



SUBJECT: 2023 community survey results

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Corporate Communications and Engagement

Report Number: CC-01-24

Wards Affected: All

Date to Committee: February 5, 2024

Date to Council: February 13, 2024

Recommendation:

Receive and file corporate communications and engagement report CC-01-24 providing the 2023 community survey results.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of conducting the 2023 Community Survey was to:

- Objectively measure resident opinions about the City's service delivery,
- Guide future actions and decisions on City services,
- Monitor and benchmark progress since the 2021 Community Survey,
- Learn opinions about property taxation, 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 in some form, regularly conducts a community telephone survey to uncover resident satisfaction. Previously, the surveys typically happened every 2-4 years and in 2019, the decision was made to conduct the survey biyearly. The most recent surveys were in 2008, 2011, 2015, 2019, 2021 and 2023. 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 four community surveys (2015, 2019, 2021 and 2023) included asking residents questions regarding communications and engagement with the City. The 2023 survey had two new questions. One question asking how connected people feel in their neighbourhood. The second was a new demographic question related to “housing type”. Ratings of Burlington overall as a place to live were compared between residents living in the different housing types. One question was deleted from the 2023 survey regarding the city’s response to COVID-19.

Discussion

After a competitive process, the City selected Deloitte Canada to conduct two community surveys for the City of Burlington, one in the fall of 2023 and one scheduled for the fall of 2025.

Strategy/process/risk

The 2023 community survey was conducted using a scientific methodology via 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. This sampling strategy ensured a representative sample, eliminating the potential bias which could occur if residents were left to opt-in to the survey by themselves, such as through an open link URL. The goal was to complete 750 interviews/surveys, with 125 completed per ward. The total reached was 784 completed interviews/surveys with a margin of error of +/-3.5% with a 95% confidence interval. The interviews/surveys were conducted between September 25 to October 7, 2023 and it took on average 15 minutes to complete. Calls were not made on Sundays nor any statutory holidays. Responses were weighted based on the population by the age and ward proportions of

the city according to the 2021 Canadian Census. Two items that are important to note one, that satisfaction of City services results were analyzed using a derived importance methodology, 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) and two, a combination of both randomly selected Burlington cellular and landlines were included in order to obtain a variety of responses.

Highlights of the Results:

Overall, the results showed highly positive views of the City among residents, despite some lower scores in comparison to previous years.

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

- Residents gave ratings of the municipal services offered in the City. There was a rating of 92% satisfaction with the overall quality of services in the City of Burlington. This rating was a slight decrease from 2021(95%) and is comparable to the pre-pandemic satisfaction rate in 2019 of 93%.
- 57% of respondents say they would support a tax increase to maintain current service levels, compared to 71% of respondents in the 2021.
- Services that were identified as strengths are Fire Services, parks, sports fields and trails, recreation facilities and festivals and events.
- 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 road safety/traffic, cost of housing, over development and public transportation and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Respondents who live in condos gave higher ratings of Burlington as a place to live (91%), in comparison to the other housing types (single detached house, duplex or row townhouse, apartment style and “other”).
- Council (council decision making, open accountable, transparent local government), transit service and bylaw enforcement are the top three areas for

primary consideration that were deemed very important and are considered primary opportunities for the City to focus on.

Financial Matters:

Total Financial Impact

The cost for the 2023 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.

Source of Funding

The completion of the Community Survey is related to report CC-01-23 that adds \$30,000 in order to deliver this council approved initiative.

Climate Implications:

There are no climate implications regarding this report, however, it should be noted that when residents were asked the open-ended question “What is the one issue you feel should receive the greatest attention from your Mayor and member of City Council?” a number of them listed “preserving greenspace” at 7%, and “public transportation and pedestrian needs” at 8%.

Engagement Matters:

784 Burlington residents were randomly selected and interviewed using either a residential landline or a cellular number. The 2019 Community Survey was the first time that interviews/surveys were conducted using cellular number. This is an important distinction to make as more people are forgoing landlines in favour of cell phones. New in 2023, the City was able to work with Deloitte to customize the call display to say “BurlION Survey”. This was promoted through a variety of communication channels so that residents knew that this is a legitimate survey conducted on behalf of the City and not spam. This tactic worked well, the vendor was able to conduct the surveys quickly and the number of calls from the public about the legitimacy of the calls was almost non-existent.

The Community Survey was also replicated online (from September 25 to October 20, 2023). There are some significant differences in the findings between the randomly

selected, 125 completed surveys per ward versus the open call of the online survey (of which there were 572 completed surveys**). Here are some highlights below:

Question	Rating via Phone	Rating Online
How would you rate Burlington as a place to live?	79% (excellent or very good)	55% (excellent or very good)
How satisfied are you with the overall quality of services provided by the City of Burlington?	92% (very satisfied to somewhat satisfied)	61% (very satisfied to somewhat satisfied)
Property tax question – which of the following would you prefer the City to pursue? *	<p>18% - Increase taxes and spend to enhance services</p> <p>39% - Increase taxes to maintain services at current levels</p> <p>22% - Cut services to maintain current tax level</p> <p>21% - Cut services and reduce taxes</p> <p>57% of residents indicated an increase in property taxes is acceptable.</p>	<p>14% - Increase taxes and spend to enhance services</p> <p>24% - Increase taxes to maintain services at current levels</p> <p>24% - Cut services to maintain current tax level</p> <p>38% - Cut services and reduce taxes</p> <p>38% of residents indicated an increase in property taxes is acceptable.</p>
Top issues for Council consideration	<p>Road safety/traffic</p> <p>Cost of housing</p> <p>Over development</p>	<p>Overdevelopment</p> <p>Traffic/road safety</p> <p>Cost of housing</p>

* This property tax question was also asked in the 2024 Budget survey. The results are as follows:

- Increase property taxes to enhance services – 13%
- Increase property taxes to maintain current services – 24%
- Cut services to maintain current tax levels – 33%
- Cut services to reduce services – 22% (with 8% unsure)

Of those that completed the open call online 2024 Budget Survey, 37% indicated an increase in property taxes is acceptable.

** It should be noted that of the 572 completed online surveys, we received one set of responses replicated verbatim a total of 133 times.

In the area of engagement, there were some declines but still ahead of when the tracking started of the below attributes in 2015. This is an area for the City to consider focusing on.

Attribute	2015	2019	2021	2023
I would like to provide input to the City for the purpose of influencing decision-making about city projects and services.	63%	76%	80%	80%
Residents have enough opportunities to provide input into decision-making about city projects and services.	64%	77%	79%	71%
The City would welcome my opinion when making decisions about city projects and services that impact me.	57%	71%	75%	65%
The city uses input from residents in decision-making about city projects and services.	50%	70%	71%	64%
The city does a good job of engaging residents in decision-making about city projects and services.	54%	71%	75%	63%

Conclusion:

The results of the 2023 Community Survey provide us with important, statistically valid baseline data. This information will be useful to guide future actions, priorities and decisions and to better understand the opinions of the average Burlington resident across all wards of the city.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

- A. Deloitte Final Report
- B. Deloitte presentation
- C. Survey results from the 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 Counsel.