

## Key Takeaways from the first round of public outreach

Bend Park and Recreation District (BPRD) conducted public outreach to learn more about how people use and access Sawyer Park. This feedback will be used to inform the design of upcoming improvements to the entry drive and parking area, which have reached the end of their life span. The outreach consisted of a survey that was conducted primarily online, but also was available in paper format. The survey was open from June 6-24<sup>th</sup> and received 113 responses. It was available on the project website and was advertised on social media, via phone calls and emails to key stakeholder groups and by individual surveys in the park. Below is a summary of the key information received from the survey. For more detailed information about the responses please contact the project manager, Bronwen Mastro, (541) 706-6152, [bronwenm@bendparksandrec.org](mailto:bronwenm@bendparksandrec.org).

**Key Takeaway #1: People love Sawyer Park!** Many of the comments received expressed how much people love this park and the unique, natural character. They appreciate the access to nature in the middle of the city.

**Key Takeaway #2: People visit the park for many recreational uses.** People use the park for a variety of reasons, from trails to river access to picnicking to getting married. Pedestrian activities such as walking, running and hiking on trails, both internal and accessing the Deschutes River Trail (DRT), ranked as the most frequent and popular activity. Access to and views of the river is the second most popular individual feature of the park. However, it is clear people treasure the natural beauty of the park. When combined, activities referencing nature such as bird watching, fishing, climbing rocks, observing and exploring nature, photography and relaxation; rank even higher than pedestrian trail use. Furthermore, it is clear from the responses that many people choose to walk, hike, run and bike on these particular trails because of the beauty of the setting.

**Key Takeaway #3: If you do not live nearby, Sawyer Park is hard to get to without a car.** 66% of respondents reported arriving at Sawyer Park most frequently by car. For visitors living over a mile away it increased to 83% most frequently arriving by car and to 91% for visitors living three miles away or more. The most common reasons for driving were reported to be living too far away and not having safe or convenient ways to access the park another way. Transportation of gear, people and pets, age and disability were other common reasons for driving.

**Key Takeaway #4: Though the park is well-loved, there is room for improvement.** When asked if there were improvements aside from the ones planned as part of this project that would enhance people's experience in the park, permanent restrooms were the most suggested amenity by a wide margin. Other frequently suggested amenities were improved accessibility, improved signage and improved picnic facilities. Other suggestions for a better experience include more dogs on leash, improved visibility into the park and less drug use and other unsafe activities in the park. These suggestions will be considered and some may be incorporated into the project if the project budget allows.

**Respondent information:** The majority of the respondents live between 1-10 miles from the park, visit several times a year to monthly and identify as white/European descent. Weekday mornings and

afternoons ranked as the most popular times to visit. The way people learned about the survey was evenly split between learning about it from social media and targeted stakeholder outreach.