

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING OF AUGUST 31, 2015
FROM:	ART ZUIDEMA CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT	2015 ANNUAL COMMUNITY SURVEY

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the City Manager, the following report on the City of London 2015 Annual Community Survey **BE RECEIVED** for information.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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- Corporate Services Committee – February 5, 2013
- Strategic Priorities & Policy Committee – December 16, 2013
- Strategic Priorities & Policy Committee- May 11, 2015

BACKGROUND

Community Surveys are one tool used by municipalities to assess resident’s attitudes, needs, priorities, and satisfaction levels. The understanding gained from this research helps guide City Councils to make important decisions regarding strategic planning, budgeting and issues management, and informs the work of the Civic Administration.

Council’s 2015-2019 Strategic Plan makes a commitment to “Open, accountable and responsive government.” This includes a strategy to “Make community engagement a priority. Make the public a partner who has access to our information and helps make decisions with Council.” Survey research is one way to support this strategy, by seeking the perspectives and perceptions of the public to help inform the work of the City.

The City of London participated in a standard community survey called Focus Ontario via Environics Research Group in the fall of 2012 and again in 2013. Survey topics included: quality of life, economy, perceptions about taxation and value for tax dollar, customer service, and communications. The information collected was used to help inform Service London implementation and garner a pulse on how the community felt about various topics.

In 2015, a request for quotes was issued and a new vendor was selected. Going forward an annual community survey will be conducted each year to facilitate consistent data collection and reporting, and create a predictable flow of information for corporate-wide use. The survey design will include standardized questions, allowing for data comparison over time, as well as an opportunity for additional questions to be included every four years to assist with Council’s Strategic Plan and Multi-Year Budget development.

2015 Annual Community Survey

Ipsos Reid was selected to conduct the 2015 Annual Community Survey, which took place June 4 - 14. The firm has extensive experience working with local governments on a wide range of issues. Ipsos typically works with over 50 different Canadian municipalities in a given year and completes ongoing annual community/citizen satisfaction surveys for at least six municipalities in Ontario.

Methodology

- The survey was conducted by telephone and the sample was drawn from random digit dialling (including a cell phone sample)
- A total of 500 interviews were completed
- The results were weighted by age and gender to reflect the general population of the City of London (Demographic Profile Comparison with 2011 Census Data attached as **Appendix A**)
- A comprehensive pre-test was conducted prior to the survey launch to ensure respondents understood the questions and that the survey design facilitated high quality responses
- When possible, questions were designed to allow for data comparison with the 2013 community survey
- When possible results were compared to the Ipsos Canadian National Norm

Survey Design

Question development was reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and supported by the Operations Management Team.

The areas of focus include:

- Top-of-mind issues in need of attention from local leaders
- Overall impressions of the quality of life in the City of London
- Perceptions of City services, including perceived importance and satisfaction
- Perceptions about taxation and value for tax dollar
- Frequency of contact and satisfaction with City Staff
- Preferred Communication needs

Key Findings

A full report on the results of the 2015 Annual Community Survey is included as Appendix B

Survey results represent resident's perceptions of City services. Respondents were asked questions about services that they may or may not have used. The results are inclusive of all responses and can be helpful in understanding overall public perception of City services.

Some of the key findings include:

- Infrastructure, transportation and economic development are top mentions for residents.
- The majority (95%) of residents believe the quality of life in the City of London is good.
- The majority (92%) of residents are satisfied with the overall level of City services, including 26% who are very satisfied.
- Land use planning, economic development, public transit and roads were found to be areas of focus that are important to overall satisfaction of residents.
- There was an increase from 2013 in the perception of getting very good value for tax dollars.
- Most residents (54%) prefer increased taxes to cutting services.
- Most city services achieved high scores on both importance and satisfaction.
- The majority (73%) of those residents who had contact with the City in the past 12 months are satisfied with their experience, including 47% who were very satisfied.
- Mail and e-mail are the most preferred methods of receiving information from the City, but the telephone is the clear choice for contacting the City with an inquiry or concern.
- Follow-up by the City regarding concerns and complaints is seen as very important.

CONCLUSION

Survey results can support Council decision making and inform the work of Civic Administration. Customer satisfaction results are used to further the work of Service London; perceptions about taxation and value for tax dollar results facilitate public input in the budget planning process; and, communications and engagement preferences influence the way the City interacts with Londoners. Survey results are reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and Operations Management Team and are used for strategic planning and issues management purposes.

In conclusion, surveys are an important tool used to determine resident priorities, evaluate services, measure customer satisfaction and assess quality of life. Results contribute to an overall understanding of the future needs and expectations of Londoners. Regular community surveys will help City Council and Civic Administration uncover answers to pertinent questions, evoke discussion, base strategic decisions on objective information and allow data comparison and evaluation over time.

PREPARED BY:	PREPARED AND RECOMMENDED BY:
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RECOMMENDED BY:
ART ZUIDEMA, CITY MANAGER

- cc. Senior Leadership Team
- Operations Management Team
- Jon-Paul McGonigle, Business Planning Process Manager
- Rosanna Wilcox, Manager, Service London