



BEND IS GROWING AND CHANGING. ARE WE READY FOR THE FUTURE?

WHY A VISION FOR BEND?

The decade of the 2020s promises to be a time of enormous change and challenges. In order to address such change, we must plan and prepare for it. To do that our community needs a vision for our future — and a plan to get there.

WHAT IS THE BEND VISION PROJECT?

The Vision Project is a year-long in-depth community conversation about the future of greater Bend — where it is going and where we want it to be. This summer, the Envision Bend organization will engage in all kinds of activities to answer these questions. That outreach will include a major public survey in both English and Spanish, “Listen & Envision” sessions, a presence at community events, and more. This fall we will gather all of the community’s input and start building our plan. The end result will be a vision and action plan for the community, including both big ideas and small things people can do in their own lives.

ABOUT THIS BACKGROUNDER

This backgrounder summarizes the results of our initial interviews and research. We’re providing it to inform both the community’s conversations and its planning. Have a look inside to see what Bendites think about our future — and some of the challenges we may face. And learn more about how you can become involved in envisioning the future of Bend.

“The challenge is also the opportunity, and that is just to grow well. To grow with intention, to grow with attention. And to grow in a way that is inclusive and equitable and something we are really, really proud of.”

~ Bend community leader



ABOUT ENVISION BEND

Envision Bend is a nonpartisan community nonprofit organization. Its mission is to bring diverse stakeholders together to educate, engage and empower all members of the Bend community to have a voice in our city’s future. The organization is supported by a Leadership Alliance, project partners and investors. For more, visit the Envision Bend website at envisionbend.org

WHERE IS BEND TODAY? WHAT ARE OUR VALUES—AND CONCERNS?



What we've learned thus far: The views of Community Leaders and Residents. Over the past few months, we have interviewed more than 50 community leaders and project partners and posed questions to dozens of residents at events. Here is what we have learned so far about what's important to Bendites and what concerns them the most about the future:

OUR CORE VALUES

What people are telling us: Residents highly value the region's natural environment and recreational opportunities, strong sense of community and collaboration, family life and schools, business climate, and small city characteristics. Asked what "widely shared values" that connect us all, residents cite care for community and the natural environment, collaboration, innovation, volunteerism — and kindness.

OUR CHANGES

What people are telling us: Change is constant and life in Bend is no exception. Population growth over the past several years, including an influx of remote workers and others during the pandemic, hasn't gone unnoticed by Bendites. People agree that housing is less available and far more costly, homelessness is increasing, traffic congestion is worsening, and public lands are being overused. They also have observed that the Bend area is becoming more culturally diverse.

OUR CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE

What people are telling us: Not surprisingly, housing and managing growth are the two top challenges among those whom Envision Bend has sought input from thus far. Other big challenges: Becoming a more inclusive and cohesive community, reducing homelessness, improving behavioral health services, and creating more better-paying jobs so people who work in Bend can afford to live here.

TOP RESPONSES FROM INTERVIEWS

What are some of the significant changes to our community? (Ranked by number of times mentioned)

1. Population growth
2. Greater diversity
3. Lack of affordable and available housing
4. Traffic congestion
5. Homelessness (Tie)
5. Overuse of public lands

What do you see as the biggest challenge for the future of Bend? (Ranked by number of times mentioned)

1. Housing availability, affordability
2. Managing growth
3. Inclusion of a more diverse population
4. Homelessness
5. Community cohesiveness

“*There is a strong sense of wanting to give back and serve the community more. Bend wants to look out for itself.*”
~ Bend community leader



WHERE IS BEND HEADED? WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

In Bend, everything global is local. The Bend Vision Project reviewed scores of articles and reports to understand how trends of change are affecting greater Bend. We learned that global and national trends such as population growth, urbanization, a changing economy and climate are all at play here. Other larger trends having an impact on our community include public health challenges, rising income inequality, and changing values and civic norms.

Bend is growing...and changing. Bend is one of the nation's fastest growing small cities, with increased traffic congestion and skyrocketing housing prices. Our economy is diversifying with tech start-ups and remote workers. Our population is also becoming more diverse—and there are more incidents of prejudice and incivility. And we have far too many unhoused community members. Looming above everything is climate change, with more frequent droughts, impacts on water resources, and the threat of catastrophic wildfire.

Bend is working to get out in front of the “change curve.” Numerous programs and initiatives by local government, businesses, social service agencies and community groups are addressing these trends. The City of Bend, for example, not only has plans for managing future growth, but also promoting transportation improvements, urban revitalization, affordable housing, water conservation, and climate action. It's also working within an equity framework to guide its decision-making.

We can do better. By understanding trends of change and planning ahead, we can shape a better Bend for all of us.

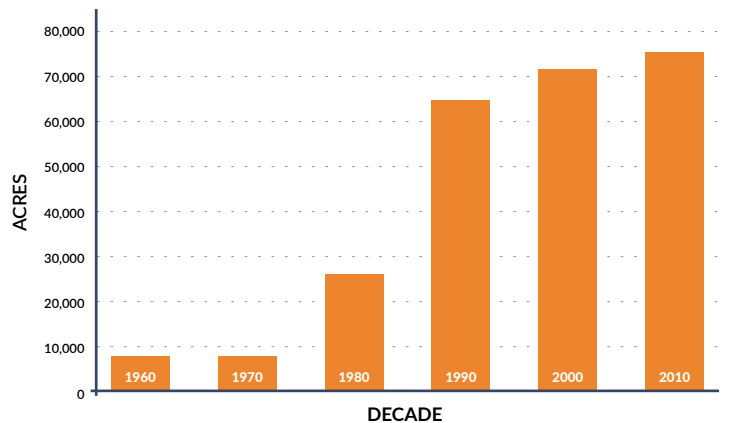
WHAT THE STATS TELL US: MORE PEOPLE, HIGHER COSTS, GREATER DIVERSITY, PERSISTENT POVERTY

Bend's trends paint a picture of a community undergoing massive change.

- Bend is projected to grow by 23,000 people in the next 8 years
- By 2040, Bend's population will reach 144,000 – nearly twice its size in 2010
- Bend's median home listing price in May was \$775,000, 40% higher than Portland
- Nearly one-in-10 Bendites is Latino; nearly one-in-20 identifies as multi-racial
- One-in-10 Bend households lives below the poverty line

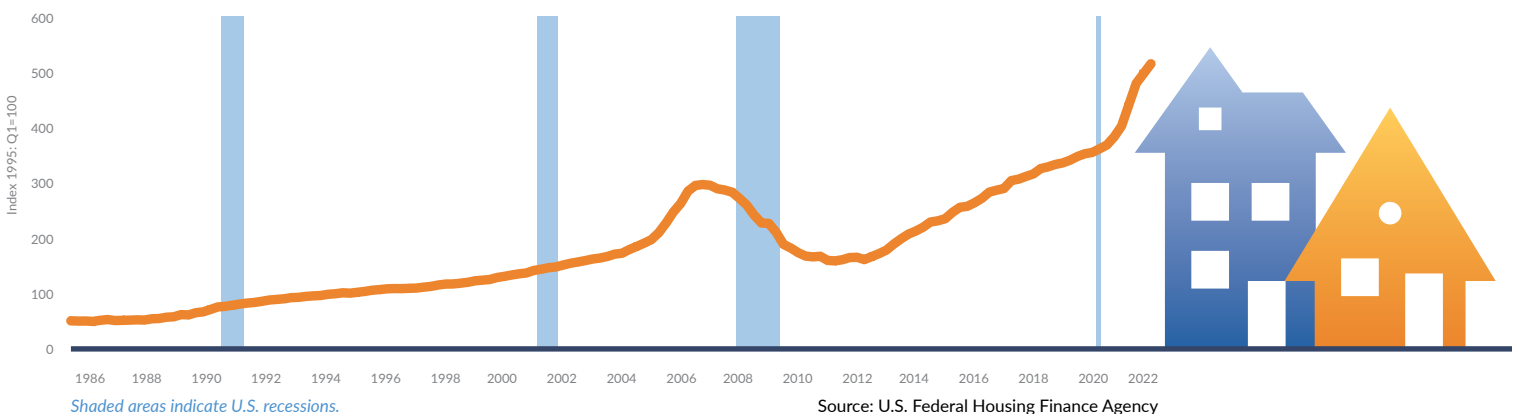
FIRE HISTORY

Deschutes County Fire Acreage by Decade



HOUSE PRICE INDEX FOR BEND

All-Transactions House Price Index for Bend, OR (MSA)



FIVE CHALLENGES FOR BEND'S FUTURE. YOU CAN HELP US ADDRESS THEM.

A vision and plan for Bend. The Bend Vision Project will result in a vision for greater Bend and an action plan to achieve it over time. Once completed, scores of community partners from government and business, nonprofits and social service agencies, and community groups will help implement the plan. It will include big ideas that are “game changers” for the future of our community—along with simple actions residents can undertake in their own lives to make Bend better for everyone.

Five themes for Bend's vision. Based on community input received thus far, we have identified five “focus areas” or themes to guide our community conversations and development of the vision and plan.

Five challenges for Bend's future. For each vision theme we are posing a key question to guide community discussions and deliberation. Addressing them will provide critical input for shaping our vision and plan.

BEND VISION PROJECT FOCUS AREAS



FIVE CHALLENGES FOR BEND'S FUTURE

- 1 LIVABILITY.** *How can we accommodate more people and development, yet still preserve and enhance the livability that drew people here in the first place?*
- 2 AFFORDABILITY.** *How can we remain an accessible and affordable city for the essential workers and middle-income families who support and sustain our community?*
- 3 RESILIENCY.** *How can we protect our natural environment, prepare for natural disasters or adverse events, and ensure the health and safety of all our residents?*
- 4 INCLUSION.** *How can we include people of all backgrounds, perspectives and identities, engaging everyone in the civic and cultural life of our community?*
- 5 INNOVATION.** *How can we build on our community's capacity for learning and innovation to create a more dynamic, inventive city?*



JOIN US ON THIS JOURNEY.

What ideas do you have for how we can address these challenges? Take the online survey. Attend one of our “Listen & Envision” workshops. Learn how to join us at www.envisionbend.org.

TAKE THE BEND VISION PROJECT ONLINE SURVEY!

