

City of Portland Public Budget Survey FY2011-12

1. INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM Research) conducted a telephone survey of Portland residents to assess their feelings about the community and the City's budget priorities to assist the City of Portland with its biennial budget development.

Research Methodology: Between March 10 and March 15, 2011, DHM conducted a telephone survey of 500 residents in the City of Portland ages 18 and older. The interviews averaged 13 minutes to administer. Residents were contacted through multiple sampling techniques including Random Digit Dial (RDD), cell phone numbers, and targeted sampling to ensure a broad and representative cross section of residents had the opportunity to be contacted. Quotas were set by age, gender, area of city, and ethnicity based on the total population of residents for a valid sample.

In gathering responses, DHM Research employed quality control measures, including questionnaire pre-testing, callbacks, and validations.

Statement of Limitations: Any sampling of opinions or attitudes is subject to a margin of error, which represents the difference between a sample of a given population and the total population, here residents of Portland. For a sample size of 500, if respondents answered a particular question in the proportion of 90% one way and 10% the other, the margin of error would be +/-2.6%, at the 95% confidence level. If they answered 50% each way, the margin of error would be 4.4%.¹

These plus-minus error margins represent differences between the sample and total population at a confidence interval, or probability, calculated to be 95%. This means that there is a 95% probability that the sample taken for this study would fall within the stated margins of error if compared with the results achieved from surveying the entire population.

DHM Research: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM Research) has been providing opinion research and consultation throughout the Pacific Northwest and other regions of the United States for over three decades. The firm is non-partisan and independent and specializes in research projects to support public policy making. www.dhmresearch.com

¹ The reason for the difference lies in the fact that when response categories are relatively even in size, each is numerically smaller and thus slightly less able-on a statistical basis- to approximate the larger population.

2. PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Residents continue to have concern about Portland's economy.

- Five in 10 (49%) residents think the economy in Portland is either in a mild (33%) or severe (16%) recession (Q1). Another four in 10 think it is either in an economic recovery (19%) or not getting any better or worse at this time (19%). Seven percent (7%) think the city is in a depression.

Over one in 10 residents said the most important park improvements are community gardens, trails, natural habitats, play equipment, and sports fields.

- When asked what one park improvement they would like to see in their neighborhood (Q7), more or better community gardens was rated most important by 16% of residents, followed by more or better trails and paths (12%), natural and wildlife habitats (11%), more play equipment (10%), more or better sports fields (10%), picnic areas (6%), and a park in their neighborhood (3%).

Majorities of residents agree that more money should be directed to neighborhoods with the greatest needs for services like parks, street maintenance, and water and sewer infrastructure.

- Residents were read two statements about directing funds for city services like parks, street maintenance, and water and sewer infrastructure improvements and were asked which comes closer to their point of view (Q2). Sixty-eight percent (68%) said the city should spend more money providing these services in neighborhoods with the greatest needs, while 29% said the city should spending the money equally throughout the city based on the number of individuals in each neighborhood.
- Specifically, 83% said the city should spend money on adding sidewalks in neighborhood areas that have the greatest need for them, 74% said the same of improving sidewalks, 68% for improving parks, and 65% for adding a park in neighborhoods that currently do not have one (Q3-Q6).
- Five in 10 (50%) residents agree that there are enough public resources invested in their neighborhoods to help local businesses, while 37% disagree and 14% are unsure (Q9). A majority of residents are soft in their opinion of either "somewhat agreeing" (36%) or "somewhat disagreeing" (24%).

Residents' opinions are divided about the leaf pick up fee. They are more negative about graffiti removal fees.

- While 47% of residents said that neighborhoods which get leaf pick up service should pay a fee, another 48% disagree with the fee (Q10).
- A majority (56%) do not agree that the city should fine private property owners for not removing graffiti on their property within 10 days after the City's official notification to remove it, with 37% who "strongly" disagree with this (Q15). Four in 10 (40%) are in agreement with this fee, and 4% aren't sure.

Majorities support the use of cameras in high crime areas to discourage criminal activity. The top priorities for police services are crime prevention, gang activity, and drug activity.

- Almost seven in 10 (69%) either "strongly" (44%) or "somewhat" (26%) support using cameras in high crime areas of the city as way to discourage criminal activity and aid in identifying those involved in a crime (Q16). Twenty-eight percent oppose this.
- Crime prevention is considered the most important priority needing increased police services by 28% of residents (Q14), followed by gang activity (20%), and drug activity (18%). These issues are followed by traffic safety (15%), burglary (12%), and theft from vehicles (7%).

Residents' support is divided about the creation of an urban renewal district surrounding Portland State University.

- Forty-nine percent (49%) of residents support the creation of an urban renewal district surrounding PSU, with pluralities (31%) only “somewhat” supporting this (Q8). Just over four in 10 (42%) are in opposition, with strength of opposition divided almost evenly between “somewhat” and “strongly.”

Majorities support transferring the responsibility of patrolling the Willamette River from Multnomah County to the City of Portland.

- Just over two-thirds (67%) support transferring the patrol of the Willamette River from the County to the City at an annual cost of \$1.8 million to free up county budget funds for mental, health, and human services and public safety (Q13). Approximately one-quarter (23%) are opposed to this.

Residents are divided in their opinions about the City taking over the operation of Willamette River bridges from the County.

- A narrow plurality (45%) support transferring the maintenance and operation of bridges from the County to the City, while 37% are in opposition (Q11). “Strong” support and opposition are equal to this proposal at around 20%. Residents’ sentiments do not change about this knowing that other than the operation and maintenance of these bridges, the county is not responsible for any part of the transportation system in the city (Q12).

A narrow majority of residents agree that racial equality and equal access to opportunity are problems and city government should try to address them.

- When read three statements about racial equality and equal access to opportunity in the city and asked to choose which comes closest to their point of view (Q17), 52% said this issue is a problem in Portland that city government should address. The remaining 43% said either it is not a problem in the city (21%) or that even if it is a problem, it should not be a focus for city government (22%), or they didn’t know (5%).
- Thirty-six percent (36%) said the city is making progress when it comes to discrimination against minorities (Q18), but the remainder thinks this issue is about the same as it has been in the past (48%) or that we are losing ground (8%).

3. ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE

**City of Portland general population (RDD + cell phone sample)
 March 10-15, 2011 N=500; 13 minutes; margin of error 4.4%
 Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM Research)**

****Indicates questions in the Portland Curbsider.**

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling on behalf of DHM, a firm that conducts opinion research in the state of Oregon. We are not trying to sell anything. Your opinions are important to us and we would like to ask you a few questions about local issues. You may be assured of complete anonymity and confidentiality. May I please speak to someone in the household that is 18 years or older?

- S1. Are you 18 years of age or older?
 Yes ----- 1 [CONTINUE]
 No ----- 2 [TERMINATE]
 [Don't Read] Refused----- 3 [TERMINATE]
- S2. Do you live in the city of Portland?
 Yes ----- 1 [CONTINUE]
 No ----- 2 [TERMINATE]
 [Don't Read] Refused----- 3 [TERMINATE]
- S3. Land line or Cell? **(Record from sample)**
 Yes ----- 1 **(20%)**
 No ----- 2 **(80%)**

Warm Up

1. Which of the following statements reflects how you feel about the economy in Portland? **(Read list; accept 1 response)**

Response Category	N=500
It is an economic recovery	19%
It is getting neither better or worse at this time	19%
It is in a mild recession	33%
It is in a severe recession	16%
It is in a depression	7%
None of these	2%
Don't know	3%

Neighborhood Investment & Parks

2. I am going to read you two statements. Please tell me which comes closer to your view. **(Wait and ask)** Is that strongly or somewhat? **(Rotate statements; accept 1 response)**

Response Category	N=500
A. For services like parks and recreation, street maintenance, and water and sewer infrastructure improvements, the city should spend more money providing these services <u>equally</u> throughout the city based on the number of individuals in each neighborhood.	
Strongly	13%
Somewhat	15%
B. Because some neighborhoods are in worse shape than others, for city services like parks and recreation, street maintenance, and water and sewer infrastructure improvements, the city should spend more money providing these services to those <u>neighborhoods with the greatest needs</u>.	
Strongly	28%
Somewhat	40%
Don't know	3%

Now, I am going to read to you a list of neighborhood needs. For each, please tell me if the city should spend money on those neighborhoods with the greatest need, even if it means that some neighborhoods may get less money than others. **(Randomize Q3-Q6)**

Response Category (N=500)	Yes	No	Don't know
3. Improving parks	68%	29%	3%
4. Adding a park in neighborhoods that currently don't have one	65%	32%	3%
5. Improving neighborhood sidewalks	74%	23%	2%
6. Adding sidewalks in neighborhood areas that have need for them	83%	16%	2%

7. ****Which of the following park improvements would you most like to see in your neighborhood? (Randomize options; accept one)**

Response Category	N=500
More or better community gardens	16%
Available restrooms	14%
More or better trails and paths	12%
Revert to natural and wild habitat	11%
Play equipment	10%
More or better sports fields	10%
More or better picnic or event areas	6%
Would like a park located in my neighborhood	3%
Other (Specified)	7%

Now I'd like to ask you a question about urban renewal. Urban renewal districts are formed in areas of cities to help stimulate and pay for redevelopment and job growth and enhance livability.

8. Do you support or oppose creating an urban renewal district surrounding Portland State University to support its research and development, as well as businesses in the surrounding area? This urban renewal district would be funded using local property taxes combined with other public and private investment. **(Wait and ask)** Is that strongly or somewhat?

Response Category	N=500
Strongly support	18%
Somewhat support	31%
Somewhat oppose	22%
Strongly oppose	21%
Don't know	9%

9. Overall, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that there are enough public resources invested to help local businesses in your neighborhood?

Response Category	N=500
Strongly agree	14%
Somewhat agree	36%
Somewhat disagree	24%
Strongly disagree	12%
Don't know	14%

10. **The city charges a fee to sweep street leaves in selected neighborhoods around Portland. Should neighborhoods that get leaf pick up services pay a fee? **(Yes/No)**

Response Category	N=500
Yes	47%
No	48%
Don't know	5%

Bridge Operation & Maintenance

11. Bridges like the Broadway, Burnside, Hawthorne, Morrison, and Sellwood are operated and maintained by Multnomah County, and all roads leading to and from the bridges are maintained by the City of Portland. Would you support or oppose the responsibility of operating and maintaining these bridges being transferred to the City of Portland? **(Wait and ask)** Is that strongly or somewhat?

Response Category	N=500
Strongly support	19%
Somewhat support	26%
Somewhat oppose	17%
Strongly oppose	20%
Don't know	18%

12. Besides the operation and maintenance of these bridges, Multnomah County is not responsible for any part of the transportation system in the City of Portland. Knowing this, would you support or oppose the responsibility of operating and maintaining the Broadway, Burnside, Hawthorne, Morrison, and Sellwood bridges being transferred to the City of Portland? **(Wait and ask)** Is that strongly or somewhat?

Response Category	N=500
Strongly support	17%
Somewhat support	29%
Somewhat oppose	19%
Strongly oppose	22%
Don't know	13%

Public Safety

13. The City of Portland currently has a one-time budget surplus, while Multnomah County has a budget deficit. There is a proposal for the City of Portland to take responsibility for patrolling the Willamette River from Multnomah County at an ongoing annual cost of \$1.8 million so that the County will not have to make more service cuts to mental health, human services, and public safety. Do you support or oppose this proposal? **(Wait and ask)** Is that strongly or somewhat?

Response Category	N=500
Strongly support	32%
Somewhat support	34%
Somewhat oppose	10%
Strongly oppose	13%
Don't know	10%

14. **I am going to read to you a list of priorities that your neighborhood could benefit from increased police services. After I read the list a second time, please rank them in order of importance, with 1 being most important to 6 being least important. **(Randomize items; respondent should rank 1-6)**

Response Category (N=500)	Most Important	2 nd Most Important	3 rd Most Important	4 th Most Important	5 th Most Important	6 th Most important
Crime prevention	28%	17%	20%	14%	10%	11%
Gang activity	20%	17%	18%	12%	15%	19%
Drug activity	18%	24%	12%	15%	18%	12%
Traffic safety	15%	11%	12%	16%	22%	24%
Burglary	12%	21%	21%	20%	15%	11%
Theft from vehicles	7%	11%	17%	22%	19%	24%

15. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that the City of Portland should fine private property owners for not removing graffiti on their property within 10 days after the City's official notification to remove the graffiti?

Response Category	N=500
Strongly agree	19%
Somewhat agree	21%
Somewhat disagree	19%
Strongly disagree	37%
Don't know	4%

16. Would you strongly oppose, somewhat oppose, somewhat support, or strongly support the use of cameras in high crime areas of the city as a way to discourage criminal activity and aid in identifying those involved in a crime?

Response Category	N=500
Strongly oppose	18%
Somewhat oppose	10%
Somewhat support	26%
Strongly support	44%
Don't know	3%

City Equality

17. I am going to read you three statements related to issues of racial equality and access to equal opportunity for all residents in the city of Portland. Please tell me which comes closest to your point of view. **(Rotate statements)**

Response Category	N=500
A. Racial inequality and access to equal opportunity for all residents is a problem in the city, and city government should try to address it	52%
B. Regardless of whether or not racial inequality and access to equal opportunity for all residents is a problem in the city, this should not be a focus for city government.	22%
C. Racial inequality and access to equal opportunity for all residents is not a problem in the city	21%
Don't know	5%

18. In thinking about discrimination against minorities do you think the Portland is making progress, losing ground, or are things about the same as they have been in the past? (PEW benchmark)

Response Category	N=500
Making progress	36%
Losing ground	8%
About the same	48%
Don't know	7%

Demographics

Finally, I need some background information for statistical purposes only to make sure we have a valid sample. Remember, all your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

19. What is the name of your neighborhood park? **(Record name or do not have neighborhood park)**

Response Category	N=500
Laurelhurst	7%
Mt. Tabor	4%
Alberta	4%
Wilshire	3%
Fern Hill	3%
Peninsula Park	3%
Woodlawn	2%
Sewallcrest	2%
Berkeley	2%
Grant Park	2%
Sellwood	2%
Woodstock	2%
Brooklyn	2%
All other responses	1% or less
None/nothing	1%
Don't know	17%

20. Gender **(BY OBSERVATION)**

Response Category	N=500	Actual % of population ages 18 and older (US Census 2006-2008)
Male	49%	49.3%
Female	51%	50.7%

21. In what age group are you?

Response Category	N=500	Actual % of population ages 18 and older (US Census 2006-2008)
18-24	8%	10.2%
25-34	19%	20.3%
35-44	15%	21.3%
45-54	26%	19.4%
55-64	17%	15.3%
65 and above	14%	13.2%
Refused	1%	--

22. Do you live in...(read list)

Response Category	N=500
In Southwest/Northwest Portland	15%
In North Portland	10%
East of the Willamette River, between I-5 and 50 th Avenue	49%
East of 50 th Avenue	25%
Don't know/Refused	1%

23. Are you of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin?

Response Category	N=500	Actual % of population ages 18 and older (US Census 2010)
Yes	11%	7.5%
No	88%	92.5%
Refused	2%	--

24. What is your race or ethnicity?

Response Category	N=500	Actual % of population ages 18 and older (US Census 2010)
Asian or Pacific Islander	5%	7.3%
American Indian / Native	1%	1.0%
Black / African American	6%	5.6%
White / Caucasian	76%	79.3%
Hispanic / Latino	8%	7.5%
Two or more races/other	2%	7.5%
Refused	2%	--

25. How long have you lived in the Portland area?

Response Category	N=500
2 years or less	6%
3-5 years	7%
6-10 years	12%
11-20 years	23%
21 years or more	51%
Refused	1%

26. What is the highest level of education you have had the opportunity to complete?

Response Category	N=500
8 th grade or less	1%
Some High School	2%
High School graduate	17%
Some college/technical/community college/2-year degree	29%
College/4 year degree	29%
Post graduate	20%
Refused	1%

27. How many children under age 18 live in your household? **(Record Number)**

Response Category	N=500
None	62%
1	14%
2	17%
3 or more	7%

28. Which category best describes your 2010 gross household income, before taxes? Remember to include everyone living in your household. Your best estimate will do.

Response Category	N=500	Actual % of population ages (US Census 2006-2008)
Less than \$24,999	18%	25.4%
\$25,000-\$49,999	30%	25.5%
\$50,000-\$74,999	18%	18.4%
\$75,000-\$99,999	13%	11.7%
\$100,000-\$149,999	9%	11.0%
\$150,000+	7%	8.1%
Refused	4%	--

29. What is your zip code? **(RECORD)**

30. What is the closest intersection to where you live? **(Record two streets _____ & _____)**

31. Are you registered to vote?

Response Category	N=500
Yes	88%
No	11%
Don't know	1%