



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Briefing Note

To: Council

File No.: 1390-01

From: Acting Director of Corporate Services

Date: January 14, 2026

Subject: Resident Survey, Your Courtenay, Your Voice – 2025 Results

PURPOSE: To present the 2025 Resident Satisfaction Survey, "*Your Courtenay, Your Voice*," results to Council for information.

BACKGROUND:

The results of the 2025 Resident Satisfaction Survey, "*Your Courtenay, Your Voice*," reflect the City's ongoing commitment to engage with the community and gather valuable feedback. This year marks the third iteration of this initiative, building on data from previous surveys to establish the five-year benchmark dataset the City aims to create. For residents, the survey continues to serve as a vital platform to voice their opinions and influence City policies and services. Resident satisfaction surveys are essential for evidence-based decision-making, allowing the City to evaluate service delivery and identify areas for improvement. The data collected informs budget discussions and strategic planning initiatives, empowering Council to allocate resources effectively and develop plans that resonate with community needs and expectations.

The 2023 and 2024 resident surveys were conducted by Forum Research Inc., providing a solid foundation for gathering community insights. Following a thorough Request for Proposals (RFP) process, in 2025 the City selected Prairie Research Associates (PRA) as the new survey company to conduct resident surveys in fall 2025 and beyond. Similarly to previous years, the 2025 survey was executed using a statistically valid phone-based methodology. While the survey results continue to be weighted based on demographic information specific to Courtenay, the innovations introduced by PRA, specifically focusing on achieving proportionality among respondents, which diminished bias and significantly improved the quality of the data when weighted.

DISCUSSION:

The 2025 the Resident Satisfaction Survey incorporated methodological improvements designed to increase the relevance and accuracy of its findings by refining municipal comparators and enhancing demographic representation to enhance the accuracy of reported perspectives when weighted.

Change to Municipal Comparators

The 2025 survey analysis introduced an important refinement in the approach to municipal comparators, moving away from a broad representation based solely on population size to a more targeted selection of municipalities that are more similar in size and characteristics to Courtenay. Previous comparisons included municipalities with populations ranging from 10,000 to 150,000, the majority (4/5) of which were at least 10,000 residents larger than Courtenay (~33% larger), resulting in potentially less accurate benchmarks. The new selection of comparators includes municipalities on Vancouver Island and the mainland that more closely align with Courtenay's demographic and compositional profile. By incorporating municipalities such as Campbell River, Port Moody, Kelowna, Saanich, Squamish, and Mission, this adjustment offers a more relevant context for evaluating Courtenay's performance and satisfaction levels.

Demographic Weighting Changes

In both the 2024 and 2025 Resident Satisfaction Surveys, responses were weighted to support results that accurately reflect the community's demographics (see Figure 1 and 2 below). However, in 2025, we placed a deliberate emphasis on capturing a greater representation of previously underrepresented groups, particularly younger residents. This focus aimed to correct the imbalances observed in the 2024 survey, where the voices of younger individuals were significantly overshadowed by older demographics, leading to potential biases in the findings. By prioritizing a more balanced representation of age groups, the 2025 survey seeks to avoid the challenges of misrepresentation and provides more reliable insights that genuinely reflect a variety of perspectives within the community. Ultimately, this intentional focus enhances the relevance and effectiveness of decisions based on the survey findings.

Figure 1: 2024 Age Demographic Weighting

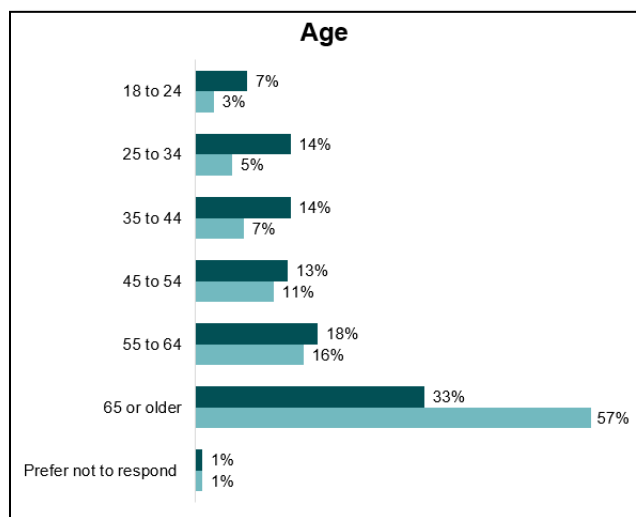
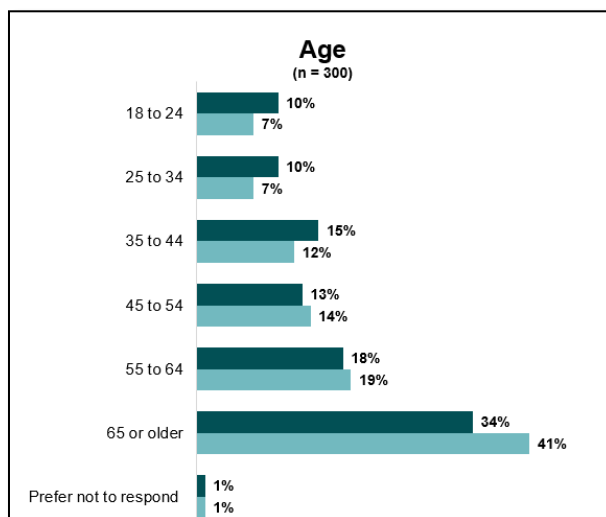


Figure 2: 2025 Age Demographic Weighting



■ Weighted ■ Unweighted

2025 Survey Results Summary

In the most recent survey conducted among residents of Courtenay, a noteworthy majority, 81%, reported a positive assessment of the quality of life in the city, categorizing it as good or very good. This is a slight decline compared to prior years; however, those rating the quality of life as "very good" increased by 8 percentage points to reach 33%. Moreover, nearly half of the respondents, approximately 49%, feel that the quality of life has remained static over the past year, while 43% believe it has worsened, indicating a need for attention to the factors influencing these perceived declines.

Residents' perceptions of the value received for their tax dollars have shown some fluctuations over the years. Despite a decrease from 78% satisfaction in 2023 to 70% in both 2024 and 2025, Courtenay consistently ranks above the average of 54% seen in six other municipal comparators. This comparison highlights that, even amid slight declines in satisfaction, Courtenay residents still appreciate the value of their contributions more than many in other communities. When inquiring about potential tax adjustments, opinions were closely divided, with 21% of participants indicating a willingness to support tax increases to maintain or enhance public services, while 20% expressed the desire for cuts in services to reduce taxes. This balance of opinion showcases this community's cautious approach toward fiscal policy in relation to service provision.

The sense of belonging within the community remains robust at 73% despite a slight decrease from the previous year. Additionally, 82% of respondents agree that Courtenay is a welcoming community, representing a 1-percentage point increase from last year. This suggests that while there may be concerns related to specific civic issues, most residents generally continue to view the community as inclusive overall.

On the aspect of recommending the city to others, the Net Promoter Score (NPS) has improved significantly to -4, reflecting a recovery from the previous year's score of -17. However, the overall negative score still suggests that more residents would discourage potential newcomers, with key reasons for these sentiments being the high cost of living (19%), overcrowding (19%), housing shortages (18%), homelessness (16%), and concerns over crime and safety (16%). Notably, homelessness remains the top issue identified by residents, though its perception has decreased by 7 percentage points since last year, indicating that while it is still a priority, there may be some shifts in community discussions around the issue.

When evaluating the level of satisfaction with municipal services, 62% of respondents expressed satisfaction, down slightly from 66% in 2024. High satisfaction levels remain for fire and emergency response, parks and green spaces/recreational offerings, which received ratings of 88% and 80%, respectively. In contrast, traffic management continues to be a pain point, with only 28% of residents expressing satisfaction, highlighting an area in need of improvement.

In terms of interactions with City staff, less than half of respondents (45%) have contacted or engaged with municipal staff in the past year; however, among those who did, satisfaction has increased to 72%, reflecting a 6-percentage point rise from last year. A large majority noted that staff were courteous (92%), treated them fairly (85%), and possessed knowledge pertinent to their inquiries (83%).

Concerning communications, nearly half of the respondents (46%) preferred to reach out to the City via telephone, followed by email (23%) and in-person interactions at City offices (14%). While a significant 63% report satisfaction with the volume of information shared by the City, there is a notable demand for more information regarding planning and development (21%), suggesting that residents are eager to engage in city planning processes. Furthermore, while 48% expressed satisfaction with opportunities to provide input to the City about their views and priorities, a prominent reason for dissatisfaction stemmed from the perception that the City does not adequately listen or act on feedback, with 30% of respondents indicating this concern.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications, the Resident Satisfaction Survey costs are covered under the Corporate Services annual operating budget.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no administrative implications.

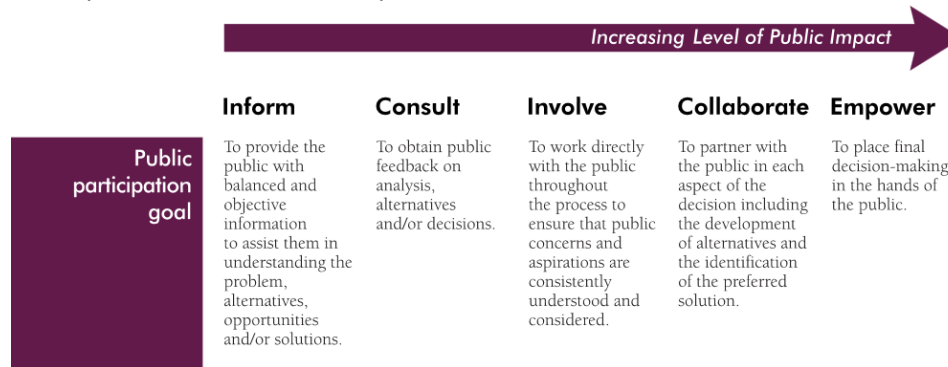
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Good Governance - Increase community engagement for all segments of the community: complete communication strategy, community survey, and community engagement strategy

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Staff will inform the public through a report and presentation to Council of the survey results based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



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RECOMMENDATION: THAT Council receive the “Resident Survey, Your Courtenay, Your Voice – 2025 Results” briefing note.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2023 Resident Survey, Your Courtenay, Your Voice – 2023 Results Presentation
2. 2024 Resident Survey, Your Courtenay, Your Voice – 2024 Results Presentation
3. 2025 Resident Survey, Your Courtenay, Your Voice – 2025 Results Presentation

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