

---

---

## 2017 Business Plan and Budget Process - 2016 Civic Services Survey Results

### Recommendation

That the Governance and Priorities Committee refer this report to the 2017 Business Plan and Budget deliberations.

### Topic and Purpose

This report provides the results of the 2016 Civic Services Survey (Attachment 1), which is conducted annually to obtain citizen feedback the delivery and provision of civic services. The results are used by the City of Saskatoon (City) in two general ways: (1) as feedback to build the business plan and budget; and (2) to provide high quality services to meet the needs and expectations of citizens.

### Report Highlights

1. Citizen perceptions about the city's quality of life have increased since 2015 and holds steady when compared to 2013.
2. A strong majority of citizens feel that the City is on the right track to being a better city 10 years from now.
3. Road conditions remain the most important issue facing the City, but respondents feel this is significantly less of an issue since 2013.
4. Satisfaction with the overall level of services provided by the City has increased since 2015 and remains high, and has seen a significant increase since 2013.
6. Citizens give the highest ratings for staff being courteous, helpful and knowledgeable, and offering high quality customer service, when interacting with the City.
7. Citizens prefer a combination of user fees and property taxes as the most appropriate way to pay for services and balance the City operating budget. They prefer increased spending on road maintenance and affordable housing, followed by snow and ice maintenance, transit, traffic management, planning for growth, and policing.
8. Citizens largely agree that the City should offer naming rights and sponsorship opportunities as a source of revenue. However, some feel that bridges and those structures that are already named or have heritage value should not be offered for sponsorship.

### Strategic Goal

This report supports the Strategic Goal of Continuous Improvement and being the best managed city in Canada. The primary goal of the annual survey is to obtain citizen feedback on a variety of civic services and to measure progress on reaching the performance target of overall satisfaction with civic services of 90% or more.

## **Background**

The City has conducted the Civic Services Survey annually since the early 1990s. The last survey was completed in May 2015.

## **Report**

In March 2016, the City issued a tender for work on the City of Saskatoon Annual Civic Services Survey. Inshatrix Inc. (Inshatrix) was awarded the contract for 2016 with the option to extend for a second year. As in previous years, both a telephone and an online survey were utilized. A total of 500 surveys were completed via telephone in 2015 and 2016. 25% of telephone respondents were from a cell phone list in order to reach younger citizens and cell phone only households. 803 surveys were completed through an online panel. Results were collected between May 9 and June 3, 2016.

## Quality of Life

In 2015, the City established that “Perceived Quality of Life” would be an indicator to watch relative to our progress on achieving performance targets. This indicator measures citizen perceptions about well-being in the city.

- Quality of life in Saskatoon continues to be rated high, with 89% of telephone and 87% of online respondents rating it as either good or very good. Perceptions have increased for telephone respondents (85% in 2015) and holds steady among online respondents (86% in 2015). The results in 2016 have held steady when compared to 2013.
- In 2016, citizens offered opinions on the quality of life in Saskatoon within the past three years. The majority feel that Saskatoon’s quality of life has remained the same or improved (76% telephone, 80% online).
- The most common suggestion to improve the quality of life centres on infrastructure and traffic (examples include: road conditions/potholes, public transit, and better traffic flow/control).

## Direction of the City

New in 2016, citizens were asked about whether or not the City is on the right track to making Saskatoon a better city in 10 years from now. A strong majority agree that the City is heading in the right direction (80% telephone, 70% online).

## Most Important Issues Facing the City

Without a list provided, the most important issue facing the City, as cited by citizens in 2016, continues to be roads (32% telephone, 22% online). However, significantly fewer respondents feel that roads and sidewalks are the most important issue when compared to 2013 (36% telephone, 31% online).

Other commonly mentioned issues include crime/policing, traffic flow/congestion, planning for city growth/development, social issues, and affordable housing. The top ten most frequent issues are generally the same as found in the 2015 Survey.

### Satisfaction

In 2015, the City established a performance target of “Overall Satisfaction with Civic Services of 90% or more”.

- Since 2013, overall satisfaction with the level of service provided by the City has increased significantly with telephone respondents (88% in 2016 compared to 83% in 2013) and online respondents (83% in 2016 compared to 73% in 2013).
- When comparing the annual change, overall satisfaction is strong and increasing, particularly among online respondents. The majority of telephone respondents (88% in 2016 compared to 86% in 2015) and online respondents (83% in 2016 compared to 77% in 2015) are satisfied.
- Services that receive the highest ratings for satisfaction include:
  - Quality of drinking water
  - Electrical services reliability
  - Fire protection
  - Availability of City parks
  - Garbage collection (black bin)
  - Recycling
  - Parks (playgrounds, green spaces, pathways, and tree services)
  - Indoor pools / community centres/ leisure facilities
- In 2016, several services saw increases in satisfaction levels: neighbourhood sidewalk and street maintenance, maintenance of major roadways and freeways, snow and ice road maintenance, traffic management, maintenance of back lanes, mosquito control, planning for growth and development, and recycling.
- Some services, by contrast saw declines in satisfaction in 2016: police services, indoor ice rinks and removing contaminants from waste-water (although wording changes to this statement may account for the decline).

### High Ratings for Helpful and Courteous Staff

Approximately one half of all residents report having had contact with or have participated in a City activity within the past 12 months. Those who have had contact with or participate in a City engagement activity provide high ratings for City staff being courteous, helpful and knowledgeable, and providing high quality customer service. Online respondents' assessments are weaker in the areas of the City engaging the public and taking public input into decision-making.

### Budget Input

Citizens were asked questions regarding balancing of the City's budget and preferred priorities for future spending.

- To pay for services and balance the operating budget, respondents prefer the City use a combination of user fee and property tax increases (47% telephone and 29% online). However, a sizable portion of online respondents were unsure (16% telephone and 31% online). These findings are largely consistent with 2015.
- When asked where the City should provide more, less or the same amount of service in 12 different areas, the majority would like to see additional services provided for road maintenance (70% telephone and 70% online) and affordable housing (54% telephone and 53% online). More modest proportions would also

like to see more services provided for snow and ice management, traffic management, transit, planning and growth, and policing. These findings are similar to 2015.

#### Naming Rights and Sponsorship Opportunities

In the 2016 survey, citizens were asked if they believe the City should offer naming rights and sponsorship opportunities as a source of revenue for the City. The majority agree (77% telephone, 81% online) that these sources of revenue should be made available.

Without a list provided, citizens were asked which City assets should not be made available. Although more than one half of residents do not believe any asset should be restricted, others most commonly suggested that bridges and those structures that are already named or have heritage value should not be offered for sponsorship.

#### **Communication Plan**

A variety of tools will be used to update the media and public on the results of the 2016 Civic Services Survey. This will include a news release and social media updates on Twitter and Facebook. A full copy of the 2016 Survey is available on the City's website.

#### **Financial Implications**

Funding for the cost for the 2016 Civic Services Survey is included in the existing annual operating budget. The cost for the 2016 Survey is \$25,250 (excluding taxes) compared to \$27,420 in 2015. The lower cost in 2016 was a result of applying an outstanding credit with Insightrix.

#### **Other Considerations/Implications**

There are no policy, environmental, privacy or CPTED implications or considerations.

#### **Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion**

The results of the "Shaping our Financial Future" Citizen Budget will be presented as a separate report at the July 2016 Governance and Priorities Committee. This report will further expand on the budget input questions asked in the 2016 Civic Services Survey. The next Civic Services Survey will take place in May 2017.

#### **Public Notice**

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

#### **Attachment**

1. City of Saskatoon Annual Civic Services Survey, June 2016

#### **Report Approval**

Written by: Carla Blumers, Director of Communications  
Reviewed by: Catherine Gryba, General Manager, Corporate Performance Department  
Approved by: Murray Totland, City Manager

2016 Civic Services Survey.docx