



COMMUNITY SERVICES – CUSTOMER SERVICES
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May 27, 2015

**COMMUNITY SERVICES – Customer Services
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE REPORT # 2015 - 19**

TO: Committee of the Whole
SUBJECT: Community Surveys
ORIGIN: Community Services - Customer Services

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Community Services - Customer Services Report # 2015 – 19 dated May 27, 2015 regarding the frequency of Community Surveys be received and that the following recommendation be adopted:


THAT staff be directed to include a proposal related to a Community Survey and the requested funds as part of the 2016 budget discussions, and future years, as appropriate.

BACKGROUND

At the Council meeting on March 30, 2015, as part of the discussions related to the 2015 budget, Council directed staff to “provide a report outlining the cost of increasing the Community Survey to an annual basis for the period of 2015 to 2018.” The purpose of this report is to provide Members of Council with the information requested, available options and approximate costs.

In 2002, 2005, 2010, and 2014, using the services of outside consultants, the Town conducted Community Satisfaction Surveys. The questions were created to assess the level of resident satisfaction for various services, the effectiveness of communication, overall fiscal priorities and also to solicit input regarding the factors that make an even better community. The current direction from Council is to conduct the Community Survey every four years, aligned with the municipal election. The information gleaned from these surveys is then used to help inform Council as they determine their strategic priorities for the course of the term.

In the Town of Newmarket: 2014 Community Satisfaction Survey Key Findings Report, as prepared and presented by Forum Research, the following recommendation was included: *Given these strong findings, it is recommended that a Community satisfaction survey be administered (although smaller in nature) for the Town of Newmarket in two years to continue to track positive trends in satisfaction levels and better gauge overall progress moving forward.*



COMMENTS

The 2014 survey was conducted by Forum Research, the successful proponent of the RFP. The cost for the 2014 survey totaled approximately \$40,000 and consisted of a telephone survey of 801 Newmarket residents as well as an IVR survey (Interactive Voice Response) to 400 households. In order to ensure results are representative of the population, the data for both surveys was weighted.

Other Survey Options

There are other options available for consideration, during years when the larger Community Survey is not being conducted. Conducting smaller surveys on alternate years, in order to further explore issues identified in the larger survey, has a great deal of merit. These other options include the following:

Shorter/Pulse Telephone surveys - \$14,000 (approximate)

Shorter/pulse surveys can be done on a more frequent basis (yearly or in alternate years) to measure any of our Key Performance Indicators and Satisfaction areas, perhaps focusing on areas that have been identified as opportunity areas for improvement. The frequency is usually determined by the timeframe of when any changes might be expected. Feedback from these surveys could then be used to validate direction and determine if progress is being made and opportunity areas are being addressed.

IVR Surveys - \$8,000 - \$10,000 (approximate)

Council may also wish to consider the introduction of IVR (Interactive Voice Response) surveys to gauge progress and gain customer feedback. An IVR survey was conducted by Forum Research as part of the survey conducted in 2014. The IVR survey provided Council and staff with additional insight into the perceptions of Recreation & Culture program participants related to value and fee structures as well as information related to tax dollar spending, level of awareness and level of interest in learning more about how tax dollars are spent.

These surveys consist of a series of questions whereby the respondent would answer by pressing a number on the key pad. Although open-ended questions do not work very well with IVR, this option can be a very effective tool to gain insight and feedback and also to engage the community through another channel.

Summary: Options and Approximate Costs

Survey Type	No. Respondents	Survey length	Approx. Costs	Statistical Validity
Telephone Survey	800 respondents	10 to 12 mins.	\$28,000	+/- 3.46, 19 times out of 20
Telephone Survey	400 respondents	10 to 12 mins.	\$14,000	+/- 4.9, 19 times out of 20
Telephone Survey	400 respondents	6 to 8 mins.	\$12,000	+/- 4.9, 19 times out of 20
IVR only	400 respondents	Up to 12 questions + a few demographics	\$8,000 – \$10,000	+/- 4.9, 19 times out of 20

Note: Costs, survey length & statistical validity are approximate & dependent upon the final product. The number of open-ended questions, presentations, and level of analysis required will affect final pricing.

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES

When we survey our residents and act upon the results we reinforce our commitment to the “well-equipped and managed” branch of our vision. Surveying our residents on a more frequent basis will enable us to better gauge our successes and determine if efforts to address gaps are being realized.

Community Satisfaction Surveys help increase the level of engagement among the community and provide greater opportunities for public consultation, an area of opportunity identified in the 2014 Community Survey.

CONSULTATION

Leo Hussey, Vice President Client Services with Forum Research was consulted regarding best practices. Mr. Hussey also provided the approximate costing and options indicated in this report.

Advancing any option(s) would be coordinated through Procurement Services as appropriate.

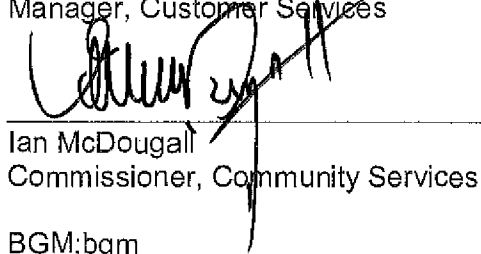
BUDGET IMPACT (CURRENT AND FUTURE)

Costs for a Community Survey for 2015 have not been included in the 2015 budget. Budget impacts in 2016 and future years would be determined based on the options selected and the frequency. Applicable costs would be included in future budgets for Council's consideration and approval.

CONTACT

Any questions related to this report and this initiative should be directed to Bonnie Munslow, Manager, Customer Services at bmunslow@newmarket.ca or 905-895-5193, extension 2251.



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BGM:bgm