

Portland Plan Business Survey Results August 2010

In Spring 2010, the City of Portland asked the business community to weigh in on issues of importance to them in an on-line Portland Plan Business Survey. The survey was available online at www.pdxplan.com and was promoted through e-mails and announcements at various Portland Plan and business association meetings. A total of 228 surveys were completed between March 30, 2010 and June 2, 2010. For most of the 24 question survey, participants were offered a set of responses to choose from, along with an opportunity for open-ended comment. Some questions offered only open-ended responses. For multiple choices responses, the total response percentages total over 100%, as participants were not limited in selected multiple responses. The percentage totals indicate the level of frequency a choice was selected.

The results are presented in this document in two forms:

- **Summary Survey Responses:** This includes summary data on the multiple choice selections and summary of major themes for questions without multiple choice selections. Open-ended responses associated with each question are not included in the summary.
- **Complete Survey Responses:** This includes summary data on the multiple choice selections as well as survey participants' responses to the open ended questions.

The following table shows the types of businesses represented by survey participants

Survey Respondent Type of Business

Office	21%	Target Industries	7%
Industrial	4%	Not in a Target Industry	83%
Health/Education	10%	No Response	10%
Retail/Service	30%		
Other	36%		
Total	100%		

Summary Survey Responses

1. What near-term steps could the City of Portland and its partners take to improve the industry or sector in which your business operates?

Address taxes and fees	42%
Improve infrastructure	24%
Provide financial tools	23%
Revise regulations	21%
Neutral/no comment	13%

2. What is the biggest barrier to your business's success over the next 25 years?

Taxes and fees	44%
Zoning restrictions and land use conflicts	19%
Infrastructure needs	17%
Workforce issues (training, availability, etc.)	15%
Neutral/no comment	14%
Land supply needs	8%

3. What roles should the City play in economic development?

Revise taxes and regulations	53%
Recruit major employers	34%
Provide access to capital	34%
Provide financial tools	26%
Provide access to national and international markets	20%
Neutral/no comment	7%

4. What is the most important education- and skill-related action that would help create and/or attract a workforce with the skills and talent (at all levels from entry to management) to thrive in your business sector?

Enhance K-12 education system	45%
Improve post-secondary education and training options	37%
Provide workforce training and readiness programs	20%
Neutral/no comment	15%

5. What skills are you looking for?

See Complete Survey response for details.

6. How might your business or industry (individually or by sector or district) improve the educational offerings of Portland's schools?

Offer apprenticeships or internships	43%
Establish or participate in mentoring program	34%
Partner with and support K-16 schools in other ways	30%
Neutral/no comment	21%

7. How can Portland better integrate sustainability and business growth?

Provide incentives for businesses engaging in sustainable practices (i.e. development, energy savings, carbon emissions, employee VMT reduction, etc.)	55%
Work with private sector in sustainable policy development and planning to find mutually beneficial policy situations	44%
Recruit businesses in “sustainability” industry	24%
Neutral/no comment	7%

8. How might the city help your business use energy and natural resources more efficiently and sustainably?

Develop a utility pricing structure to encourage conservation	44%
Provide subsidies or reduce cost of needed changes	42%
Provide more information and technical assistance on ways to conserve	28%
Neutral/no comment	12%

9. Do public safety concerns affect your business, and if so how?

Yes, my employees and/or clients and customers are impacted by safety issues, real or perceived, near my business	37%
Yes, my business has been a victim of a property crime	28%
I do not have public safety concerns relating to my business	28%
Neutral/no comment	8%
Floodplain, seismic or site clean-up requirements	5%

10. If your business is impacted by homelessness or the City’s camping policies, what might be done to improve the situation?

Enhance enforcement of panhandling and camping laws	37%
Support more homeless-to-work opportunities	35%
Support more short- and long-term affordable housing options	34%
Neutral/no comment	21%

11. In your experience with the City, how can regulations or processes that affect your business be improved?

Reduce permitting time and delays	38%
Reduce regulatory costs	36%
Streamline building permit process timeline	36%
Provide up-front clarity about totality of fees associated with development	34%
Provide more flexibility (or certainty) in development review	33%
Increase customer service through the permit and design process	30%
Neutral/no comment	24%
Make specific changes to zoning or design code	21%

12. How could land use and zoning regulations and the design of city streets and public spaces better encourage your business to thrive?

Increase public investment in streetscapes, public plazas and open spaces	31%
Retain industrial land supply	23%

Reduce regulatory authority over design	23%
Revise zoning regulations to meet district-specific employment goals	23%
Neutral/no comment	20%
Increase allowable building heights and density where appropriate	19%
Expand employment zones	15%

13. If neighborhoods and housing are not adequate for your workforce and business needs, how can they be improved?

Invest more in neighborhood revitalization efforts	39%
Neutral/no comment	28%
Develop more affordable housing choices, for instance by providing incentives for the development of workforce housing	19%
Protect and enhance established high-end housing stock and neighborhood design	11%

14. What is the relationship between your business location and residential neighborhoods, if they are adjacent?

We experience no conflicts between business and residences	41%
Parking conflicts exist (lack of parking for customers, employees or residents)	28%
Neutral/no comment	14%
Nuisance conflicts exist (for example, noise, hours of operation, pollution, etc.)	11%

15. What improvements to the regional transportation system and infrastructure would help improve your business?

Investment in public transportation	38%
Improve availability of parking	33%
Investment in pedestrian and bicycle access and facilities	31%
Lower cost of parking	25%
Investment in freight system	14%
Neutral/no comment	9%

16. What technologies, if any, need to be more accessible to better serve your business?

Technological service is fine as is	31%
Higher speed internet connection at my business	24%
Neutral/no comment	20%
Make online access to City business resources easier	18%

17. From a business perspective, what if anything would you change regarding the relationship and responsibilities between City Council and the City bureaus?

Foster more coordination among bureaus and agencies	46%
Neutral/no comment	24%
Prefer less direct control by City Council	17%
Prefer more direct control by City Council	3%

18. What organizations or civic groups are you involved with as a part of your business endeavors?

Business associations	63%
Trade or industry associations	51%
Neighborhood or other geographic based groups	45%
Research, policy, civic or identity groups	29%
Neutral/no comment	8%

19. Are Portland's arts and cultural offerings a factor in the success of your business and Portland's economy overall, and if so, how might they be encouraged?

Increasing arts and culture in Portland will provide broader benefits to the city	38%
Arts and culture positively affect my business	36%
Arts and culture do not affect my business	20%
Neutral/no comment	14%

20. How might your business encourage the arts, culture and innovation in Portland?

Neutral/no comment	31%
Sponsor exhibits, events or mentorship programs	28%
Partner with local schools and training programs	27%
Advertise in local media that cover and promote the arts, culture and innovation	22%
Donate space for activities, events, exhibits or research	18%

21. Would encouragement of tourism help your business and the business climate of Portland overall?

Tourism has broad benefits	56%
Tourism has no direct affect on my business	29%
Tourism helps my business directly	25%
Neutral/no comment	4%