



# MOORE INFORMATION

OPINION RESEARCH • STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

November 6, 2009

TO: Kent Wyatt and Liz Newton  
FROM: Kelly Middendorff  
RE: City of Tigard Resident Survey Results

---

## **Methodology**

*This memo contains results of a telephone survey conducted among a representative sample of 400 residents age 18 and older in the City of Tigard, Oregon. The interviews were conducted October 18-20, 2009. The potential sampling error is plus or minus 5% at the 95% confidence level.*

## **Overview**

Today, residents of Tigard are widely satisfied with the city as a place to live. A city's safety, streets, utilities and neighborhoods are perceived most important in terms of desirable characteristics of a place to live, and Tigard residents are most likely to say "residents feel safe" and "streets and utilities such as water and sewer are provided and well maintained" are excellent descriptions of Tigard.

When comparing residents' assigned importance ratings of city characteristics with their perceptions of how well those characteristics currently describe Tigard, we find the City falling short of residents' expectations in all categories, albeit only narrowly in most cases. Significant deficits for the City today are in the areas of safety, streets/utilities and neighborhoods. Although these three characteristics are rated highest as descriptions of Tigard, their importance scores are even higher overall, resulting in a net deficit versus reality.

On other issues:

Safety: Residents feel more safe walking in their own neighborhoods than they do in downtown, although a majority still feel safe walking downtown (84% own neighborhood vs. 58% downtown).

Open spaces and the environment: Residents agree with three statements regarding open spaces and the environment:

- "Tigard's rivers and streams are important resources worth protecting" (94% agree, 4% disagree)
- "The City should take the lead in preserving the remaining open spaces within Tigard" (85% agree, 13% disagree)

- “I would support regulations to protect existing trees in the City” (80% agree, 17% disagree)

**Growth:** Just 39% agree that “to accommodate future growth, the City should encourage greater residential density than exists today in both new and existing neighborhoods” and 56% disagree with that statement. There is no consensus from respondents as to where most of the future population growth should occur, although widening 99W is the leading traffic solution.

**Contact with the City:** One-in-four residents have had contact with a city employee or elected official in the past year. The most frequently contacted departments include the police (28%) and public works/streets/sewer/water (24%). Overall, residents’ experiences were widely positive and more than 90% agree that Tigard city employees are courteous, fair and honest, with a significant percentage who “strongly” agree.

More survey details follow.

### **Satisfaction and Issue Priorities**

Today, residents of Tigard are widely satisfied with the city as a place to live. On a ten-point scale, where ten means very satisfied and one means very dissatisfied, fully 65% rate their satisfaction level as an “eight” or greater, while another 31% give a satisfaction rating of five through seven. Just 3% are dissatisfied with the City of Tigard as a place to live today (having given a rating of one through four).

For purposes of additional analysis, we calculate a mean score and find the City earns a 7.8 satisfaction score overall. Further, mean scores are higher among senior residents than among residents age 18-64 and higher among respondents who have not had some type of contact with a city employee/elected official in the past year than among those who have had such contact in the past year.

Traffic/congestion is the most important issue for the Tigard City Council to address over the next year (for 28%), distantly followed by “street improvements/maintenance” (8%), “education/schools” (8%), “crime and drugs” (7%), “taxes/lower taxes” (5%) and “parks and recreation” (5%). Nothing else was mentioned by more than 4% of residents and 15% have no opinion.

### **City Characteristics**

A city’s safety, streets, utilities and neighborhoods are perceived most important when it comes to characteristics of a city respondents would like to live in. A city where “residents feel safe” receives the highest rating, with a mean score of 8.8 on a ten-point scale (where ten means it is very important the respondent’s city is described that way and one means it is not at all important). Safety concerns are closely followed by “streets and utilities such as water and sewer are provided and well maintained” (8.6 mean score) and “friendly, cohesive neighborhoods” (8.2 mean score).

Five additional characteristics received minimum mean scores of 7.0 or higher, including;

- The services needed by residents are provided within the community (7.8)
- There is a positive community image (7.7)
- Development respects the natural environment (7.6)
- Residents are informed and active in civic affairs (7.1)
- Quality leisure activities are available (7.0)

Interestingly, in today's tough economic climate, availability of jobs is the lowest rated importance characteristic (6.9 mean score), as the following table reflects.

### City Characteristics Importance Ratings: Mean Scores

	<b>Mean score</b>
Residents feel safe	8.8
Streets and utilities such as water and sewer are provided and well maintained	8.6
Friendly, cohesive neighborhoods	8.2
The services needed by residents are provided within the community	7.8
There is a positive community image	7.7
Development respects the natural environment	7.6
Residents are informed and active in civic affairs	7.1
Quality leisure activities are available	7.0
Jobs are available within the community	6.9

Looking at differences by gender and age, overall, women assign higher importance to most characteristics than men, except for the issue of safety, where younger men are more in line with women of all ages than they are with men age 55 and older. Further, women age 18-54 are among the most likely to rate each of the city characteristics important, while men age 55 and older among the least likely to rate the nine city characteristics important.

When looking at city characteristics and respondent satisfaction with Tigard, those who are "very satisfied" with Tigard as a place to live (9-10 on a 10-point scale where 10=very satisfied) are more likely to rate the nine city characteristics as important than those who are just "satisfied" (6-8 on the 10-point scale) with Tigard as a place to live.

#### Perceptions of Tigard

Closer to home, when respondents were asked to rate the same nine characteristics in terms of how well they describe the City of Tigard, safety and streets/utilities rise to the top of the list.

Indeed, respondents are most likely to say the following are excellent descriptions of Tigard (10-point scale where ten means that characteristic is an "excellent" description of Tigard and one means it "does not describe Tigard at all").

- Residents feel safe (7.7 mean score)
- Streets and utilities such as water and sewer are provided and well maintained (7.7)

Three other characteristics also receive mean scores above 7.0, including;

- Friendly, cohesive neighborhoods (7.5)
- There is a positive community image (7.3)
- The services needed by residents are provided within the community (7.1)

The remaining four characteristics all earn mean scores below 7.0, with job availability earning the lowest score.

- Development respects the natural environment (6.8)
- Residents are informed and active in civic affairs (6.4)
- Quality leisure activities are available (6.4)
- Jobs are available within the community (5.5)

### Perceptions of Tigard: Mean Scores

	<b>Mean score</b>
Residents feel safe	7.7
Streets and utilities such as water and sewer are provided and well maintained	7.7
Friendly, cohesive neighborhoods	7.5
There is a positive community image	7.3
The services needed by residents are provided within the community	7.1
Development respects the natural environment	6.8
Residents are informed and active in civic affairs	6.4
Quality leisure activities are available	6.4
Jobs are available within the community	5.5

Looking at gender and age subgroup reactions to how well these nine characteristics describe Tigard, there are no significant variations concerning safety, streets/utilities and friendly neighborhoods. However, when it comes to provision of services, information about civic affairs, and availability of leisure activities and jobs, women age 55 and older are among the most likely to associate each of these with Tigard. Men age 55 and older are among the least likely to associate a positive community image and job availability with Tigard, while men age 18-54 are among the least likely to associate Tigard's development with respect for the natural environment. When looking at perceptions of Tigard's characteristics and respondent satisfaction with Tigard, those who are "very satisfied" with Tigard as a place to live (9-10 on a 10-point scale where 10=very satisfied) are more likely to rate the nine characteristics as descriptive of Tigard than those who are just "satisfied" (6-8 on the 10-point scale) with Tigard as a place to live.

When we compare respondents' assigned importance ratings of the nine city characteristics and their perceptions of how well those characteristics describe Tigard, we find the City falling short of residents' expectations in all categories. Significant deficits for the City today are in the areas of safety, streets/utilities and neighborhoods. Indeed, although these three characteristics are the most highly rated in their description of Tigard, they are still rated more highly overall when it comes to importance, resulting in a net deficit perception for the City, when compared to importance. Further, the availability of jobs in the community earns the largest deficit, but since this characteristic is also rated the least important, it is less worrisome. The following table compares the nine characteristics' perceived importance and residents' perceptions of Tigard.

## Importance vs. Perception

	Importance of characteristic	Perception of Tigard	Deficit
Jobs are available within the community	6.9	5.5	-1.4
Residents feel safe	8.8	7.7	-1.1
Streets and utilities such as water and sewer are provided and well maintained	8.6	7.7	-0.9
Development respects the natural environment	7.6	6.8	-0.8
Friendly, cohesive neighborhoods	8.2	7.5	-0.7
The services needed by residents are provided within the community	7.8	7.1	-0.7
Residents are informed and active in civic affairs	7.1	6.4	-0.7
Quality leisure activities are available	7.0	6.4	-0.7
There is a positive community image	7.7	7.3	-0.4

### Safety

Looking more closely at the issue of safety, the survey finds 58% of respondents “feel safe walking in downtown Tigard at night,” while one-in-four (26%) disagree. The most likely to feel unsafe are women (especially age 55 and older) and seniors. However, most other key subgroups feel safe by an approximate two-to-one margin.

Turning to respondents’ own neighborhoods, the perception of safety is higher, as more residents “feel safe” walking in their own neighborhoods than feel safe walking downtown. Fully 84% feel safe in their own neighborhoods, and just 14% feel unsafe. Also, fully 80% of residents agree that “I know many of my neighbors and often greet them by name.” Only 19% disagree with that statement.

### Future Growth

When it comes to the issues of open spaces and the environment, there is nearly universal agreement that “Tigard’s rivers and streams are important resources worth protecting” (94% agree, 4% disagree). Wide majorities of residents also agree “the City should take the lead in preserving the remaining open spaces within Tigard” (85% agree, 13% disagree) and nearly as many “would support regulations to protect existing trees in the City” (80% agree, 17% disagree).

Residents are less enthusiastic about increased residential density in the future, just 39% agree that “to accommodate future growth, the City should encourage greater residential density than exists today in both new and existing neighborhoods,” and fully 56% disagree. By subgroup, the most likely to agree with increased residential density are residents age 18-44, women age 18-54, and those with a high school education. Most likely to disagree are residents of the 97224 zip code, men, residents age 45-64 and those with at least some college education.

After hearing “Tigard is projected to accommodate over 15,000 new people by the year 2015, bringing the City’s population to over 50,000,” there is no consensus from respondents as to where most of the future population growth should occur. The top two areas include, “away from already developed areas” (21%) and “along transportation routes” (19%), followed by the “Washington Square area” (12%), “Tigard Triangle” (10%),

"existing neighborhoods" (10%), "within urbanized/established areas" (9%) and "downtown Tigard" (7%). The remaining respondents have no opinion (9%) or have another suggestion not offered in the survey (4%).

When it comes to preferences for traffic solutions, one-in-three respondents (34%) say Highway 99/Pacific Highway should be widened from five to seven lanes to address traffic congestion on that highway. Another 20% say light rail is the answer, and still others say "development of new streets along 99W, Frontage Road" (13%), "changes to bus services, such as dedicated lanes, more frequent service" (10%), "restrict left-hand turns on major roads and highways" (7%) and "pedestrian improvements, such as sidewalks, medians, etc." (3%). The remaining respondents have no opinion (8%) or have another suggestion not recorded in the survey (5%).

### **Contact with the City of Tigard**

One-in-four (26%) Tigard residents have had contact with a city employee or elected official in the past year. Among those who report having contact, the most frequently contacted departments include the police (28%) and public works/streets/sewer/water (24%). Others report having contacted the city regarding utility billing/paying their water bill (15%), contacting an elected official/mayor/city council members (14%), building/planning permits (12%), the library (10%) or parks and recreation (5%). Nothing else was mentioned by more than 3% and 6% could not remember which department they contacted.

Importantly, among those who report having had contact with a city employee or elected official in the past year, experiences were widely positive. Specifically, more than 90% agree that Tigard city employees are courteous, fair and honest, with a significant percentage who "strongly" agree with each.

- The employee was respectful and courteous (94% agree, 86% "strongly" agree)
- I was treated fairly by the City employee that assisted me (92% agree, 77% "strongly" agree)
- The employee was honest in their dealings with me (92% agree, 70% "strongly" agree)

Two additional statements regarding accurate and timely information were also met with wide agreement, including more than 50% who agree "strongly."

- The information or assistance I received was accurate and helpful (89% agree, 68% "strongly" agree)
- I received a solution or answer in a timely manner (82% agree, 53% "strongly" agree)

Of all statements tested, respondents were least likely to agree that "the employee that assisted me was creative and persistent in making sure my issue was resolved," but still, fully 79% agree with that statement, including 43% who agree "strongly."

### **Information Sources**

The most widely cited source for information specifically about the City of Tigard is "Cityscape, the city newsletter," with nearly half (49%) of respondents saying they have received information from that source in the past year. Other responses included, "the Oregonian" (18%), "the Times" (15%), "local television news" (13%), "word of mouth" (13%), the "City of Tigard website" (8%), a "local mailer" (6%), a "neighborhood network website" (5%), "public library" (4%) and "radio" (4%). No other source was mentioned by more than 3% and just 14% have no opinion.