



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council

File No.: 0320-01

From: Director of Corporate Services

Date: August 28, 2024

Subject: Resident Surveys – Your Courtenay, Your Voice

PURPOSE: To seek Council approval to conduct statistically-valid resident surveys to establish City of Courtenay specific benchmarks through the Resident Survey, ***"Your Courtenay, Your Voice"***.

BACKGROUND:

The City's Resident Survey, titled "Your Courtenay, Your Voice," launched in July 2023 with the aim of gathering feedback from Courtenay residents. The survey utilized two methodologies: a statistically valid phone-based survey, and an online survey for self-selected participants. The target number of respondents for the phone-based survey was set at 300 and results were weighted based on Statistics Canada local demographic information. In addition to standardized/benchmarking questions, unique questions were included to gather insight on various topics, including the City crest's alignment with community identity, desired improvements to the City's image, awareness of City initiatives, opportunities to enhance quality of life, and perspectives on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts within the community.

Overall, the survey results show that Courtenay residents enjoy a high quality of life with 90% of respondents rating the quality of life as good or very good. However, in contrast to the high quality of life rating, the majority of residents would not recommend the City of Courtenay to others as articulated in a negative Net Promoter Score (-16). Based on service areas that were identified by respondents to have highest impact in determining quality of life, the Net Promoter Score could be improved by addressing homelessness, land use planning, and affordable housing.

DISCUSSION:

Insights collected from the 2023 Resident Survey informed the annual budgeting process with some projects and priorities adjusted based on community input. By utilizing the information and perspectives obtained from the survey, and reflecting on the policy priorities outlined in the City's Official Community Plan, Courtenay is better positioned to meet the expectations of our residents with efficient and lasting solutions. For example, informed by the 2023 survey results, the City is enhancing and broadening access to online services, vigorously pursuing the creation of supportive housing, investing in bylaw services, and currently assessing the City's role in the provision and/or support of community services.

Establishing Benchmarks:

Conducting the survey each year until a comprehensive benchmark is established will enable the City to more accurately track trends, identify and target areas for improvement, understand evolving perceptions and priorities, and measure the effectiveness of specific initiatives. Internal benchmarks, in addition to municipal comparisons, offer valuable insight into the City's progress and performance in meeting the needs and expectations of Courtenay residents. To establish internal benchmarks, three to five years of data is generally required to provide a solid foundation for identifying trends, patterns, and areas for improvement.

Due to the anomalies in the years immediately following the Covid-19 pandemic and in consideration of election cycles, a five-year survey plan is recommended. A five-year benchmarking dataset will diminish the data representation/impact of the pandemic on resident satisfaction levels and provide a more stable baseline for future comparison. Moving forward, after the initial five-year benchmarking period, the City can then transition to running the survey every other year. This approach will still provide valuable insight into long-term trends while allowing for resources to be allocated towards other engagement initiatives. Additionally, upon the completion of a five-year survey process and a subsequent transition to biennially thereafter, the proposed survey schedule would provide timely resident feedback prior to and following the local government general elections scheduled for 2026 and 2030:

- 2024 – 2nd year benchmarking annual survey
- 2025 – 3rd year benchmarking annual survey
- 2026 – 4th year benchmarking annual survey
- 2027 – 5th year benchmarking annual survey
- 2029 – Bi-annual survey schedule begins
- 2031 – bi-annual survey

As the City is in the process of developing an Engagement Strategy, the 2024 Resident Survey will focus on statistically-valid data collection and weighted analysis. There will be no variable questions in the 2024 survey.

Replacing the online self-selected version of the Resident Survey, a concurrent engagement-specific survey will solicit feedback from residents on their desired and preferred engagement methodologies. This approach aligns with the anticipated outcomes of the Engagement Strategy, which will incorporate resident-informed recommendations to shape future engagement opportunities.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

Official Community Plan Vision: “Courtenay is responsible for the future, supporting high quality of life, with a low-carbon footprint for all”. As outlined in the OCP, and based on the Social Determinants of Health, “quality of life is influenced by a broad range of personal, social, economic, and environmental conditions in which we grow, live, work, and age. It is defined as the standard of health, comfort and happiness by an individual or group”.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Forum Research Inc. has been contracted to undertake the 2024 Resident Survey. The annual cost to conduct the survey and analysis is approximately \$25,000.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

Support for the Resident Survey will be provided by the Corporate Services Department as part of its annual workplan.

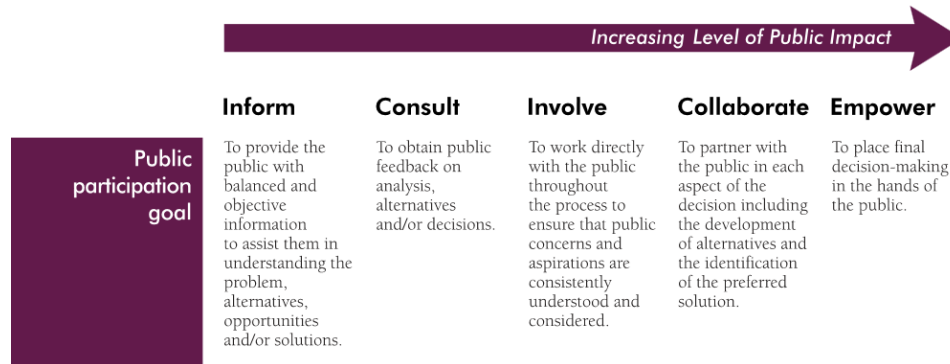
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

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:

Based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, staff would inform the public of the phone based Resident Survey via social media, and inform the public of the survey findings via a report and presentation to Council:



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OPTIONS:

1. THAT to establish a five-year City of Courtenay benchmarking data set, Council direct staff to conduct the statistically valid Resident Survey annually until 2027; and,

THAT Council direct staff to conduct the statistically valid Resident Survey every two years starting in 2029.

2. THAT to establish a three-year City of Courtenay benchmarking data set, Council direct staff to conduct the statistically valid resident Survey for a third time in 2025; and,

THAT Council direct staff to conduct the statistically valid Resident Survey every two years starting in 2027.

3. THAT Council direct staff to terminate the Resident Survey.

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