

January 8, 2025

To: City of Bend
From: Tony Iaccarino and David Phan, DHM Research
Re: City of Bend Community Survey (Opt-in), #00847

Introduction and Methodology

From December 9-27, 2024, 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 2-8, 2024.

Research Methodology

The opt-in survey consisted of 1,335 Bend residents and took approximately 10 minutes to complete. This is a sufficient sample size to assess residents' opinions generally and to review findings by multiple subgroups including by age, gender, race, education level, income, and area of the City.

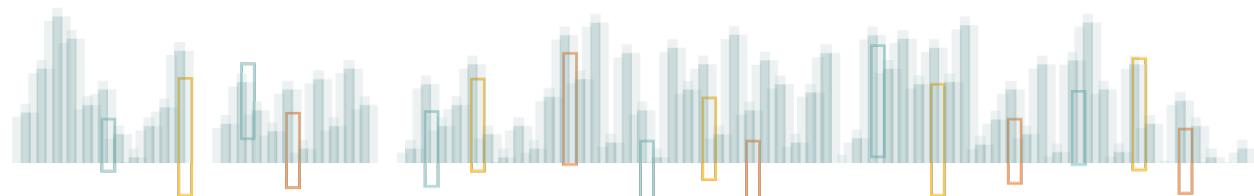
The City of Bend made the opt-in survey available in both English and Spanish on their website and promoted the survey through numerous channels.

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 9–27, 2024. A link to the online survey appeared on the City's website and other outreach methods 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 accurately reflects the demographic makeup of the community, the opt-in 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 policymakers may receive at community meetings, via email, or via social media.

Notable Differences in Sample

There are several key differences between the 1,335 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, less likely to identify as people of color, less likely to be lower income, have more years of education, and are more likely to be homeowners. Specifically:

- **Opt-in participants are older** than the representative sample. Over a third of the opt-in sample are 55+ (53% vs. 38%), and the opt-in sample has proportionately fewer under the age of 35 (7% vs. 25%).
- **Opt-in participants are less likely to identify as people of color** than the representative sample (9% vs. 17%). Part of this may be due to the fact that there was a higher percentage of opt-in respondents who preferred not to describe their race or ethnicity (15% vs. 3%).
- **Opt-in participants are less likely to be lower income** than the representative sample (8% vs. 14%).
- **Opt-in participants are more highly educated** than the representative sample. Eight in ten in the opt-in sample have a four-year degree or more (81% vs. 45%), and the opt-in sample has fewer with a high-school degree or less (3% vs. 22%).
- **Opt-in participants are slightly more likely to be homeowners** than the representative sample (85% vs. 78%), a pattern likely related to the older sample in the opt-in survey.

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 smaller demographic subgroups. For instance, while the opt-in survey has a smaller percentage of people of color than the representative survey, it includes more people of color than the representative survey (n=114 vs. n=69).

However, the results from these groups should be interpreted with caution. Opt-in participants have self-selected into the survey and may differ in important ways from the more representative sample. Strategies like using 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 participants are slightly less positive about their quality of life than the representative sample. Just over seven in ten (74%) say their quality of life in Bend is good or excellent, seven points less than in the representative survey (81%). Within the opt-in survey, white residents are more likely than residents who identify as people of color to say their quality of life is good or excellent (79% v. 60%). Within the opt-in survey, Northwest and Southwest residents (81% and 75%) are also more likely than Northeast and Southeast residents (70% and 69%) to say their quality of life is good or excellent.

Opt-in participants give lower ratings to the City for its overall job performance than the representative sample. Nearly four in ten opt-in participants give the City an A (5%) or B grade (33%), compared to more than five in ten in the representative sample who give the City an A (11%) or B grade (43%). This is likely due to a smaller percentage of younger residents in the opt-in survey than in the representative survey, with younger residents generally more positive than older residents about the City's performance. Within the opt-in survey, white residents are more likely than residents who identify as people of color to give the City an overall combined A or B grade (45% vs. 25%). Within the opt-in survey, Northwest (44%), Southwest (38%), and Northeast residents (37%) are also more likely than Southeast residents (31%) to give the City an overall combined A or B grade. When it comes to specific services, opt-in participants rate them roughly similarly to the representative sample, giving the following either a score of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale: water service (62% vs. 70%), police and fire (69% vs. 68%), transportation system maintenance (20% vs. 26%), and building, planning, and permitting services (12% v. 14%).

Budget and Service Priorities

Opt-in participants have similar priorities to the representative sample, but they are less likely to prioritize affordable housing and more likely to prioritize fire and police services. Asked to rate individual service priorities over the next ten years, opt-in participants are less likely than the representative sample to rate increasing the availability of affordable housing as either a high or urgent priority (48% vs. 61%), perhaps because more opt-in participants already own their own homes. Opt-in participants are also more likely to rate fire services (63% vs. 55%) and police services (56% vs. 45%) as high or urgent priorities. Asked to identify the one service the City should most prioritize, both long-range community planning and affordable housing top the list for both opt-in participants and the representative sample. Still, fewer opt-in participants as compared to the representative sample rank affordable housing as the number-one issue (23% vs. 35%), again, likely because opt-in participants are more likely to be homeowners.

Opt-in participants are more likely to rank the protection of open spaces and natural areas as the top priority for managing growth. Both opt-in participants and the representative sample share the same top three priorities for managing growth: keeping the region affordable through access to affordable housing, ensuring roadways can handle more people, and protecting open spaces. They simply rank these top three differently. For opt-in participants, protecting open spaces and natural areas is the top priority for managing growth (31% vs. 23%), while for the representative sample keeping the region affordable through access to affordable housing is the top priority for managing growth (25% vs. 16%). Again, these differences are likely attributable to the fact that homeowners are overrepresented in the opt-in survey and may feel less committed to using land for additional housing.

Opt-in participants who bike, walk, or bus as their primary mode of transportation give lower ratings for pedestrian and bike safety. In the representative survey, there are no significant differences between those who primarily use transportation alternatives as opposed to those who primarily drive alone when it comes to their ratings of pedestrian and bike safety (59% vs. 65%). However, the number of respondents who primarily bike, walk, or bus is larger in the opt-in sample than in the representative sample (n=117 vs. n=31, making meaningful subgroup comparisons easier in the opt-in survey. Opt-in participants who use transportation alternatives are less likely than those who primarily drive alone to rate bike and pedestrian safety highly (39% vs. 65%).

Information and Engagement

Opt-in participants are more likely to get information from the City's e-newsletter and to provide feedback on City policies or projects. There are no significant differences between opt-in and representative sample participants when it comes to how they get information from the City or engage with the City, except in two key areas: opt-in participants are more likely to get information from the City's e-newsletter (33% vs. 24%) and to provide feedback on City policies or projects (52% vs. 32%). Since the e-newsletter was a vehicle for opt-in survey distribution, which also gave residents an opportunity to comment on City priorities, this finding is not entirely surprising. Nevertheless, the findings also highlight the value of the City's e-newsletter as a vehicle for sharing information and providing residents with opportunities to engage.

Bend Community Opt-in Survey 2024

December 9 - 27, 2024

10 minutes

N=1335

DHM Research

#00847

S1. What language would you like to take the survey in?

Response category	n=1335
English	100%
Spanish	--

LANDING PAGE

2024 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 27. 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

INTRODUCTION

Hi, my name is ___ and I'm calling to ask some questions about important issues in the City of Bend. I'm not selling anything, and this shouldn't take too long. **[Anyone age 18+ qualifies]**

As needed:

- We are not trying to sell you anything.
- The survey should only take a few minutes and I think you will find the questions interesting.
- Your answers are strictly confidential.

If at any time you are unsure of your answer, just let us know.

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=1335
Total Excellent/Good	74%
Excellent	21%
Good	52%
Fair	20%
Total Poor/Very poor	6%
Poor	5%
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=1335
A+B	38%
A	5%
B	33%
C	33%
D	20%
F	8%
Don't know	1%

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, and 5 is excellent, how would you rate the city on providing these services?

Response category	Mean	Top box (4+5)	Don't know
4. Police and fire service			
n=1335	4.1	69%	9%
5. ***Water service			
n=1335	4.0	62%	11%
6. ***Maintaining City transportation system			
n=1335	2.7	20%	19%
7. Building, planning, and permitting service			
n=1335	2.3	12%	16%

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.

Response category	Low	Medium	High	Urgent	NET High + Urgent	Don't know
8. Drinking water service						
n=1335	10%	33%	44%	7%	51%	6%
9. Street maintenance						
n=1335	3%	29%	51%	15%	67%	1%
10. Sidewalks and bike lanes						
n=1335	42%	32%	18%	8%	26%	1%
11. Increase availability of affordable housing						
n=1335	23%	28%	20%	27%	48%	1%
12. Police Department services						
n=1335	8%	34%	45%	11%	56%	3%
13. Fire Department services						
n=1335	5%	29%	51%	12%	63%	4%
14. ***Stormwater and wastewater services						
n=1335	17%	49%	24%	3%	27%	7%
15. Long-range community planning						
n=1335	8%	26%	39%	25%	64%	2%
16. ***Strategies to address climate change						
n=1335	49%	20%	15%	14%	29%	1%

BUDGET

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

Response category	n=1335
Long-range community planning	24%
Increase availability of affordable housing	23%
Street maintenance	17%
Police Department services	15%
Fire Department services	6%
***Strategies to address climate change	6%
Drinking water services	5%
Sidewalks and bike lanes	4%
***Stormwater and wastewater services	<1%

TRANSPORTATION

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

Response category	n=1335
Total Excellent/Good	65%
Excellent	3%
Good	62%
Total Poor/Very poor	35%
Poor	28%
Very poor	7%
Don't know	<1%

19. ***How would you rate pedestrian and bike safety in Bend?

Response category	n=1335
Total Excellent/Good	63%
Excellent	10%
Good	53%
Total Poor/Very poor	30%
Poor	25%
Very poor	5%
Don't know	7%

GROWTH

20. Right now, what should the City of Bend's biggest priority be for better managing its growth?

Response category	n=1335
***Protecting open spaces and natural areas	31%
Ensuring our roadways and transportation system can handle more people	28%
Keeping the region an affordable place to live with access to affordable housing	16%
Protecting public safety as more people come to the area	13%
Creating more living wage jobs and diversifying our economy	9%
Attracting people of different backgrounds to make our community more diverse	1%
Don't know	1%

HOUSING

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]**

Response category	n=1335
***Support construction of lower- and middle-income housing through incentives	36%
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	24%
Make it easier to build more housing in Bend	22%
None of these	21%
Provide financial support for new affordable housing developments	10%
Don't know	3%

CLIMATE

22. ***Here is a list of things the City of Bend could be doing at the local level to address climate change. Which TWO do you think should be the top priorities?

Response category	n=1335
Encouraging energy efficiency in new homes and buildings and supporting energy efficient upgrades to existing homes and buildings	47%
Reducing waste in construction and demolition, and helping residents both prevent waste and recycle and compost the waste they do create	35%
None of these	30%
Reducing emissions from transportation by promoting electric vehicle adoption, ridesharing, walking, biking, and transit	20%
Transitioning the entire community to renewable energy for all power needs	17%
Don't know	3%

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

23. Where do you get information about City issues in Bend? Indicate ALL that apply.

Response category	n=1335
Local newspaper (daily Bend Bulletin or The Source Weekly)	63%
TV	46%
Friends/Family	36%
City social media (Facebook, X, Instagram)	35%
City government's e-newsletter (eNews, The Bend Current)	33%
City Website	30%
Nextdoor	27%
***Neighborhood District (formerly known as Neighborhood Association)	25%
Radio	19%
***City-hosted events	16%
Other newspaper mentions	15%
Other	8%
Reddit	2%
Don't know	1%

24. ****How do you engage with the City of Bend? Indicate ALL that apply.

Response category	n=1335
Following City updates through social media or e-newsletters	61%
Providing feedback on City policies or projects	52%
Participating in public meetings or forums	29%
Attending City events	28%
Don't know	9%
Other	8%
Volunteering on a City advisory committee	4%

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.

25. How many years have you lived in Bend?

Response category	n=1335
Less than 5	15%
5-9	22%
10-19	24%
20+	39%
Don't know	<1%

26. Do you rent or own your home, or do you have a different arrangement?

Response category	n=1335
Rent	10%
Own	85%
Different arrangement	2%
Prefer not to say	2%

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

Response category	n=1335
Northwest	35%
Southwest	21%
Northeast	19%
Southeast	19%
Prefer not to say	5%

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

Response category	n=1335
Driving in a car or truck alone	66%
Driving in a car or truck with others	24%
Bicycle	4%
Walking	5%
Bus or public transportation	<1%
Other mode	1%
Don't know	<1%

29. What is your age?

Response category	n=1335
18-24	1%
25-34	6%
35-54	30%
55-64	19%
65+	34%
Prefer not to say	10%

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

Response category	n=1335
Less than high school	<1%
High school diploma	2%
Some college	13%
College degree	41%
Graduate/professional school	40%
Prefer not to say	4%

31. How do you describe your gender?

Response category	n=1335
Man	39%
Woman	53%
Non-binary or gender non-conforming	1%
Another way [Open]	<1%
Prefer not to say	7%

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

Response category	n=1335
Less than \$25,000	1%
\$25,000 to less than \$50,000	7%
\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	11%
\$75,000 to less than \$100,000	15%
\$100,000 to less than \$150,000	21%
\$150,000 or more	27%
Prefer not to say	19%

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

Response category	n=1335
African	<1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1%
Black/African American	1%
Hispanic/Latino	4%
Middle Eastern/North African	<1%
Native American/American Indian	2%
White/Caucasian	80%
Other	2%
Not sure	<1%
Prefer not to say	15%
White Alone	76%
People of Color	9%

CLOSING

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