

MANAGEMENT BRIEF

DATE: July 9, 2024

TO: City Councilmembers

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SUBJECT: Performance Measures Survey and Budget Survey Results

Executive Summary

Results from the 2023 Performance Measures Survey and 2024 Budget Survey confirm that the community's top budget priorities are safety, livability, and mobility. Most community members give high ratings to City services and the quality of life in Bellevue. Many Performance Survey questions saw a decline from the "peak year" of 2021, although the Budget Survey indicates some improvement. Ratings are often lower from community members who are low-income, non-White, and gender nonbinary. Many of these trends are consistent with those experienced by communities in our region and nationwide.

Background

The biennial Performance Measures Survey is a statistically valid survey that measures community opinion of City services and overall performance. The Performance Survey was conducted from August 3 to September 12, 2023, and 1,524 community members took the survey. The biennial Budget Survey is also a statistically valid survey that captures opinion on city services, with a primary focus on community budget priorities. The Budget Survey was conducted from December 15, 2023, to January 21, 2024, with 1,377 people completing the survey. An external vendor, ReconMR, conducts both surveys, with the city's Performance Measurement Program coordinating the project.

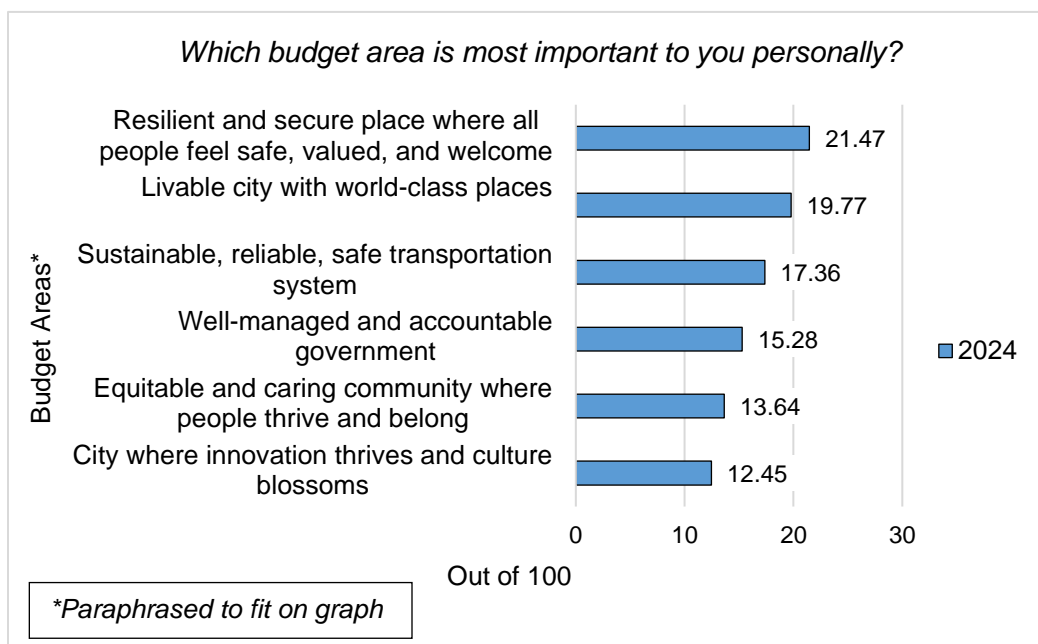
Both surveys underwent improvements in recent years to hear from a larger, more inclusive group of Bellevue community members. Surveys and outreach are conducted in multiple languages: Chinese (simplified and traditional), English, Japanese, Korean, Russian, and Spanish. The surveys collect representative data across a range of demographic categories, including age, gender, income, and many more. Racial demographics have been required in these surveys since 2022. Additionally, for the first time, the Performance Survey featured focus groups with demographic populations that are often underrepresented in community survey data. The vendor conducted in-depth interviews with representatives from various nonprofit organizations, including the Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network, Hopelink, the Network on Aging, Youth Link, and 4 Tomorrow. The full Performance Survey report incorporates the results of this qualitative research.

Overall Budget Priorities

In the Budget Survey, community members ranked their budget priorities, with the top three being:

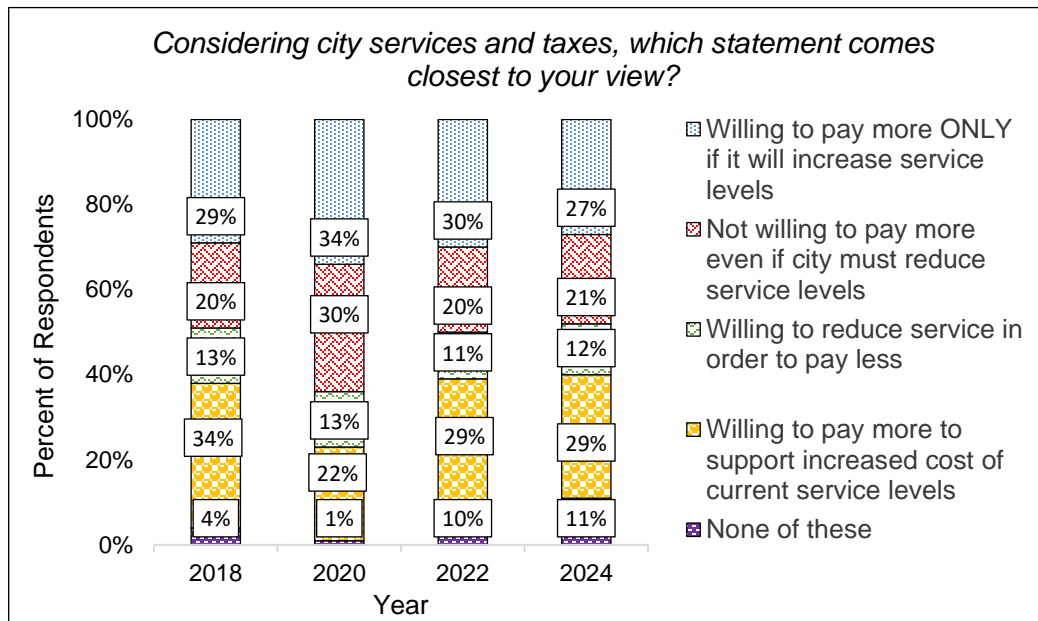
- Creating a resilient, and secure place where all people feel safe, valued, and welcome
- Becoming a livable city with world-class places to live, work, play, and learn
- Creating and maintaining a sustainable, reliable, predictable, clean, and safe transportation system

These ratings remain largely consistent across demographic categories. There is no historical data prior to 2024, as the priority areas were revised for this survey cycle to align with Council's recently updated Strategic Target Areas.



Taxes and Service Levels

In the Budget Survey, community members were asked a series of questions about the amount of taxes they pay and the impact on city service levels. Over half of respondents (56%) are willing to pay more in taxes to maintain or increase current service levels. These results are similar to previous years. Respondents who are Asian are significantly less willing to pay more taxes, even if it means a reduction in city services.



City Services and Quality of Life

Respondents give high ratings for city services and quality of life in Bellevue. Budget Survey results show that:

- 84% of community members rate the quality of city services as good or excellent
- 86% of community members believe the overall quality of life in Bellevue exceeds or greatly exceeds their expectations
- 85% of community members rate Bellevue as a better or significantly better place to live compared to other cities and towns

These results are consistent with previous years. Respondents 55 and older are more likely to rate these questions positively.

Safety

Safety remains a top priority for community members. Performance Survey results show that:

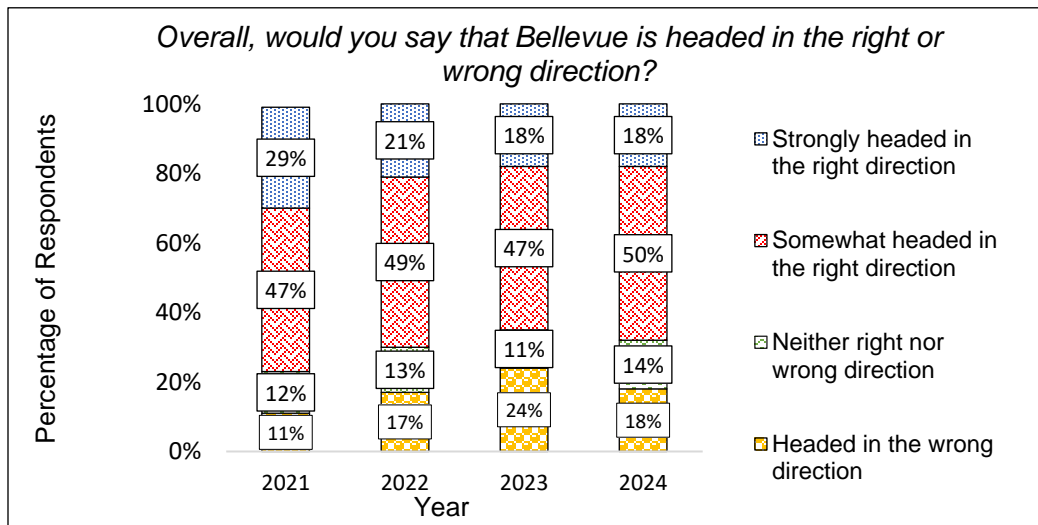
- 93% of community members say they feel safe in their neighborhood during the day
- 78% of community members say they feel safe in their neighborhood at night
- 93% of community members say they feel safe downtown during the day
- 73% of community members say they feel safe downtown at night

These results have decreased significantly since 2021, which is consistent with regional and national trends.

Direction the City is Headed

Both the Performance Survey and the Budget Survey ask respondents if they believe Bellevue is headed in the right or wrong direction. For many years in a row, most community members (over 65%) report that Bellevue is headed in the right direction. When looking at demographic analysis for this question, results are lower among families with children, gender nonbinary residents, and residents who identify as a race other than Asian or White.

Recent data may indicate a positive trend with this question. 2023 saw an increase in the percentage of people who feel that the city is headed in the wrong direction (24% of respondents in 2023, compared to 17% in 2022 and 11% in 2021.) This was consistent with regional and national trends. In 2024, this number returned back down to near-2022 levels, which could indicate that 2023 was a blip instead of a trend.



MOST COMMON REASONS GIVEN		
	<i>Why Right Direction</i>	<i>Why Wrong Direction</i>
#1 Most Common	Population Density (n=159)	Population Density (n=44)
#2 Most Common	Cost of Living (n=67)	Increase in Crime (n=39)
#3 Most Common	Amenities and services (n=67)	Cost of Living (n=28)

Ratings Return To Pre-2021 Levels

The Performance Survey showed a statistically significant drop in ratings for many survey questions. Overall, results for these questions returned to pre-2021 levels. Anecdotally, the survey vendor suspects that 2021 was a “peak year”, as people were initially emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. The vendor also notes that these results are common regionally and nationwide.

Demographic Trends

There are generally lower ratings seen among residents of Bellevue who are a race other than White or Asian, gender nonbinary, families with children, and those with lower overall income. Responses trend lower across almost all trends for Bellevue residents making less than \$50,000 annually, especially regarding the quality of city services.

Next Steps

The full results of the Performance Measures Survey and the Budget Survey will be posted to the City of Bellevue website in mid-July.