

SUBJECT: Community Survey – follow-up presentation

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Corporate Affairs  
Communications and Engagement

Report Number: CAF-05-26

Wards Affected: all

Date to Committee: May 11, 2026

Date to Council: May 26, 2026

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## **Recommendation:**

Receive for information corporate affairs report CAF-05-26 regarding the presentation of the final results of the Community Survey.

## **Executive Summary**

This report presents findings from the 2025 Community Survey. Conducted in partnership with Deloitte and supplemented by online responses via GetInvolvedBurlington.ca, the survey explores residents' perceptions of quality of life, satisfaction with City services, civic engagement, and community priorities.

The findings reflect a generally positive view of life in Burlington, tempered by concerns about transportation, traffic, and affordability.

The purpose of conducting the 2025 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 2023 Community Survey,
- Learn opinions about property taxation, transportation options
- Identify and benchmark opinions regarding communications and public involvement with the City.

**Purpose of report:**

This report is in response to Item 8.8 from the April 13, 2026, Committee of the Whole meeting: “Direct the Head of Corporate Affairs to bring forward the 2025 Community Survey results, including a presentation of the findings from Deloitte to a Committee of the Whole meeting in Q2 2026.”

At this time, there are no substantive updates beyond the information previously shared with Council through the September 26, 2025 Council Information Package, the November 25, 2025 Budget Committee of the Whole meeting discussion, and the December 19, 2025 Council Information Package.

# Information Report

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## Background

Since 1998, the City of Burlington has regularly conducted a community telephone survey to uncover resident satisfaction. Surveys typically occurred every 2–4 years until 2019, when the decision was made to conduct the survey biennially. The most recent surveys were in 2008, 2011, 2015, 2019, 2021, 2023, and now 2025. The survey provides benchmarking and monitors progress over time with the goal of continuous improvement. After a competitive process, the City selected Deloitte Canada to conduct two community surveys for Burlington—one in fall 2023 and one in fall 2025. After 2025, if the Community Survey continues to be a Council priority, the City will enter into an RFP process again to select a vendor. Feedback received from Council has indicated that the timeline for the Community Survey needs to be adjusted to better support budget discussions. The 2027 Community Survey will be administered in the spring instead of the fall to allow ample time for results and analysis.

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## Analysis

### Key findings:

The 2025 Community Survey was conducted using a scientific methodology via Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI). Respondents were randomly selected from the city's population using a mix of residential landlines and cell phone numbers. This sampling strategy ensured a representative sample, eliminating potential bias that could occur with opt-in online surveys.

- Sample size: 755 completed interviews
- Margin of error:  $\pm 3.5\%$  at 95% confidence level
- Fieldwork: September 8–29, 2025
- Weighting: Responses weighted by age, gender, and ward based on the 2021 Canadian Census

Overall, the results continue to reflect generally positive resident views of the City, while also identifying some areas where results were lower than in previous surveys.

- **Quality of Life - Decline in positive sentiment:**
  - 71% rate Burlington's quality of life as very good or excellent (down from 79% in 2023).
  - 37% say quality of life has worsened in the past two years; 6% say it has improved.
  - Top factors for decline: cost of living/affordability (35%), traffic (33%), Transportation/public transit (25%).

- **Overall Service Satisfaction:**
  - 91% were satisfied with the overall quality of City services (down from 92% in 2023).
  - Highest-rated services: recreation facilities (95%), maintenance of parks and green space (94%), parks, sports fields and trails (94%).
  - Lower-rated services: council decision-making (71%), roadway and sidewalk maintenance (78%), snow removal (79%).
  
- **Top Priorities (Derived Importance\*):**
  1. Council (council decision-making, open, accountable, transparent local government)
  2. Roadways and sidewalk maintenance
  3. Snow removal - roads, sidewalks, and walkways
  4. Parking management
  5. By-law enforcement

\*Derived Importance

- A statistical calculation of importance
- It is far more accurate relative to asking importance
- Calculates the correlation coefficient of municipal services with the KPI
- Services with a high derived importance will have the greatest impact on the KPI
  
- **Community Safety – Some declines:**
  - 93% feel Burlington is very or somewhat safe.
  - 36% say safety has worsened in the past two years.
  
- **Taxation and Budget Preferences:**
  - 82% feel they receive good value for taxes.

| Option  | 2025 % | 2023 % |
|---|--------|--------|
| Cut taxes by cutting services                 | 11%    | 21%    |
| Limit tax increases by limiting enhancements* | 35%    | 22%    |
| Keep current services (taxes at inflation)    | 42%    | 39%    |
| Improve services (slightly higher taxes)      | 12%    | 18%    |

\*Note: 2023 wording was “**Cut services to maintain current tax level**”, which differs from 2025’s “**Limit enhancements**”—interpret trends directionally, not as exact equivalence.

- **Communications and Engagement:**

- 71% rate City communication as *good or excellent*.
- Preferred channels: direct mail (57%), City website (51%), e-newsletters (49%), social media (47%).
- 79% did not participate in any engagement activity in the past year; among those who did, most felt heard and 66% believe input informs decisions.

**Online vs. Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) Survey Results**

The survey was conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interview methodology to ensure representativeness. Calls displayed “BurlION Survey” to improve legitimacy and reduce spam concerns.

At the same time, City staff distributed an online version of the survey through our Get Involved Burlington engagement platform. Comparative results are listed below. The online survey was in field from September 3 to September 30, 2025.

| Question   | CATI 2025 | Online 2025 |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Q1 How would you rate the overall quality of life in the City of Burlington? (Top-2 Very good/Excellent) | 71%       | 53.5%       |
| Q2 QoL change – Improved   | 6%        | 3.8%        |
| Q2 QoL change – Stayed the same  | 57%       | 32.4%       |
| Q2 QoL change – Worsened   | 37%       | 60.5%       |
| Q5 Overall satisfaction with City services (Top-2)   | 91%       | 77.3%       |
| Q13 City communications (Good/Excellent)   | 71%       | 38.4%       |
| Q16 Feel Very/Somewhat safe  | 93%       | 70.3%       |
| Q18 Good value for taxes (Fairly+Very good)  | 82%       | 34.6%       |
| Q19 Budget: Keep current services (taxes at inflation)   | 42%       | 35.3%       |

**Note:** Online and CATI results varied, which is not unexpected given the different methodologies and respondent recruitment approaches. The online survey was open to self-selected participants, while CATI used a structured telephone methodology designed to reach a representative sample.

These differences should be considered when interpreting the findings. Together, the results provide complementary insights and reinforce the value of using multiple methods to understand resident perspectives across Burlington. Demographic data collected through both survey streams will help inform future outreach, promotion and engagement planning, including opportunities to broaden participation across communities.

## Community Panels

To complement the quantitative survey findings, the City hosted two Community Panel sessions in fall 2025. Panelists were drawn from the City's volunteer roster, with random selection used where possible to reduce bias and ensure representation across wards, age groups, and diverse backgrounds. Each session was facilitated by the Manager of Engagement & Marketing and designed as an in-person focus group to gather qualitative insights.

- **September 16, 2025 (10 participants)**

**Focus:** Quality of Life, City Services, and key themes already identified in survey data (e.g., affordability, safety, traffic).

**Highlights:** Participants generally described Burlington in positive terms, including as a peaceful and vibrant community. At the same time, feedback identified areas of concern, including traffic congestion, housing affordability, access to amenities and recreation, transit, walkability, and infrastructure maintenance.

Participants also identified areas viewed positively, including emergency services, libraries, and programming for seniors. Overall, the feedback reflects both strong community satisfaction in key areas and opportunities to address issues that affect residents' day-to-day experience across Burlington.

- **October 28, 2025 (8 participants)**

**Focus:** Perceptions of quality of life, transparency and trust, community engagement, and engagement fatigue.

**Highlights:** Panelists pointed to several factors they believe are affecting quality of life, including broader economic pressures such as cost of living, housing affordability and economic uncertainty, as well as local issues such as traffic, parking and employment opportunities.

The feedback suggests that while some concerns are outside the City's direct control, residents may still look to the City to clearly communicate its priorities, explain where it can influence outcomes, and demonstrate progress where municipal action is possible. Suggestions related to trust focused on making Council information easier to access, strengthening clarity around decision-making, and showing how public input is considered and reflected in next steps.

Feedback on engagement suggests residents value opportunities to participate, while also reinforcing the importance of ensuring engagement is focused, accessible and clearly connected to the decisions being made. This can help support public understanding of how input is used, while recognizing the time and effort residents contribute when they take part.

## **Insights:**

Feedback from both panels largely aligned with survey results, adding context and nuance through lived experiences. Themes such as affordability, traffic, and transparency were reinforced, while participants offered practical ideas for improving engagement (e.g., hybrid options, simplified language, and visible “what we heard” reporting).

## **Benchmarking:**

- Quality of Life
  - 71% of residents rate quality of life as Very good or Excellent (2025). Burlington’s indexed score is 7.10 vs the national comparator of 7.07.
- Service Satisfaction
  - Overall service satisfaction remains high at 91% somewhat or very satisfied. On a 0–10 index, Burlington scores 7.7 compared to a national comparator of 6.8, indicating stronger-than-average service satisfaction. While the score reflects a slight decline from previous years, results continue to point to a high level of resident satisfaction with City services.
- Satisfaction with Council
  - Based on the most recent survey, 71% of residents expressed satisfaction with the work of Council. Direct benchmarking is limited because other municipalities do not ask the same question. Instead, they tend to assess satisfaction with Council’s openness, transparency, and accountability. These alternative measures provide directional context but are not directly comparable. Among the municipalities that asked similar questions, satisfaction ranged from 46% to 69%, averaging around 60%, placing Burlington above the benchmark range.
- Engagement Participation
  - In the data from the consultant, only two other municipalities ask about engagement in a similar way. Those municipalities had 11% and 14% vs. Burlington’s 21%. A broader data set would confirm observed trends.

## **Status**

2025 Community Survey work has been completed.

2025 Community Survey to be presented on May 11, 2026, Committee of the Whole.

2026 Community Survey will enter into an RFP process to secure a vendor for 2027 and 2029.

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## Key Dates & Milestones

Sept 3, 2025 – Community Survey Launched online  
Sept 8 to 29 - Deloitte survey fieldwork  
Sept 16, 2025 – Community Panel 1 – Community Survey  
Sept 26, 2025 – Preliminary Community Survey results report via council Information package  
Sept 30, 2025 – Community Survey Closes, fieldwork ends  
October 28, 2025 – Community Panel 2 – Community Survey  
Nov 13, 2025 – Presentation of full Community Survey results to Budget Community  
Dec 19, 2025 – Follow-up Community Survey results report via council Information package  
Q2 and Q3 2026 – Development and posting of RFP for new Community Survey vendor  
Q2 2027 – Next Community Survey launched on new timeline

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## Conclusion:

The results of the 2025 Community Survey provide statistically valid data to guide future actions, priorities, and decisions. This information helps the City understand resident opinions across all wards and track progress over time.

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## References

[CAF-03-25 - Community Survey – Preliminary Results](#)  
[CAF-04-25 – Community Survey – Final Results](#)  
[CAF-06-25 - Community Survey – Follow-up on CAF-05-25](#)

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## Strategic Alignment

- Designing and delivering complete communities
  - Providing the best services and experiences
  - Protecting and improving the natural environment and taking action on climate change
  - Driving organizational performance
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## Appendices:

A. City of Burlington 2025 Community Survey Final Report

## Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and approved by the Commissioner, Head of Corporate Affairs, Chief Financial Officer, and Commissioner of Legal and Legislative Services/City Solicitor.