to support it.

“[Protecting public health] is the only one that I thought was a value. I have no control over the neighbor’s septic tank. If it’s failing and they don’t fix it, it’s a problem.”

–In Area

Participants also understand that cities must comply with state and federal regulations, and they assume there are consequences to flouting them. In total, four participants said compliance is the best reason to install sewers and replace septic systems. Additionally, 11 participants said this is a good or very good reason to transition.

“I thought one of the best reasons was to help Bend meet the state and federal regulations. I thought that was a very good reason. I think that that does affect them on some level, if they’re not meeting guidelines. There can be other consequences for not meeting those.”

–Mixed

If there are clear implications for failing to meet these standards—especially consequences that would directly impact residents—they should be shared with the community. Many participants felt in the dark about the entire process, or that the City has been hiding information from them. Highlighting these types of details may help residents feel more informed.

Even though in the written exercise only three participants preferred a scenario wherein all residents would be connected to the sewer in a short period, 13 said *a coordinated approach to sewerage southeast Bend produces efficiencies and reduces the cost per household* is a good reason to support such a project.

The advisory committee was also quite popular among participants: 11 said it is a good or very good reason to support the project, and three said it is the best reason to support it. However, opinions were mixed, and six said it was a poor reason.

Some messages aren’t credible because residents have experience to the contrary.

A few possible reasons to support a sewer project simply didn’t resonate with participants. Most residents did not see the value of the message that *southeast Bend’s rocky geology isn’t well-suited to septic systems and makes construction challenging and more costly*. Overall, 11 participants said this was a poor reason to support the transition.

Similarly, 11 participants thought a poor reason to support phasing out septic tanks was that *the long-term costs for sewers are lower than ongoing costs to maintain and replace septic systems*. Many participants simply couldn’t believe that connecting to sewer would be cheaper than relying on their existing septic system—especially considering many participants are older and would have large up-front costs.

“I have put \$3,000 in my septic tank in 35 years. And if I was at a sewer, I would be paying about \$18,000 just for the cost of the sewer.” –In Area

“We have put zero into ours in 21 years.” –In Area

“We have pumped ours once.” –In Area

The same disbelief was apparent when participants considered whether *sewers contribute to a neighborhood’s property values*. While nine participants thought this was a good reason to transition, eight said it was a poor reason. Those who thought it was poor felt it paled in comparison to skyrocketing real estate prices in Bend generally.

“The property values. I mean the average cost of the homes down in that neighborhood is astronomically high compared to what I paid for it when I moved in 20 years ago. And none of it is on sewer.” –In Area

Participants noted that by removing their septic tanks, they might be afforded greater use and enjoyment of their property.

Residents were not asked about the land use benefits of removing their septic tanks, but several mentioned these unprompted. Some mentioned they could not build an accessory dwelling unit or out-building on their property because they were constricted by their leach field.

However, residents will want to know if other zoning or building restrictions would still apply. Any information about new abilities to build should be tempered with other zoning laws.

“We are limited to what we can do in our backyard because of the septic field, right? And once I put this in, does it mean I can put a house behind my house? But if they’re going to do this and then they’re going to say, ‘No, you’re zoned, you can’t do any of this stuff,’ then what is the advantage of being on sewer?” –In Area

3.6 FINAL REMARKS

Ultimately, affected residents want more clarity and transparency from city leaders, along with assurances that they are adequately planning for the future.

Recalling earlier discussion about the perceived lack of planning in Bend, participants said their final advice to city leaders would be to plan ahead.

“Plan not for today but for 50 years from now. Do you need another treatment plant? Are you going to need four of them? And how are we going to pay for those?” –Mixed

Residents also wanted to be confident that the City was providing accurate, up-to-date information that clearly demonstrated the need for expanding the sewer system. Prioritizing transparency is important to residents who feel like they have heard conflicting messages over the past 20 years. A simple but thorough website can help residents feel more informed.

“There should be a subpage on the City of Bend website that has a frank discussion about what it is that they’re planning to do and what they’re going to do. And I think the city knows. I just don’t think they’re telling anybody, because people aren’t going to like it.” –In Area

“Nothing has been provided to show NEED.”

–In Area

But the major considerations were still cost and choice. Residents don't want to feel forced to connect to the sewer unnecessarily, and they certainly don't want to shoulder major costs.

“I think it is great as long as the City pays for all right-of-way install costs and allows the homeowner to decide how and when to install service on their property, either septic failure, desire to build on leach fields, or during landscaping project.” –In Area

“Keep costs reasonable for all city residents, simple.”

–Mixed

**Barney Worth Bend Sewer
DHM Research Project #00611**

**Group #1 8/12/17 Homeowners with septic tanks (“In Area”); Bend; N=9
Group #2 8/12/17 Homeowners with tanks or city sewer (“Mixed”); Bend; N=8**

**Appendix A
Participant Demographics**

City and Zip Code

In Area	Mixed
Bend/97702	Bend/97701
Bend/97702	Bend/97702
Bend/97702	Bend/97702
Bend/97702	Bend/97702
Bend/97702	Bend/97702
Bend/97702	Bend/97702
Bend/97702	Bend/97702
Bend/97702	Bend/97703
Bend/97702	

Occupation

In Area	Mixed
Electrical Engineer	Education
Owner—Computer store	Medical Administration
President—Corporation	Retired—Administrative Assistant
Retired—Civil Engineer	Retired—Mathematics Teacher
Retired—Construction Loan Officer	Retired—Registered Nurse
No response	No response
No response	No response
No response	No response
No response	

Education Level

Response Category	In Area	Mixed
Less than high school graduate	--	--
High school graduate	--	1
Some college; technical school; community college; 2-year degree	6	2
College degree; 4-year degree	3	3
Graduate degree	--	2
No response	--	--

Household Income

Response Category	In Area	Mixed
Under \$15,000	--	--
\$15,000 – \$29,999	--	--
\$30,000 – \$49,999	1	2
\$50,000 – \$74,999	1	3
\$75,000 – \$99,999	4	2
\$100,000 – \$150,000	3	--
More than \$150,000	--	1
No Response	--	--

Type of Housing

Response Category	In Area	Mixed
Single-family	8	8
Multi-family	--	--
Other:	--	--
No response	1	--

Type of Housing

Response Category	In Area	Mixed
Rent	--	--
Own	9	8
Other:	--	--
No response	--	--

Number in Household

Response Category	In Area	Mixed
1	2	1
2	7	6
3	--	1
4	--	--
5+	--	--
No response	--	--

Age

Response Category	In Area	Mixed
18 – 24	--	--
25 – 34	--	--
35 – 44	--	1
45 – 54	1	1
55 – 64	6	2
65 – 74	2	2
75+	--	2
No Response	--	--

Gender

Response Category	In Area	Mixed
Female	4	6
Male	5	2
Non-Binary or Gender Non-Conforming	--	--
No Response	--	--

Racial or Ethnic Group

Response Category	In Area	Mixed
White	9	7
American Indian, Alaska Native or First Nations	--	--
Asian	--	--
Hispanic or Latino	--	--
Middle Eastern or North African	--	--
Black or African American	--	--
African	--	--
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	--	--
Another race or ethnicity	--	1
No Response	--	--

Political Party

Response Category	In Area	Mixed
Democrat	3	3
Republican	2	1
Other: [Democrat and Independent]	--	1
Other: [Marked all three]	1	--
Other: [Not specified]	3	2
No response	--	--

**Appendix B
Written Exercise 1**

What three words best describe why you choose to live in Bend?

Word 1

In Area	Mixed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allergies ▪ Family ▪ Location ▪ Location ▪ Mountains ▪ Outdoors ▪ Ponderosa Pines ▪ Work ▪ Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Best ▪ Family ▪ Family ▪ Job ▪ Light for quilting ▪ Parents ▪ Recreational opportunities ▪ Weather

Word 2

In Area	Mixed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Climate ▪ Deschutes River ▪ Doctors ▪ Fishing ▪ Jobs ▪ Lack of rain ▪ Outdoors ▪ Small ▪ Weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beauty ▪ Cancer ▪ Family ▪ Location ▪ Oregon is beautiful, and so is Bend ▪ Outdoor opportunities ▪ Weather ▪ Work

Word 3

In Area	Mixed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Artist events ▪ Beauty ▪ Camping ▪ Community ▪ Family ▪ Lifestyle ▪ Roots/grew up here ▪ Weather ▪ Weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Area ▪ Beauty ▪ Clean air and water ▪ Family ▪ Friends ▪ Medical ▪ My current job ▪ Safety

**Appendix C
Written Exercise 2**

All things considered, how satisfied are you with the way things are going in the City of Bend today?

Response Category	In Area	Mixed	Total
Very satisfied	--	1	1
Somewhat satisfied	2	3	5
Somewhat dissatisfied	5	3	8
Very dissatisfied	2	1	3

Very satisfied

In Area	Mixed
[No responses]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am a snow bird. Visited several places and Bend is doing well to handle progress.

Somewhat satisfied

In Area	Mixed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth in housing market is good Town is nice, there are issues with growth, traffic. It is nice here. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City is growing, but also has some growing pains: road construction, water bills, infrastructure. Love being back here—concerned about lack of planning Seem to be working on issues but seems like special interests get preferences.

Somewhat dissatisfied

In Area	Mixed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Bend seems to have no plan. Never did have one. Probably never will. Growing too fast and the infrastructure can't keep up. The last year has been really bad with traffic. Mainly, the City Council improperly utilizes tax dollars The west side seems to be the focus for parks, rec, safety and renewal Too much infill building. Houses not quality and building too close together. Traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting <i>too</i> busy. Summer especially the growth feels unplanned. Too many events on weekends. Can't enjoy reasons I came here (trails too busy, etc.) Too much building of homes and not enough infrastructure—traffic is too heavy for the roads Too much growth too fast without proper infrastructure to support it. Tendency for business to change greater prices because we are "desirable"

Very dissatisfied

In Area	Mixed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too many close subdivision and small lots congestion. Housing shortage. Too much traffic! Too many people! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have not planned well for the growth, roads, services, housing

Appendix D Written Exercise 3

Make a list of the most important issues in the City of Bend that affect quality of life and that you would like your local leaders to do something about. Place a star (*) by the most important issue.

In Area

- *A lack of consistency in what they do; Dense housing conditions; A lack of sensible zoning.
- *Access for emergency vehicles in our neighborhood. Roundabout at Road and 15th.
- *Affordable housing; Traffic, street quality
- *Bike trails; Congestion; Subdivision design and planning better; Noise
- *Lack of staffing for the police department
- *Outside funding for sewer install; Revisit plan for building homes too close
- *Roads!! *Better management of resources; Better housing
- *Traffic; Threat of sewer hookup
- [No star] Traffic, taxes, drugs

Mixed

- *Accessibility for disabled; Parking; Traffic
- *Affordable housing; Bike paths; Traffic; Construction on streets
- *Growth seems unplanned, unsustainable; Roads are in bad shape; Too many bars on the west side; Parking issues on the west side; Affordable housing; Too much going on (weekends—too many events)
- *Housing affordability; Regulate growth beyond the boundaries; Monitor services/roads; Annexation rules sewer/septic; Homeless population
- [No star] Plan for the growth that is coming: roads, schools, parking; Traffic will certainly be a problem in five years; VR regulations, restrictions
- *Traffic—roads are insufficient. Too much construction. Homes are too close together.
- *Public transportation.
- *Unchecked growth; Uncontrolled price gouging; Lack of infrastructure and support of existing.

For the issue you starred, give additional details about why it is important to you and what you would like done about it.

In Area

- [A lack of consistency in what they do] Bend seems to do things without a plan. They do things that the residents don't approve.
- [Access for emergency vehicles in our neighborhood] No access between Franklin and Knot Road when the train is parked. Murphey Road to 15th would help.
- [Affordable housing] Bend is one of the most expensive towns in Oregon for real estate. Shortage of housing and lack of new land. Make housing more affordable.
- [Bike trails] Biking is paramount to reduce congestion in and around the city of bend, also into neighborhoods for the safety of all people that don't drive.
- [Lack of staffing for the police department] The homeless population is taking over the downtown area and affecting local businesses.
- [Outside funding for sewer install] It is unfair to impose the cost of sewer construction on individual homeowners with rock removal. Apply for outside funding or alternatives.

- [Roads!! Better management of resources] Stop Parks & Rec from over-developing. Use some of the money for road improvement; Better snow removal; Stop spraying so much magnesium chloride
- [Traffic] When driving through town, I now have to sit at many traffic lights for two to three lights. The Reed Market roadwork was a complete failure
- [No star] Better city planning!

Mixed

- [Accessibility for disabled] My husband has MS and is disabled. One of our struggles is it often seems that those planning don't understand what "handicap accessible" means.
- [Affordable housing] After moving here 10 months ago, there are NO houses available in the same price range I paid—don't have a solution.
- [Growth seems unplanned, unsustainable] Roads aren't able to hold traffic for current neighborhoods, yet NWX is adding 600 homes on the west side.
- [Housing affordability] Neighborhoods are too pushed together; Allowing buildings to be too high; Permits/taxes/etc. are too high.
- [No star] Not a fan of roundabout solutions. Causing problems during peak hours.
- [Public transportation] Moving people: 1) Pedestrians, ease and efficiency; 2) Biking, ease and efficiency; 3) Public transit more and free; 4) Cars—more roundabouts.
- [Traffic] For the most part it's too late. Roads should have been enlarged to accommodate the hundreds of new homes (and owners)
- [Unchecked growth] Traffic increasing; public less patient with each other; visitors often inconsiderate of residents, environment. Do? Stop advertising how great we are.

Appendix E
Written Exercise 4

As Bend has grown to over 90,000 residents, some areas have come into the city that were developed without sewers. Around 2,800 Bend homes are in areas served by septic systems. The largest of these areas is in the southeast. Bend recently installed large sewer trunk line to serve this area. Under state law, property owners will be required to hook up to this line.

Have you heard about the situation of some Bend neighborhoods without sewers?

Response Category	In Area	Mixed	Total
Yes	9	7	16
No	--	1	1

Do you have any questions or concerns about these unsewered neighborhoods that will be required to hookup?

In Area	Mixed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1) What about the rest of the city? It's a patchwork of septic vs. sewer. 2)The plan. ▪ Cost to homeowners; Resale value if not hooked up. ▪ Cost! (Construction) Time frame! Cost for sewer service! ▪ How much will it cost homeowners? The timeline ▪ Of course, they originally said we would only have to hookup if our septic failed. We should not have to pay to hook up if our septic works. ▪ Required? Cost of taps? What about drains for runoff? ▪ The many costs to hook up. How much time you have to hook up ▪ There has been very little information released and what is said is conflicting or very general. I want to know. ▪ Why hook up if our systems are working fine? What if we want to upgrade our septics? How much will it cost? Who will pay? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concerned that residents have to pay for it out of their pocket. ▪ Current system cannot serve added lines adequately. Estimated cost to hook up is phenomenally outrageous. ▪ Financing; funds to assist ▪ From Portland—my last neighborhood was old and not ready for sewer. Seemed always under construction. ▪ Hook-up should be required only after the need is there for that homeowner ▪ How will those who can't afford to hook up be dealt with? What will be the timeframe? ▪ Serious unfairness about this. This can often cost \$30-80k for a homeowner, which many cannot afford. ▪ No questions

**Appendix F
Written Exercise 5**

Is your house connected to a City sewer, on a septic system, or are you not sure?

Response Category	In Area	Mixed	Total
City sewer	--	6	6
Septic system	9	3	12
Not sure	--	--	--

**One person in Mixed had two houses: one on city sewer and one on septic system*

If you are connected to a City sewer, do you recall about how much you pay per month for your sewer service? If you are not connected to a City sewer, don't write anything in this section.

Mixed
\$35
\$40
?
? No clue what portion is just sewer
Not sure
Mean: \$37.50

**No one in In Area is connected to city sewer*

If you are living in an area served by septic systems, have you or your neighbors experienced any problems? Were these problems experienced just once, were they repeated from time to time, or have they become chronic, ongoing problems? If you are not living in an area served by septic systems, don't write anything in this section.

In Area

- I have seen neighbors replace old metal tanks.
- I know one home at the end of the block who had to put in a new drain field—happened about 15 years back. Don't know anyone in immediate area now.
- Neighbors behind me had to fix their drain field.
- No
- No issues other than materials used originally for the tank.
- No. We have 12 homes on our street and we all have septic systems with no problems.
- So far, so good. A second set of leech fields were installed in 2003 so they must have had problems in the past.
- We have not experienced any problems
- No response

Mixed

- I have not had issues, but I've heard of neighbors who have once had one issue or another.
- New to the house on septic (1 year). No problems so far, but it is a concern.
- Problem with systems going bad and residents not fixing (cost, only a rental, other reasons.) Occurs often.
- We have not had any problems. Neighbor had a leakage.

Appendix G Written Exercise 6

Make a list of the values or guiding principles that you think should be considered when making decisions about installing sewers in southeast Bend.

In Area

- Costs (installation) Traffic control; Environmental impact; The ends justifying the means
- Engineering for convenience of resident for location; Requirements of a perfectly working septic to change over to sewer.
- Frank discussion about what is going to happen. Perhaps a website. Options/costs/benefits/timing
- How long to install systems?
- How much does the property owner have to pay? Pay schedule?
- Saving trees; Cost sharing
- The city should cover all costs if we are forced to hook up with a fully functioning septic. Our neighborhood's mature landscaping should be protected!
- Who pays? Do we start some kind of fund for raising the income to address the costs? How to get the information to the community?
- No response

Mixed

- 1. Can present system handle additional homes? 2. Cost for individual homeowners. 3. Cost to city. 4. Growth a consideration
- 1) We were annexed in by a vote of the rest of Bend. 2) Fair assessment of hook-up. People cannot afford \$50,000
- Cost to citizens; Road closures, traffic impacts. Is current system able to handle these 2000 homes?
- Cost—how houses require to hook up will pay. Consider some have lived in their homes for years and may be on fixed incomes.
- Is it necessary to always use a gravity system? Consider a pressurized sewer system!!!!
- No opinion—not really knowledgeable on the subject. We have city sewers and that's working for us.
- Quality of resulting function; Fairness of cost; Effect on existing landscape
- Who should pay for it? Burden should be shared by total population and not be on the homeowner.

Make a list of any worries or problems that need to be avoided while installing sewers in southeast Bend.

In Area

- Backflow problems; Traffic; Utility placement
- Don't know
- How retired people in area will be able to pay for sewers?
- Noise/access/dust/dirt; Cost and how it will be paid.
- Put the neighborhood back the way it was after construction.
- Putting undue pressure on homeowners to hookup; traffic; cost overruns
- Sound communication with homeowners on upcoming noise, traffic detours, school hours
- Traffic congestion; Detours
- We do not want to pay and cannot afford to hookup to the sewer.

Mixed

- 1) Break down who will pay what. 2) Regulate companies who put lines as not so scam homeowners
- Construction of new systems. Repairs of existing systems.
- Cost; Road closures; Regulations
- Do not know.
- Hook-up should not be mandatory if not needed.
- I don't have enough knowledge.
- Loss of landscaping; Construction dust/noise/inconvenience
- My worries are access for Dial-a-Ride to serve my house.

Appendix H
Written Exercise 7

Take a moment to review this list of possible values to guide Bend’s program for unsewered areas. Rate each possible value on whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not important. Place a star (*) by the most important value.

Response Category	In Area	Mixed	Total
Be environmentally sensitive			
Very important	3	4	7
Somewhat important	6	4	10
Not important	--	--	--
Protect public health for area residents and pets			
Very important	5	3	8
Somewhat important	3	5	8
Not important	1	--	1
Prioritize lower cost solutions for all Bend sewer customers			
Very important	3	2	5
Somewhat important	5	6	11
Not important	1	--	1
Ensure financial solutions are affordable for area property owners in the unsewered area			
Very important	9	6	15
Somewhat important	--	2	2
Not important	--	--	--
Provide a timely solution that ensures property owners have access to sewers soon			
Very important	--	--	--
Somewhat important	5	3	8
Not important	4	4	8
No answer	--	1	1
Mitigate sewer construction impacts in neighborhoods, such as noise and street closures			
Very important	5	3	8
Somewhat important	4	2	6
Not important	--	2	2
No answer	--	1	1
Maintain access for emergency vehicles during construction			
Very important	7	5	12
Somewhat important	2	3	5
Not important	--	--	--
Find solutions that are replicable in other unsewered neighborhoods			
Very important	2	--	2
Somewhat important	6	4	10
Not important	1	3	4
No answer	--	1	1

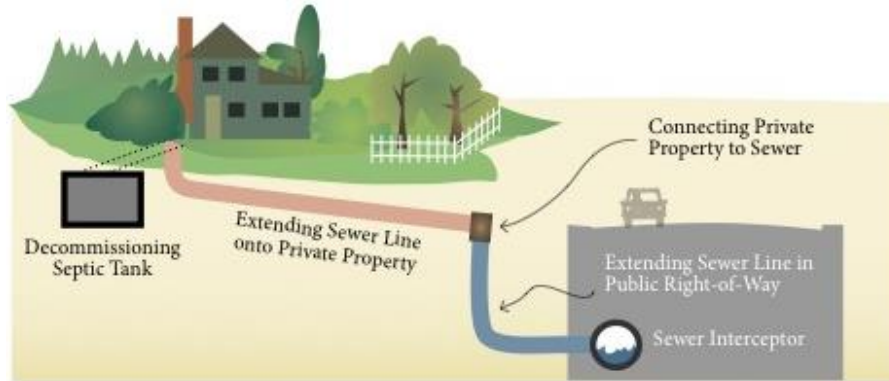
Response Category	In Area	Mixed	Total
Promote opportunities for economic development and jobs			
Very important	1	1	2
Somewhat important	4	2	6
Not important	4	4	8
No answer	--	1	1

Starred Responses

Response Category	In Area	Mixed	Total
Be environmentally sensitive	--	--	--
Protect public health for area residents and pets	--	--	--
Prioritize lower cost solutions for all Bend sewer customers	--	1	1
Ensure financial solutions are affordable for area property owners in the unsewered area	8	6	14
Provide a timely solution that ensures property owners have access to sewers soon	--	--	--
Mitigate sewer construction impacts in neighborhoods, such as noise and street closures	--	--	--
Maintain access for emergency vehicles during construction	--	1	1
Find solutions that are replicable in other unsewered neighborhoods	1	--	1
Promote opportunities for economic development and jobs	--	--	--

Appendix I Written Exercise 8

For these various cost categories, what percentage should be paid by area property owners?



Response Category	In Area	Mixed	Total
Extending sewer lines in public right-of-way (roads)			
Highest percentage	25%	50%	
Lowest percentage	0%	0%	
<i>Mean percentage</i>	4%	8%	6%
Extending sewer line onto private property			
Highest percentage	100%	100%	
Lowest percentage	0%	0%	
<i>Mean percentage</i>	29%	52%	39%
Connecting private property to sewer			
Highest percentage	100%	100%	
Lowest percentage	0%	25%	
<i>Mean percentage</i>	30%	75%	51%
System development charges paid when new sewer users connect			
Highest percentage	100%	100%	
Lowest percentage	0%	0%	
<i>Mean percentage</i>	26%	54%	37%
Decommissioning septic systems			
Highest percentage	100%	100%	
Lowest percentage	0%	5%	
<i>Mean percentage</i>	62%	61%	62%

Comments:

In Area

- Hard to answer this when I am against paying for this.

Mixed

- As a city sewer customer, I don't feel I have the best understanding of costs, reasons, timetables.
- Concern that "they" in charge have to be experts in all things.
- I'm sorry, I just don't know and I didn't want to guess.

- Only if property owner's *choice* and *need*.
- [*RE: Extending sewer line in public right-of way/onto private property*]: State and city taxes are for this; [*RE: Decommissioning septic systems*]: City taxes for this unless owner is requesting; Depends on if septic system is failing.

**Appendix J
Written Exercise 9**

What is your impression of what the total sewer hookup cost will be for a typical southeast Bend property?

In Area	Mixed	Total
\$5,000-80,000	\$4,000	
\$15,000	\$25,000 (No clue)	
\$15,000	\$25,000-\$40,000	
\$17,000	\$30,000	
\$25,000-\$50,000	\$30,000-\$40,000	
\$40,000-\$60,000	\$40,000 (?)	
\$40,000-80,000	\$40,000	
\$50,000	No idea	
\$100,000		
Mean: \$43,000	Mean: \$29,500	

Comments

(Not all participants provided comments)

In Area

- Continuous rock beds were encountered in sewer main installation. Heavily treed area and replacement of plants.
- Former county commissioner came by the house and explained this
- Hopeful. Just being optimistic
- Re-routing internal plumbing in house; Removing septic; City of Bend charges; Permits; Trenching in rock; Materials; Disposal costs
- Read in paper. Have never done this.
- The cost of digging (solid rock) The cost of re-plumbing interior to sewer line
- This is what I've read in the paper for other subdivisions and also people that have been forced to hook up.
- Unfortunately, our neighborhood is built on a lava shelf. Did we know this when we purchased? No. And rock is hard.
- Varying landscapes: rock; location, etc. placement.

Mixed

- \$4,000 was my initial impression before hearing from panel. I now know it could be \$40,000-\$80,000

Appendix K Written Exercise 10

Scenario One: Under this scenario, the City of Bend would provide sewer service and require hookups as septic systems fail, as required by state regulations. Costs and timing for individual homeowners would vary widely according to actual construction costs. The sewer program would not be finished within a fixed time.

What are your first impressions of this scenario?

In Area

- 1) Who determines when the “system” fails? 2) Allows people to postpone the event. 3) No mention of financing.
- For myself, this is the best-case scenario and what we were originally promised. I understand it may be more costly for some, more than for others.
- It would be continuous construction; Cost would be high
- It's an option. Time periods are important. These costs should be passed to the next owner of the property. These rules and updated infrastructures and costs were mandated after the property was purchased.
- No set cost. More expense to sewer for the first customers
- Scenario makes sense!
- Sort of like it, but don't.
- Sounds reasonable except are we subject to timing AND the city NOT?
- Too unsure of outcome

Mixed

- I think that this is much fairer than forcing people with good septic systems to hook up and foot the costs.
- I would think as a system fails, replacing it with sewer would be okay. *But* cost/timing varying is concerning. I would prefer a reasonable fixed cost.
- Looks good.
- Mostly agreeable, depending on definitions of “cost” and “actual construction costs”
- Requirement for hook-ups as needed.
- Sounds fair to current homeowner
- This could be a good middle ground for those on septic.
- This is very fast and would need some assistance or timeline.

Make a list of the benefits of this scenario. Star (*) the benefit most important to you.

In Area

- As long as I own a healthy septic system I can take my time to save the money to hook up to the sewer.
- *Cost could be more than initially thought; or less than initially thought; Selling home may be more difficult
- Can wait—not immediate
- Homeowner more time to save money. May be able to sell home and need for sewer onto new owner.
- *May never have to hook up

- Our septic works great and would allow us to not pay to hook up
- Some people will not hook up.
- To keep a working septic. Given a choice of when with a healthy system.
- No response

Mixed

- As septic systems fail
- City pays for line. Homeowner pays for sewer from street to house
- Fairness, unfair to force people to foot a bill when their system is working.
- Home ownership to budget/plan for a timeline that fits their needs; Sewer available for when septic systems do fail.
- ? How would construction occur? Would lines all be done at once and then just hook up to system occur when system fails?
- Know when to anticipate conversion. Newer system.
- Varying timelines of costs
- No response

Make a list of the drawbacks of this scenario. Star (*) the drawback most important to you.

In Area

- Cost could go up—if longer in figure. What if cannot afford.
- *Cost will always go up; Continual construction in the area
- End cost would not be known
- May cost more for homeowners with bad septic systems
- Most cost to the homeowner. The sewer would be in limbo and costs would rise over the years of incompleteness.
- When septic system does fail, hit with immediate cost
- Will prices go up if we wait?
- No response
- No response

Mixed

- As time goes by, costs will likely increase
- Do not require homeowners already on sewer to help pay for other hookup. Do hookup charges as they did in 1980!
- Drawback: too expensive for most property owners to afford. Need the city to defer costs; Time: sudden costs to homeowners could be beyond most what most homeowners could handle.
- Marketability of home. Captive audience/at the mercy of contractors when you do have a septic failure
- Not all done at once. Someone has to track who is on the sewer system. Lack of ability to plan revenue.
- Variable cost—construction during boom could be costly.
- What are the costs? The unknown is stressful.
- No response

Appendix L Written Exercise 11

Scenario Two: Under this scenario, the City of Bend would plan to systematically install sewers for all property owners within the project area, regardless of the current condition of their septic systems. Costs for homeowners would be relatively uniform. The sewer program would be completed with a fixed time of about 3-5 years.

What are your first impressions of this scenario?

In Area

- Dictatorial
- I think this is really a good idea even though I think it would be difficult for property owners to cover the costs. Bonds.
- Is okay depending on costs and payment timeline
- Not enough time for the homeowner to hook up. Each lot has different costs.
- Takes out septic systems that are working properly and some are new
- This is probably what will happen. In/out/done.
- This would be better if costs were fair.
- This would require us to sell our house in the next year as we would not be able to pay for the cost to hook up to the sewer.
- We should have no cost individually to bring sewer tap to our property.

Mixed

- ?
- A longer timeline
- Could be good solution if the “uniform” cost is affordable. Would allow city to have a completion date for their project.
- Feels forced, especially during a construction boom.
- Not in favor. I bought my house with the understanding that it was a new septic system. Why should I have to foot the bill for infrastructure I do not need. This is not fair.
- Unrealistic and projected only on “estimates”
- Why replace septic that has not failed?
- Would prefer this, but need a cost factor

Make a list of the benefits of this scenario. Star (*) the benefit most important to you.

In Area

- Construction finished; Less noise congestion after completion.
- It gets done in a fixed timeframe; There may be cost savings
- Known cost
- None
- Property owners would know when the project would be done, and how much it would cost.
- Shared, uniform cost
- Would make costs closer to predict
- Zero
- No response

Mixed

- All property owners would be connected, adhering to state requirements
- Costs more uniform/affordable. Timeframe shorter.
- Do construction for an area—but don't turn on sewer until septic fails.
- If affordable, would eliminate environmental issues with septic.
- If I had a home/lot much larger, the lines would be longer, but others would share the cost.
- *Known cost; know timeline
- More efficient and cost effective.
- Over with. On a timeframe and done. Can make a plan.

Make a list of the drawbacks of this scenario. Star (*) the drawback most important to you.

In Area

- A good septic gone
- Congestion, noise, dust, bad air.
- Need for *money* now. No choice, even when system is working.
- Sale of our home
- Some of us have already installed dry service out to R/W line during landscaping project.
- That the plan changes once the project is started
- We pay for work on sewer in public
- No response
- No response

Mixed

- “Regardless of current condition of their existing septic”
- *Potential to replace a new, functioning system that has 30 years left (environmentally wasteful); Residents forced to replace system.
- Costs???
- Large bill.
- See first comment [“*Unrealistic and projected only on ‘estimates’*”]
- Sounds expensive for individual homeowner.
- To make you pay for maybe something when you do not need it.
- Unknown cost—definition of what defines “uniform”

Favorite Scenario

Response Category	In Area	Mixed	Total
Scenario 1 (WE 10)	5	6	11
Scenario 2 (WE 11)	2	1	3
No answer	2	1	3

Appendix M
Written Exercise 12

The following are reasons that some people might give as a good idea to install sewers to replace septic systems in southeast Bend. For each, indicate if you think it is a very good, good, poor, or very poor reason. Star (*) the one best reason.

Response Category	In Area	Mixed	Total
Sewers enable Bend to meet state and federal regulations			
Very good	1	3	4
Good	3	4	7
Poor	4	1	5
Very poor	1	--	1
Sewers help protect public health for area homeowners and pets			
Very good	3	1	4
Good	2	5	8
Poor	2	--	2
Very poor	2	1	2
Sewers contribute to a neighborhood's property values			
Very good	--	2	2
Good	3	4	7
Poor	5	1	6
Very poor	1	1	2
Southeast Bend's rocky geology isn't well suited to septic systems and makes construction challenging and more costly			
Very good	2	1	3
Good	--	2	2
Poor	3	4	7
Very poor	4	--	4
No answer	--	1	1
The long-term costs for sewers are lower than ongoing costs to maintain and replace septic systems			
Very good	--	1	1
Good	2	3	5
Poor	4	2	6
Very poor	3	2	5
An advisory committee has been appointed by the City Council to work with area property owners to find equitable and affordable solutions			
Very good	1	3	4
Good	4	3	7
Poor	3	2	5
Very poor	1	--	1
A coordinated approach to sewerage southeast Bend produces efficiencies and reduces the cost per household			
Very good	2	4	6
Good	5	3	8
Poor	2	1	3
Very poor	--	--	--

Response Category	In Area	Mixed	Total
Other communities across the Pacific Northwest have successfully confronted this same challenge, providing sewer service to much larger areas			
Very good	--	--	--
Good	3	3	6
Poor	5	3	8
Very poor	--	1	1
No response	1	1	2
Most of the sewer construction work can be handled by local contractors, keeping our dollars in the local economy			
Very good	--	2	2
Good	6	3	9
Poor	3	1	4
Very poor	--	1	1
No response	--	1	1
Experience in other communities confirm property values can be expected to increase when the sewer program is completed			
Very good	1	--	1
Good	3	5	8
Poor	3	1	4
Very poor	1	1	2
No response	1	1	2

Starred Responses

Response Category	In Area	Mixed	Total
Sewers enable Bend to meet state and federal regulations	2	2	4
Sewers help protect public health for area homeowners and pets	3	--	3
Sewers contribute to a neighborhood's property values	--	1	1
Southeast Bend's rocky geology isn't well suited to septic systems and makes construction challenging and more costly	--	--	--
The long-term costs for sewers are lower than ongoing costs to maintain and replace septic systems	--	1	1
An advisory committee has been appointed by the City Council to work with area property owners to find equitable and affordable solutions	2	1	3
A coordinated approach to sewerage southeast Bend produces efficiencies and reduces the cost per household	--	2	2
Other communities across the Pacific Northwest have successfully confronted this same challenge, providing sewer service to much larger areas	--	--	--

Response Category	In Area	Mixed	Total
Most of the sewer construction work can be handled by local contractors, keeping our dollars in the local economy	1	--	1
Experience in other communities confirm property values can be expected to increase when the sewer program is completed	1	--	1
No star	--	1	1

Add any additional reasons you have for installing sewers to replace septic systems in southeast Bend

In Area

- Build on property.
- No reasons. I'm against being forced to hook up. My septic has cost \$0.00 in 21 years.
- Perhaps health reasons and pets. My septic has needed VERY LITTLE work in 35 years. Sewer, the annual cost is \$400.00/year
- No response [x6]

Mixed

- Big Brother mentality. Individual can't be responsible.
- Cost per household is fair, not astronomical
- [RE: Most of the sewer construction work can be handled by local contractors, keeping our dollars in the local economy]: Is this true? It's not out-of-area contractors?
- No response [x5]

Appendix N

Written Exercise 13

What final message do you have for Bend's elected leaders about the City's plans for installing sewers to replace septic systems in southeast Bend?

In Area

- First, we were never asked if we wanted it. Nothing has been provided to show NEED. Second, how affordable can it be and how is it going to be paid. Third, what GRANTS and subsidy are available to reduce cost? Fourth, when I purchased the property we were OUTSIDE the city and this problem was not considered.
- I believe it's a good idea for the CITY to do this and not force an area or individual to do so. I know systems do fail and progress is expensive, but we've been paying city taxes as well as everyone else since annexation without representation. WHAT ARE THE TAP FEES?
- I have lived in Bend at my southeast location for 30 years. Only one septic I know of has failed. They need new lines, I have extended line. I think it will continue to operate well, but I would need a new tank soon. What is your timeline for new sewer to my area? What cost could you quote that I could possibly work into my financial outlook that would keep the cost down? What was your original [...]
- I think it is great as long as the city pays for all R/W install costs and allows the homeowner to decide who and when to install service, on their own property (either septic failure, desire to build on each fields, or during landscaping project).
- If we are going to be forced to hook up to the sewer system, the city needs to find a way to pay for it. By grants, bonds, taxes, etc. We were against being annexed into the city and they should pick up the cost. We should be grandfathered in and hooking up to the sewer should be passed on when you sell your home.
- If we have to, we need the original offer that was made to Bend residents.
- The cost of installations are priority options to homeowners if the costs are property owners responsibility. I believe that the property owner should have final say onto the hookup or not to. Provide options for state or federal funding (bonds, etc.) Possibly a grandfather clause to property owners to pass responsibility to the next owner.
- They need to consider the financial impact it will have on property owners. They need to allow the property owners to choose where the sewer enters the property
- This should not go forward unless there is fair cost to homeowners.

Mixed

- 1) Find an effective cost-share that is fair to the homeowner. 2) Find an assistance for the homeowner 3) Think to the structure of keeping word on plans.
- City to put in main lines. Homeowners are there to put line from street to house on their own. Of course, after inspections.
- Consider the cost for older homeowners who are on a fixed income (and have a septic that is faithfully maintained). This cost is prohibitive for them.
- Don't just think about your neighborhood and your needs. As an elected leader, it is your job to think how this affects people in the subject area which includes the economic cost, the time cost and inconvenience.
- Keep costs reasonable for ALL city residents.
- Plan not for today, but for 50 years from now. Get experts to share knowledge.
- The sewer system is an infrastructure that is government's responsibility to provide. Yes, hook up from main system to home is an owner's share, but should not be insisted on. Cost for this share should be affordable and predictable.

- Why not a hybrid of these solutions? Run main lines. Only require hookup after septic systems fail. Defer the cost over time with a small upfront bill for main liners.