

“DON'T BE A STRANGER IN YOUR OWN TOWN.... WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER”

Earlier this year, the Billings City Council contracted with the National Research Center to conduct a citizen preference and satisfaction survey. 1,200 households were randomly selected to receive the survey and 47% returned it; an excellent response rate. The City Council is now conducting citizen listening sessions called “Community Conversations.” These sessions end in mid-September and the results and the survey results will help guide the City Council when it meets later this year to set goals for 2010-2011.

Even though you may not have been among the 1,200 households who received the survey, you can still participate. The survey instrument that those households received is shown below. The City Council invites you to print the survey, complete it according to the instructions that are provided and mail or deliver it to Bruce McCandless, Asst. City Administrator, 210 N. Broadway, Billings, MT 59101. You may also scan and email your responses to the same person at email address [mccandlessb@ci.billings.mt.us](mailto:mccandlessb@ci.billings.mt.us). Please return your response by October 15, 2009, it will be combined with all others received by that date and group results reported to the Council. Your participation is important and the City Council urges you to complete and return the survey.

Please call the contact above at 657-8222 if you have any questions about the survey or how the results will be used.

# The City of Billings 2009 Citizen Survey

Please complete this questionnaire if you are the adult (age 18 or older) in the household who most recently had a birthday. The adult's year of birth does not matter. Please select the response (by circling the number or checking the box) that most closely represents your opinion for each question. Your responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

**1. Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Billings:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Billings as a place to live.....	1	2	3	4	5
Your neighborhood as a place to live.....	1	2	3	4	5
Billings as a place to raise children .....	1	2	3	4	5
Billings as a place to work.....	1	2	3	4	5
Billings as a place to retire .....	1	2	3	4	5
The overall quality of life in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5

**2. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Billings as a whole:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Sense of community.....	1	2	3	4	5
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall appearance of Billings .....	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness of Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of new development in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of housing options .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to attend cultural activities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational opportunities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Employment opportunities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Educational opportunities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to volunteer.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in community matters.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of car travel in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bus travel in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bicycle travel in Billings .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of walking in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of paths and walking trails .....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic flow on major streets.....	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of public parking .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality housing.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality child care .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality health care .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality food .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of preventative health services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Air quality.....	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of overall natural environment in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall image or reputation of Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5

**3. Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Billings over the past 2 years:**

	<i>Much too slow</i>	<i>Somewhat too slow</i>	<i>Right amount</i>	<i>Somewhat too fast</i>	<i>Much too fast</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Population growth .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.).....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Jobs growth.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Billings?  
 Not a problem     Minor problem     Moderate problem     Major problem     Don't know

5. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Billings:

	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery) .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft).....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

6. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
In your neighborhood during the day.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In your neighborhood after dark.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Billings' downtown area during the day .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Billings' downtown area after dark.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?  
 No → Go to Question 9     Yes → Go to Question 8     Don't know → Go to Question 9

8. If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?  
 No     Yes     Don't know

9. In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Billings?

	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times
Used Billings public libraries or their services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Used Billings recreation centers .....	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in a recreation program or activity .....	1	2	3	4	5
Visited a neighborhood park or city park .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ridden a local bus within Billings .....	1	2	3	4	5
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting .....	1	2	3	4	5
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television .....	1	2	3	4	5
Read Billings Newsletter .....	1	2	3	4	5
Visited the City of Billings Web site (at www.ci.billings.mt.us) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home.....	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Billings .....	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Billings .....	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in a club or civic group in Billings .....	1	2	3	4	5
Provided help to a friend or neighbor .....	1	2	3	4	5

10. About how often, if at all, do you talk to or visit with your immediate neighbors (people who live in the 10 or 20 households that are closest to you)?

- Just about every day  
 Several times a week  
 Several times a month  
 Once a month  
 Several times a year  
 Once a year or less  
 Never

# The City of Billings 2009 Citizen Survey

## 11. Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Billings:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Police services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Fire services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ambulance or emergency medical services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Crime prevention .....	1	2	3	4	5
Fire prevention and education .....	1	2	3	4	5
Municipal courts .....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic enforcement.....	1	2	3	4	5
Street repair .....	1	2	3	4	5
Street cleaning .....	1	2	3	4	5
Street lighting.....	1	2	3	4	5
Snow removal.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sidewalk maintenance .....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic signal timing .....	1	2	3	4	5
Bus or transit services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Garbage collection.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recycling.....	1	2	3	4	5
Yard waste pick-up .....	1	2	3	4	5
Storm drainage.....	1	2	3	4	5
Drinking water.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sewer services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Power (electric and/or gas) utility .....	1	2	3	4	5
City parks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation programs or classes .....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation centers or facilities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Land use, planning and zoning .....	1	2	3	4	5
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Animal control .....	1	2	3	4	5
Economic development .....	1	2	3	4	5
Health services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Services to seniors.....	1	2	3	4	5
Services to youth.....	1	2	3	4	5
Services to low-income people .....	1	2	3	4	5
Public library services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Public information services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Public schools.....	1	2	3	4	5
Cable television .....	1	2	3	4	5
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts.....	1	2	3	4	5

## 12. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
The City of Billings .....	1	2	3	4	5
The Federal Government .....	1	2	3	4	5
The State Government .....	1	2	3	4	5
Yellowstone County Government .....	1	2	3	4	5

**13. Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Billings within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?**

- No → Go to Question 15       Yes → Go to Question 14

**14. What was your impression of the employee(s) of the City of Billings in your most recent contact? (Rate each characteristic below.)**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Knowledge.....	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness.....	1	2	3	4	5
Courtesy.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall impression.....	1	2	3	4	5

**15. Please rate the following categories of Billings government performance:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
The value of services for the taxes paid to Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
The overall direction that Billings is taking.....	1	2	3	4	5
The job Billings government does at welcoming citizen involvement.....	1	2	3	4	5
The job Billings government does at listening to citizens.....	1	2	3	4	5

**16. Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:**

	<i>Very likely</i>	<i>Somewhat likely</i>	<i>Somewhat unlikely</i>	<i>Very unlikely</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Recommend living in Billings to someone who asks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Remain in Billings for the next five years.....	1	2	3	4	5

**17. What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be:**

- Very positive       Somewhat positive       Neutral       Somewhat negative       Very negative

**18. Please check the response that comes closest to your opinion for each of the following questions:**

**a. To what extent would you support or oppose the following potential efforts to delay, reduce or eliminate property tax increases?**

	<i>Strongly support</i>	<i>Somewhat support</i>	<i>Somewhat oppose</i>	<i>Strongly oppose</i>
Reduce City Hall operating hours.....	1	2	3	4
Reduce Library operating hours.....	1	2	3	4
Close one of seven fire stations.....	1	2	3	4
Reduce park maintenance.....	1	2	3	4
Eliminate recreation programs.....	1	2	3	4
Reduce MET Transit operations.....	1	2	3	4
Close one or more public swimming or wading pools.....	1	2	3	4

**b. To what extent would you support or oppose creating a citywide Park Maintenance District to increase park construction and improve grounds maintenance?**

- Strongly support       Somewhat support       Somewhat oppose       Strongly oppose       Don't know

**c. The City's charter limits the amount of property taxes the city can collect (currently \$2,421 on a house valued at \$200,000). If the city were to remove this limit, it would, along with all other cities and counties, be held to the State of Montana's statute that allows additional property tax to be collected in order to produce taxes equal to the prior year, plus growth and inflation. To what extent do you support or oppose removing the City's current limit and adopting the State's limit?**

- Strongly support       Somewhat support       Somewhat oppose       Strongly oppose       Don't know

**d. What is the most pressing issue for our city government to address at this time?**

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# The City of Billings 2009 Citizen Survey

Our last questions are about you and your household. Again, all of your responses to this survey are completely anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

**D1. Are you currently employed for pay?**

- No → Go to Question D3
- Yes, full time → Go to Question D2
- Yes, part time → Go to Question D2

**D2. During a typical week, how many days do you commute to work (for the longest distance of your commute) in each of the ways listed below? (Enter the total number of days, using whole numbers.)**

- Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) by myself ..... days
- Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults ..... days
- Bus, Rail, Subway or other public transportation ..... days
- Walk ..... days
- Bicycle ..... days
- Work at home ..... days
- Other ..... days

**D3. How many years have you lived in Billings?**

- Less than 2 years     11-20 years
- 2-5 years             More than 20 years
- 6-10 years

**D4. Which best describes the building you live in?**

- One family house detached from any other houses
- House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)
- Building with two or more apartments or condominiums
- Mobile home
- Other

**D5. Is this house, apartment or mobile home...**

- Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment?
- Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear?

**D6. About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners' association (HOA) fees)?**

- Less than \$300 per month
- \$300 to \$599 per month
- \$600 to \$999 per month
- \$1,000 to \$1,499 per month
- \$1,500 to \$2,499 per month
- \$2,500 or more per month

**D7. Do any children 17 or under live in your household?**

- No     Yes

**D8. Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?**

- No     Yes

**D9. How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)**

- Less than \$24,999
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 or more

**Please respond to both question D10 and D11:**

**D10. Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?**

- No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino
- Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino

**D11. What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be)**

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- White
- Other

**D12. In which category is your age?**

- 18-24 years                       55-64 years
- 25-34 years                       65-74 years
- 35-44 years                       75 years or older
- 45-54 years

**D13. What is your sex?**

- Female
- Male

**D14. Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?**

- No
- Yes
- Ineligible to vote
- Don't know

**D15. Many people don't have time to vote in elections. Did you vote in the last general election?**

- No
- Yes
- Ineligible to vote
- Don't know

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return the completed survey in the postage paid envelope to:  
National Research Center, Inc., 3005 30th St., Boulder, CO 80301