



January 6, 2023

To: City of Bend  
From: Michelle Neiss, DHM Research  
Re: City of Bend Community Perceptions Opt-In Survey, #01162

## INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

From December 12–26, 2022, DHM Research conducted an opt-in, online survey of Bend residents. The opt-in survey offered an opportunity for all interested residents to provide feedback to the City by answering the same questions that appeared in a statistically valid and representative survey conducted from December 1–6, 2022.

**Research Methodology:** The opt-in survey consisted of 1,278 Bend residents and took approximately 10 minutes to complete. This is a sufficient sample size to assess voter opinions generally and to review findings by multiple subgroups, including age, gender, and area of the city.

The City of Bend made the opt-in survey available in both English and in Spanish on their website and promoted the survey on social media and with local media outlets.

**Statement of Limitations:** The opt-in survey did not rely on random sampling. Therefore, a margin of error cannot be calculated with confidence. Differences found between demographic groups should be interpreted cautiously.

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

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OPT-IN AND RANDOM-SAMPLE SURVEY

The City of Bend promoted the opt-in version of the survey and made it available in both English and Spanish from December 12–26, 2022. A link to the online survey appeared on the City's website and other outreach materials were used as appropriate. These methods ensured that all Bend residents who were interested in sharing feedback about the City's performance and upcoming priorities had the opportunity to do so.

While the statistically valid random sample survey brings rigor to public opinion research and accurately reflects the demographic makeup of the community, the opt-in online survey serves a valuable and complementary purpose. This type of client-promoted, opt-in survey allows local government leaders to engage with their constituents and elicit comments from thousands of people.

Differences are sure to arise between results from the random sample and the self-selected opt-in sample. While the former is more representative than the latter, both provide valuable context for interpreting the feedback that policy makers may hear at community meetings or in email correspondence.

## Notable differences in sample

There are several key demographic differences between the 1,278 Bend residents who took the opt-in survey and the 400-person random sample. On average, the residents who chose to take the opt-in survey are older, have more years of education, are more likely to live in northwest Bend, and are newer to the city. Specifically:

- **The opt-in sample is skewed towards people with higher levels of education.** Nearly eight in ten in the opt-in sample have a four-year degree or more (79%) compared to less than half of the representative sample. A whopping 38% of the opt-in sample has a graduate degree.
- **Opt-in participants tend to be older** than the representative sample. Over a third in the opt-in sample are 65 or older (35%), and the opt-in sample has proportionately fewer people under the age of 35 (13%) than the representative sample (28%). That said, the opt-in survey is more representative with regards to age than it was in 2020, when just 3% of respondents were under the age of 35.
- **Opt-in participants are slightly more likely to be homeowners** than the representative sample (83% vs. 76%), a pattern probably related to the older sample in the opt-in survey.
- **The opt-in sample also contains more residents who are new to Bend**, despite being older on average: 22% have lived in Bend for less than five years vs. 12% of the representative sample.
- **Opt-in survey participants disproportionately live in the northwest quadrant of the city** (33% vs. 22% of the representative sample), while fewer live in the northeast quadrant (23% vs. 30%). The representative survey used quotas to ensure geographic representation.
- **Reported race/ethnicity was relatively similar between the opt-in and representative samples**—88% of opt-in participants are white, similar to the representative sample (85% white). However, slightly fewer identify as Hispanic or Latino (4% vs 9%). Just three participants out of 1,278 (<1%) took the survey in Spanish, compared to about 3% of the representative sample.
- **There are no notable differences in income or gender identity** between the opt-in sample and the representative sample.

The opt-in survey has a larger sample size than the representative survey, which can provide greater statistical power and give us a glimpse of attitudes among small demographic subgroups. For instance, the opt-in survey includes more than twice as many people of color as the representative survey (n=133 vs. 58), and there are subgroup differences evident in the opt-in sample that are not present in the randomized survey. For example, Latinos in the opt-in sample appear to have more negative views of the City's quality of life and prioritize public safety services less compared to other people of color.

However, these results should be interpreted with caution. Participants have self-selected into the survey and may differ in important ways from the population as a whole. Strategies like including an oversample in the randomized survey or conducting focus groups are more likely to provide accurate and in-depth insights into the views of specific communities.

## Quality of life and service ratings

**Opt-in survey participants are more positive about their quality of life than the representative sample (Q1).** Eight in ten said their quality of life in Bend is *good* (54%) or *excellent* (26%), about ten points more than the randomized survey (70%). The opt-in survey did not capture the decrease in satisfaction seen in the representative sample—positive ratings are about the same as they were in the 2020 opt-in survey (83%).

**The City receives similar grades for its performance from the opt-in survey respondents as the representative sample** (Q2). About four in ten give the City an A (6%) or B grade (37%). Looking at specific City services, opt-in participants' satisfaction levels are slightly higher than the representative sample for police and fire (+6 percentage points), which may reflect the older demographic (Q4). Opt-in survey respondents were also slightly more likely to respond by saying "don't know," a common difference between phone surveys and online surveys.

## Budget and service priorities

**Opt-in survey participants have very similar priorities to the representative sample—with a few key differences.** When asked to choose which service they feel the City should prioritize (Q17), opt-in participants' responses are nearly identical to the representative sample, with housing affordability and long-range planning at the top of the list. They are more likely to rate many services a *high* or *urgent* priority (Q9–16), probably reflecting the fact that they are more engaged with City issues.

**Growth and long-range planning are bigger concerns for opt-in survey participants.** Opt-in participants are more likely to cite growth and development as a top issue facing Bend (23% vs. 13%) and consider long-term planning a *high* or *urgent* priority (71% vs. 62%) (Q3, Q16). However, opt-in participants still do not consider growth a more pressing issue than affordable housing: a plurality would choose affordable housing as the single service the City should prioritize (36%, vs. 21% for long-range planning) (Q17). When it comes to managing future growth, opt-in participants are slightly more concerned about transportation (26% vs. 20%) and protecting scenic vistas (18% vs. 13%) (Q19).

**Affordable housing and homelessness are dominant concerns for opt-in survey participants, though their priorities are slightly different from the representative sample.** Like the representative sample, opt-in participants consider affordable housing a top priority (63% *high* or *urgent* priority) (Q12). They are slightly less likely to consider housing affordability the top issue facing Bend (-5 percentage points), possibly reflecting the smaller proportion of renters (Q3). Opt-in participants prioritize similar solutions to homelessness and housing affordability to the representative sample, but they emphasize *working with the County to ensure access to mental health and addiction services* (+6 percentage points) and *providing shelters for vulnerable populations* (+6) even more (Q20, Q21).

**Transportation is important to younger Bend residents who participated in the opt-in survey.** Opt-in survey participants prioritize sidewalks and bike lanes more than the representative sample (+11 percentage points *high* or *urgent* priority), though they are still low on the priority list (Q11). Younger participants are most concerned about sidewalks and bike lanes (60% *high* or *urgent* priority). Street maintenance and conditions receive similar ratings between the two samples (Q7, Q18). However, while young people were more positive about road maintenance in the representative survey, younger opt-in survey participants give road maintenance lower ratings compared to participants 55 and older.

## Information sources

**Opt-in survey participants are highly informed and rely on multiple news sources.** Compared to the representative sample, opt-in participants were more likely to report using nearly every news source to get information about city issues (Q23). Seventy percent say they read a local newspaper, nearly 20 percentage points more than in the representative sample, and they are also more likely to subscribe to the City e-newsletter (+13). It should be noted that the differences in methodology may have contributed to differences between the opt-in responses and representative responses, since participants find it easier to choose multiple options in an online survey than a phone survey.

**Bend Community Open Link Survey 2022**  
**December 12<sup>th</sup>–26<sup>th</sup>, 2022**  
**Online survey; 10 minutes**  
**N=1,278**  
**DHM Research**  
**#01152**

**LANDING PAGE**

2022 Community Survey

Thank you for taking the time to answer these survey questions. The City of Bend wants to get your feedback about our City and various services we provide. Your input is very important and will help to inform City decisions on issues that are important to the community. We value your candid responses. If you have recently answered these questions on the phone, we thank you for your time. This survey is intended for those who were not contacted earlier, to give everyone an opportunity to share their opinions.

This survey may take up to 10 minutes to complete and will be available until December 26. Your responses are completely confidential and no name or identifying information will be associated with your responses. The online survey is being hosted by an independent, third-party research firm, DHM Research. DHM will also collect and analyze the results.

Thank you for providing your feedback!  
City of Bend

S1. Survey language

Response category	n=1,278
English	100%
Spanish	n=3

**WARM-UP**

1. I'd like to start with a question about quality of life. Would you say Bend, as a place to live, is:

Response category	n=1,278
Excellent	26%
Good	54%
Fair	17%
Poor	3%
Very poor	1%
Don't know	<1%

## GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND PRIORITIES

2. If you were to give the City of Bend a grade for its performance, would you give it an A, meaning excellent, a B for above average, a C for average, a D for below average, or F for failing?

Response category	n=1,278
A	6%
B	37%
C	34%
D	16%
F	5%
Don't know	1%

3. What is the most important issue in Bend that you would like your local government leaders to do something about? **[Open]**

Response category	n=1,278
<b>Social Issues (Net)</b>	<b>54%</b>
Homelessness/hunger	36%
Housing/affordable housing	20%
Healthcare/poor access to healthcare	1%
Race relations	1%
Other social issues	<1%
<b>Growth/Overdevelopment (Net)</b>	<b>23%</b>
Manage growth/Too much development	16%
Upkeep of infrastructure	5%
Land use	3%
Overpopulation/too many people moving in	3%
Sewer/cost to install	<1%
Changes due to new people	<1%
<b>Transportation (Net)</b>	<b>22%</b>
<i>Roads &amp; congestion (Subnet)</i>	<i>14%</i>
Traffic congestion	9%
Road repair/maintenance	5%
Build new roads, expand roads	2%
Other general roads/bridges/ construction	<1%
<i>Public transportation (General)</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>Other transportation (Subnet)</i>	<i>6%</i>
Bicycle issues	4%
Other	2%
<b>Government &amp; Taxes (Net)</b>	<b>9%</b>
Bad government/politicians	6%
High taxes/property taxes	2%
Mismanage money	1%
Other	1%
Crime/public safety	7%
<b>Economy/Jobs (Net)</b>	<b>5%</b>
Cost of living/Inflation	3%
Economy, general	1%

Jobs/unemployment	<1%
Wages – living wages, increased wages	<1%
Other (Economy/Jobs)	<1%
Environment	5%
Drugs/Addiction	1%
<b>School issues (Net)</b>	<b>1%</b>
Fund schools/education	<1%
Other school issues	<1%
COVID/Pandemic	<1%
Gun laws/Measure 114	<1%
Other	<1%
Don't know/Need more information	3%

How would you rate the City of Bend in each of the following areas? Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very poor, 3 is neutral, 5 is excellent, how would you rate the city on providing these services?

**[Randomize]**

Response category	Mean	Top Box (4+5)	Don't know
4. Police and fire service			
n=1,278	4.0	68%	7%
5. Drinking water service			
n=1,278	4.3	72%	9%
6. Sewer service			
n=1,278	3.9	54%	17%
7. Maintaining City streets*			
n=1,278	3.0	35%	1%
8. Building, planning, and permitting service			
n=1,278	2.5	14%	17%

Over the next 10 years, Bend will be facing many issues. The City won't be able to do everything and must identify priorities. I'd like to read a list of services we provide. Should the City give each of the following a low priority, medium priority, high priority, or urgent priority? Please be selective in your rating as funding is limited and remember that we're talking about priorities over the next 10 years. You may have other priorities but please limit your answers for now to just these issues. **[Randomize]**

Response category	Low	Medium	High	Urgent	Not sure
9. Drinking water service					
n=1,278	12%	38%	35%	6%	9%
10. Street maintenance					
n=1,278	3%	38%	45%	13%	1%
11. Sidewalks and bike lanes					
n=1,278	25%	34%	25%	15%	1%
12. Increase availability of affordable housing					
n=1,278	14%	22%	21%	42%	1%
13. Police Department services					
n=1,278	12%	31%	40%	14%	3%

Response category	Low	Medium	High	Urgent	Not sure
14. Fire Department services					
n=1,278	6%	35%	45%	10%	4%
15. Sewer service					
n=1,278	14%	47%	23%	3%	13%
16. Long-range community planning					
n=1,278	5%	21%	39%	32%	2%

## BUDGET

17. Now please tell me which ONE service you feel the city should prioritize to fund? **[Randomize]**

Response category	n=1,278
Increase availability of affordable housing	36%
Long-range community planning	21%
Police Department services	17%
Street maintenance	8%
Sidewalks and bike lanes	8%
Fire Department services	4%
Drinking water service	2%
Sewer service	1%
Don't know	2%

## TRANSPORTATION

18. How would you rate the condition of roads and streets in Bend?

Response category	n=1,278
Excellent	3%
Good	58%
Poor	32%
Very poor	6%
Don't know	<1%

## GROWTH

19. Right now, what should the City of Bend's biggest priority be for better managing its growth?  
**[Randomize]**

Response category	n=1,278
Keeping the region an affordable place to live with access to affordable housing.	28%
Ensuring our roadways and transportation system can handle more people.	26%
Protecting scenic vistas and ability to view the surrounding landscape.	18%
Protecting public safety as more people come to the area.	14%
Creating more living wage jobs and diversifying our economy.	11%
Attracting people of different backgrounds to make our community more diverse.	2%
Don't know	1%

## HOUSING

20. \*\*\*Here is a list of things the City of Bend could be doing to address homelessness. Which two do you think should be the top priorities? **[Allow up to two responses] [Randomize 1-5]**

Response category	n=1,278
Work with the County to ensure access to mental health and addiction services	59%
Provide shelters for vulnerable populations	30%
Provide grants to non-profits to provide services to people experiencing homelessness	29%
Create additional organized camp facilities for people experiencing homelessness	25%
Provide safe parking spaces where people can sleep in their vehicles	8%
None of these	12%
Don't know	3%



21. \*\*\*Here is a list of things the City of Bend could be doing to address housing affordability. Which two do you think should be the top priorities? **[Allow up to two responses] [Randomize 1–5]**

Response category	n=1,278
Provide housing for lower- and middle-income Bend residents	35%
Create programs and services to help middle class residents better afford housing	34%
Provide housing for specific vulnerable groups of people, such as senior citizens or families with children	29%
Make it easier to build more housing in Bend	22%
Provide financial support for new affordable housing developments	22%
None of these	15%
Don't know	4%

22. \*\*\*I'm going to read you two statements. Please tell me which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view: **[Rotate]**

Response category	n=1,278
The City of Bend's plan to address housing affordability and houselessness needs to prioritize providing the social services needed to address the problem, such as counseling, housing, case management, financial education, and life skills	57%
The City of Bend's plan to address housing affordability and houselessness needs to prioritize creating the facilities needed to address the problem: shelters and affordable housing	32%
Don't know	11%

## COMMUNICATIONS

23. Where do you get information about City issues in Bend? Indicate all that apply. [Randomize 1–10]

Response category	n=1,278
Local newspaper (daily Bend Bulletin or The Source Weekly)	70%
TV	45%
Friends/Family	40%
City social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	36%
City government's e-newsletter (eNews, The Bend Current)	32%
City Website	29%
Neighborhood association	24%
Radio	19%
Nextdoor App	19%
Other newspaper mentions	14%
Reddit	6%
Other	7%
Don't know	1%

## DEMOGRAPHICS

These last few questions are to make sure we have a valid sample of the community. It's important that we collect answers to all of these questions. Your information is completely confidential and anonymous.

24. How many years have you lived in Bend?

Response category	n=1,278
Less than 5	22%
5–9	23%
10–19	24%
20+	31%
Don't know	n=4

25. Do you rent or own your home?

Response category	n=1,278
Rent	16%
Own	83%
Prefer not to say	1%

26. Do you live in the Northwest, Southwest, Northeast, or Southeast area of Bend?

**If needed:** Please use the location where Highway 97 and Colorado Avenue meet as a reference point to divide the city into quadrants.

Response category	n=1,278
Northwest	33%
Southwest	18%
Northeast	23%
Southeast	24%
Refused	2%

27. For most days of the week, what is your main mode of transportation?

Response category	n=1,278
Driving in a car or truck alone	68%
Driving in a car or truck with others	20%
Bicycle	6%
Walking	4%
Other mode	1%
Refused	1%

28. What is your age? **[If refused: Into which of the following groups does your age fall? Read list].**

Response category	n=1,278
18–24	n=1
25–34	12%
35–54	32%
55–64	19%
65+	35%
Refused	1%

29. What's the highest level of education you've obtained?

Response category	n=1,278
Less than high school	n=1
High school diploma	3%
Some college	16%
College degree	41%
Graduate/professional school	38%
Prefer not to say	1%

30. Do you describe your gender as:

Response category	n=1,278
Male	48%
Female	48%
Non-binary or gender non-conforming	1%
Other	1%
Refused	2%

31. Which category best describes your 2021 gross household income, before taxes? Remember to include everyone living in your household. Your best estimate will do.

Response category	n=1,278
Less than \$25,000	3%
\$25,000 to less than \$50,000	10%
\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	15%
\$75,000 to less than \$100,000	17%
\$100,000 to less than \$150,000	23%
\$150,000 or more	27%
Refused	6%

32. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity? Choose all that apply. **[Allow for multiple responses]**

Response category	n=1,278
African	n=3
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%
Black/African American	n=6
Hispanic/Latino	4%
Middle Eastern/North African	n=4
Native American/American Indian	2%
White/Caucasian	88%
Other	3%
Don't know	1%
Refused	4%

## CLOSING PAGE

Thank you for your time! Findings are shared with the Bend City Council to influence their goals for the next two years.