



SUBJECT: 2019 community survey results

TO: Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk & Accountability Cttee.

FROM: Corporate Communications and Government Relations

Report Number: CC-01-20

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 101-03-2

Date to Committee: February 13, 2020

Date to Council: February 24, 2020

Recommendation:

Receive and file corporate communications and government relations report CC-01-20 providing the 2019 community survey results.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of conducting the 2019 Community Survey was to:

- Measure resident opinions about the City's service delivery,
- Guide future actions and decisions,
- Monitor and benchmark progress since the 2015 Community Survey,
- Learn opinions about transportation options and,
- Identify and benchmark opinions regarding communications and public involvement with the City.

Vision to Focus Alignment:

Focus Area 5 Key Action Item: Conduct a community-wide survey every two years starting in the fall 2019 to determine if residents feel they are being engaged and are part of the City's decision-making process and based on established municipal norms, including quality of life, city programs and services, value for taxes and governance.

- Improve integrated city mobility
- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

- Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation
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Background and Discussion:

Background:

Since 1998, the City of Burlington regularly conducts a community survey to uncover resident satisfaction. The surveys typically happen every 2-4 years, the most recent surveys were in 2008, 2011, 2015 and 2019. The survey provides the opportunity for benchmarking and to monitor progress of community measures over time with the goal of continuous improvement.

In addition to resident satisfaction, the last two community surveys (2015 and 2019) included asking residents questions regarding communications and engagement with the City. The 2019 survey had some new additions including questions about property taxes, issue identification and transit and transportation.

Discussion:

After a competitive process, in September of 2019, the city selected MDB Insight to conduct two community surveys for the City of Burlington, one in November of 2019 and one scheduled for November 2021.

Strategy/process

The 2019 community survey was conducted using Computer Aided Telephone Interviews where respondents were randomly selected from the city's population using a mix of both residential landlines and cell phone numbers. The goal was to complete 750 interviews/surveys, with 125 completed interviews/surveys per ward. The total reached was 757 completed interviews/surveys with a margin of error of +/-3.6% with a 95% confidence interval. The interviews/surveys were conducted between November 4 to December 10 and it took on average 18 minutes to complete.

It is important to note that satisfaction of city services results were analyzed using a priority matrix that compares performance, room for improvement and the derived importance of each service (a measure which represents the level to which each service is related to overall satisfaction).

Highlights of the Results:

The full report of the results can be found in Appendix "A" of this report. The following are some highlights:

Overall, the results of the survey turned out highly positive across several measures, including:

- A four-percentage point increase in overall level of satisfaction with municipal services.
- 87% of respondents rate Burlington as an excellent/very good place to live, up slightly from 2015.
- Services that were identified as strengths were parks, festivals, green spaces, recreation facilities and fire services.
- Significant gains were made in the area of citizen engagement, questions asked about having enough opportunities to provide input, city's ability to engage with residents, city being welcoming to public opinion in decision-making, using public input in decision making and decisions made reflect the voice of the majority of residents all saw sharp increases, in some cases a twenty-percentage point increase.
- When asked an open-ended question – “what is the one issue you feel should receive the greatest attention from your Mayor and members of Council?”, the most frequent responses were around growth, especially in the downtown and the implications it might have on increased population, traffic, and the physical landscape or views. This was followed by traffic more generally including congestion, snow removal, traffic light timing and road conditions. Other common issues include municipal taxes, nature and climate change.
- Leaf collection, roadway and sidewalk maintenance, tree health and pest management, roads (plowing, salting and sanding), by-law enforcement and transit are the areas for primary opportunities.

Financial Matters:

Total Financial Impact

The cost for the 2019 survey was \$29,780 and the fee includes drafting and refining of the survey, conducting the telephone interviews, analysis of the data and presenting the data to the City of Burlington. The fee is the same for the 2021 survey.

Source of Funding

Funding for the 2019 survey was from Strategic Plan funding in the operating budget.

Climate Implications

There are no climate implications regarding this report, however, it should be noted that a number of residents listed “climate change” or “trees” when asked the open-ended question “What is the one issue you feel should receive the greatest attention from your Mayor and members of City Council?”

Enterprise Risk:

- Financial Sustainability
 - Climate Change
 - Growth & Affordability
 - Transportation
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Engagement Matters:

757 Burlington residents were randomly selected and interviewed using either a residential landline or cell phone number. The 2019 community survey is the first time that interviews/surveys were conducted using cell phone numbers, this is an important distinction to make as more people are forgoing landlines in favour of cell phones.

The Community Survey was also replicated online, with two major differences; 1) it was open call where anyone registered to the Get Involved Burlington platform could take the survey and 2) the sample size was much smaller (155 online versus 757 facilitated by MDB Insight). There are a number of similarities in the results including:

Question	Rating via Phone	Rating via Online
How would you rate Burlington as a place to live?	87% (excellent or very good)	88% (excellent or very good)
How satisfied are you with the overall quality of services provided by the City of Burlington?	93% (very satisfied or somewhat satisfied)	93% (very satisfied or somewhat satisfied)
Which of the following options would you prefer the City to pursue?	79% maintain property taxes at inflation and maintain service levels 10% increase property taxes	71% maintain property taxes at inflation and maintain service levels 14% increase property taxes

	<p>higher than inflation to enhance services levels</p> <p>6% Increase property taxes below inflation by reducing service levels</p> <p>5% reduce property taxes by reducing or elimination services</p>	<p>higher than inflation to enhance services levels</p> <p>5% Increase property taxes below inflation by reducing service levels</p> <p>10% reduce property taxes by reducing or elimination services</p>
Are you aware that Burlington has a Community Engagement Charter?	<p>26% yes</p> <p>74% no</p>	<p>39% yes</p> <p>61% no</p>
How satisfied are you with the overall quality of City information and communications?	<p>31% very satisfied</p> <p>55% somewhat satisfied</p> <p>11% somewhat dissatisfied</p> <p>3% very dissatisfied</p>	<p>39% very satisfied</p> <p>50% somewhat satisfied</p> <p>11% somewhat dissatisfied</p> <p>.5% very dissatisfied</p>

Conclusion:

The results of the 2019 Community Survey provides us with important, statistically valid baseline data. This information will be useful to guide future actions and decisions and to better understand the opinions of the average Burlington resident.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

- A. MDB Insight Final Report – December 2019
- B. MDB Insight presentation
- C. Results from Get Involved Burlington Online Engagement portal

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Council. Final approval is by the City Manager.