

Report to Council



Date: June 13, 2022

To: Council

From: City Manager

Subject: 2022 Citizen Survey Results

Department: Communications. Prepared as supplemental to the presentations by IPSOS

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the Report from the Communications Manager dated June 13, 2022 with respect to the results of the 2022 Citizen Survey.

Purpose:

To present the results of the 2022 Citizen Survey.

Background:

Collecting and comparing previous survey results allows elected officials, staff and other community stakeholders to understand how citizens' attitudes and priorities are changing, identify new or emerging issues facing the community and assess the progress the City is making in addressing key issues through statistically significant methodology. The outcomes complement the ongoing engagement and conversations with citizens on a variety of initiatives throughout the year. The previous Citizen Survey was completed in October 2020.

The 2022 telephone survey was conducted through cell phone and landline methodology with the final sample size of 300 adult Kelowna residents, split 75 per cent cell phones and 25 per cent landlines. Quotas were established in order to get more representative data both geographically and demographically by establishing age, gender and postal code information. The overall survey results are accurate within + or – 5.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The final data has been weighted to reflect the actual population in Kelowna according to the most recent Census data. Ipsos Public Affairs was selected to conduct the survey in order to benchmark Kelowna against other BC municipalities as part of its database of municipal norms.

Discussion:

The 2022 survey focused on seven key areas:

1. Quality of Life
2. Issue Agenda
3. Community Safety

4. City Services and Infrastructure
5. Financial Planning
6. Priority Setting
7. Customer Service

Overall results

Overall results for 2022 reflect generally positive feedback – perceptions of quality of life remain high at 90 per cent and three quarters of citizens remain satisfied with the services they receive believe they receive good value for their tax dollars. However, several indicators are lower than in previous years.

- Quality of life
- Safe community
- Satisfied with services
- Value for tax dollars
- City inclusiveness and acceptance

Perceptions of a worsening quality of life are quite pronounced this year – despite more than 90 per cent of citizens saying they have a good quality of life more than half (55%) of citizens say the quality of life in Kelowna has 'worsened' over the past three years. This results in a net momentum score of minus 47 points, down 34 points from 2020.

Top community issues

Open-ended responses from respondents indicate the primary issues facing the community are social issues, with affordable housing, poverty & homelessness, taking the top position once again over transportation.

- Social issues such as homeless, mental health, addiction and affordability at 57 per cent
- Transportation and traffic flow management at 23 per cent
- Crime and community safety at 12 per cent
- Municipal government services at 10 per cent

Much has been done in the past few years on each of these fronts, but there is more to do. The City of Kelowna continues to lead efforts in our community and across B.C. to improve community safety through innovation, collaboration and advocacy.

Social Issues

Social issues continue to dominate the public issue agenda with 57 per cent of citizens identifying social issues as the most important issue facing the community on an open-ended basis. Comments around housing affordability, poverty and homelessness were the most frequent.

Citizens' increased concern with social issues continues to be something the City is working on through Journey Home and with over 50 community partners. While there are many examples of progress made, the need continues to grow for the most vulnerable in our community.

- In 2017, Council increased resources to focus on homelessness with the Journey Home strategy and expanded the amount and variety of housing being developed. Since then, even with over 300 homes with supports built to support those struggling with homelessness, demand continues to grow.

- The City is coordinating with more than 50 organizations, including hearing from those with lived experience of homelessness, to address this issue through the Journey Home Strategy. It's a complex issue that no single organization or government can solve alone.
- While Kelowna is leading the way in B.C. with progressive approaches to social issues, there is much more work to be done. The City continues to advocate with senior governments to invest more resources into Kelowna to address the causes and impacts of issues like poverty, addiction and mental health.
- For more information about the City's approach to social wellness, visit [Kelowna.ca/socialwellness](https://kelowna.ca/socialwellness) and for more information about housing, visit [Kelowna.ca/housing](https://kelowna.ca/housing)

Transportation

Overall, 23 per cent identified transportation as an important community issue, with the most frequent concerns being traffic congestion, condition of roads/streets/highways, general transportation and parking.

The City remains committed to developing a transportation network to address congestion by balancing investment in major roadway connections with increased investments in alternate transportation such as public transit, pathways and bicycle routes.

- The City's main strategies in the Transportation Master Plan call to densify urban centres, create more efficient transit links and build and promote infrastructure such as sidewalks and bike paths.
- The City continues to build on its extensive network of 467 kilometres of sidewalks and walkways, 310 km of dedicated bike lanes and 100km of shared pathways.
- The City maintains an annual Pavement Management program of approx. \$3.4 million. By regularly maintaining the infrastructure of our roads is protected, and the need for mass replacement is avoided. Monitoring and testing of roads helps to identify and prioritize sections that require updating.

Community Safety

Perception of Community Safety fell slightly with 81 per cent of residents describing Kelowna as a safe community.

While Kelowna continues to be a safe place to live, work and raise a family, decisive action is needed to reduce property crime. The City of Kelowna has been at the forefront of initiatives and actions to address community safety and other social challenges in recent years. The City has been more than a partner – we've been a provincial leader in this space.

- The City has invested in RCMP contract budget increases for years and it's become clear this cannot be the only means to promote community safety.
 - \$32 million spent to increase public safety personnel from 2016 to 2022: 47 RCMP Officers, 9 Bylaw Officers and 40 safety support staff were added
 - 84% increase to the RCMP contract budget, from \$27.9 million in 2016 to \$51.4 million in 2022
 - 35% of the average 2022 tax bill in Kelowna went to safety expenditures, the largest of any category

- Kelowna's first Community Safety Plan was recently endorsed by Council – this five-year plan is designed to generate shared ownership, vision and action among government ministries, community organizations and residents to improve community safety and the sense of safety.
- In addition to taking steps outlined in the Community Safety Plan, the City continues to advocate for changes to address the underlying root cause of crime because policing alone will not solve the issue.
- The Provincial Court of BC opened the Kelowna Integrated Court in 2021. The Court seeks to reduce crime and improve public safety by integrating health and social services with the justice system to address the root causes of criminal behaviour.
- In 2019, the RCMP piloted and launched an online crime reporting tool to make it easier for victims of property crime to report incidents.
- Residents and business can support safety by learning how to discourage crime and removing opportunities. This includes increasing visibility, securing property, and reporting suspicious behaviour.
- For more information about the City's approach to community safety, visit [Kelowna.ca/safety](https://kelowna.ca/safety)

Municipal Government Services

The services provided by the City are important to citizens and generally speaking, most citizens (80%) are satisfied with the overall level and quality of services provided by the City of Kelowna. However, this number is the lowest on record in the past 10 years. There was a corresponding decrease in satisfaction with a number of services as well.

Snow removal and traffic management flow were specifically mentioned as primary areas for improvement. This past winter, during December & January when Kelowna faced a long stretch of continuous snowfall days, the number of snow and ice related service requests increased by six times a normal season while response time actually decreased.

- The City's main strategies call to densify urban centres, create more efficient transit links and build and promote infrastructure such as sidewalks and bike paths.
- The Transportation Master Plan was endorsed by Council in 2021 and includes significant policy shifts which encourages decreasing the number of vehicle trips by using alternative transportation methods
- The City continues to focus on improving road conditions spending \$850,000 on street sweeping, \$2.6 million on snow and ice and \$850,000 surface repairs (potholes etc.). In addition, the Pavement Management program is \$3.5 million

Top investment priorities

The paired choice analysis identifies priorities for City investment. Addressing social issues such as homelessness, mental health and addiction was consistently the top priority. 80 per cent of citizens selected it as a priority when presented alongside other options.

Other priorities include having a diverse supply of housing options at different price points (73%), traffic flow management (67%), fire services (60%), drinking water (58%), road maintenance and police services (54%).

When asked about investing capital dollars into building new or renewing existing infrastructure, respondents were split with renewing at 55 per cent and building new at 41 per cent.

Value for taxes

Overall, 75 per cent of respondents think services and programs are very good to fairly good value. This is a slight decrease from the previous results. When asked about options to increase taxes to enhance or to maintain services at current levels, 53 per cent of residents preferred this approach, rather than cutting taxes or services, which is consistent with the results in 2020.

Complete results of the 2022 Citizen Survey are posted on kelowna.ca.

Conclusion:

The Citizen Survey is an opportunity to get a pulse check from the community. While residents generally feel positive about the community and the value of the services they receive from the City, there are a number of areas the City must pay attention in the coming years to maintain the quality of life offered in Kelowna. The next survey will be run in the spring of 2024.

Internal Circulation:

Director of Corporate Strategic Services

Considerations applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Existing Policy:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Communications Comments:

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Submitted by:

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Approved for inclusion:

[NOTE: enter the department director initials here]

cc: