

2007 RESIDENT SURVEY – Methodology

The City Auditor's annual Resident Survey was conducted for the 17th year in 2007. Questions on the survey correspond to the goals of the 11 Portland bureaus and the Portland Development Commission which are covered in the Auditor's annual Service Efforts and Accomplishments report. The results are intended to indicate how well goals were met.

The survey was mailed to randomly selected addresses, with a letter from the City Auditor explaining the purpose of the survey and how to complete it. We asked respondents to remove the address page of the survey so that returned surveys would be anonymous.

This is the second time we surveyed at the neighborhood level, as opposed to the more general coalition level (the first time was in 2005). There are 95 neighborhoods in Portland. Because several have small populations, we grouped some together, for a total of 75 neighborhoods and/or groups of neighborhoods.

The Auditor's annual Service Efforts and Accomplishments report includes

information summarized at the citywide level, with 10 years of historical data. Results for the 75 individual neighborhood groups are available in bar charts at www.portlandonline.com/auditor/auditservices.

Response rate

In August 2007, we mailed approximately 850 introductory postcards and surveys to residents in each of these 75 neighborhood areas. A total of 64,302 surveys were sent out. We sent a reminder survey a few weeks later. Any postcard or survey returned to us as undeliverable (due to bad addresses, etc.) was taken out of the survey calculations. There were approximately 2,000 removed. A total of 20,400 surveys were returned, for an overall response rate of 33 percent. The response rates in the individual neighborhoods varied from 21 percent to 50 percent.

Reliability of survey

For the citywide survey sample size of 20,400, the survey accuracy (at the conventional 95 percent confidence level) is ± 1 percent. Within any of the seven coalitions, the survey accuracy is ± 3 percent. Within the 75 smaller neighborhoods, the accuracy is between ± 5 percent and ± 8 percent.

Neighborhood sampling methodology

We sent an equal number of surveys to residents in each of the 75 neighborhood areas. The households that received surveys were randomly chosen from all available addresses in each neighborhood. The cover letter asked that the adult with the most recent birthday fill out the survey, helping to randomize responses in each household. Because the sampling was designed for neighborhood level reporting, adjustments should be made prior to collapsing neighborhoods into larger groupings. The neighborhoods vary greatly in population, and simply combining their survey results to represent the seven coalitions, or the entire city,

would be misleading. Without weighting, neighborhoods with very large (or very small) populations would be over (or under) represented. All of the results presented in the SEA report are from data weighted proportionately to neighborhood populations from 2000 Census data.

Representativeness of respondents

We compared demographic information supplied by the respondents to Census data in order to assess how closely our sample matches official census demographics. On a citywide level, our survey respondents are somewhat more educated and older than the entire population. We found that females are over-represented and minorities are under-represented. Analysis in prior years has shown that adjustments to give more weight to the less educated respondents would make very little, if any, difference in the results. We have not determined the impact of the other factors on our results. We did not repeat these comparisons for the individual neighborhoods.

The majority of respondents reported having resided in the same residence for five or more years. While nearly 43 percent lived in their current residence for 10 or more years.

Previous follow-up on non-respondents

We have not done any recent follow-up with non-respondents. When we began the annual resident survey, we conducted a follow-up telephone survey of 400 non-respondents to address possible bias in the results caused by major attitude differences between those who returned the survey and those who did not. We asked nine questions from the mailed survey, as well as the demographic questions, and a general question on why the survey was not returned. We concluded from our analysis that there were no major differences between our sample and those who did not respond.

The demographic characteristics of the non-respondents contacted by telephone matched those of the total City population better than the respondents to the mail survey. More minorities were interviewed in the phone follow-up. In addition, younger people and more people without any college education were contacted. The answers from the respondents and non-respondents were compared. There was no significant difference between the two groups on feelings of safety or the number of burglaries. The non-respondents had visited a park slightly less often than respondents. Only one question showed a marked difference in opinions - the non-respondents were more positive on how well the City provided government services overall.