

Strategic Planning Public Input – Phase I

Background

As part of Council's strategic planning, citizens were invited to participate by providing input into the process.

The first phase of the engagement plan included a survey that was made available to all residents, as well as circulated by email to stakeholder groups. Employees of the City of Greater Sudbury were also specifically invited to participate in the process.

The survey was available both electronically on the City's engagement portal, overtoyou.greatersudbury.ca and in paper copy at Citizen Service Centres. These options allowed residents to provide their feedback using the method with which they were most comfortable, and that fit the type of input they were looking to provide.

The purpose of the survey was to gather generalized input into community priorities and to provide an avenue for citizens to express their thoughts about strategic opportunities for the City. Stakeholder groups were able to identify themselves by their group's name, rather than as an individual, when completing the survey.

A total of 412 responses (406 in English and 6 in French) were received during this first phase of public input; however, more than 1,630 people accessed the page, and of those, more than 1,220 people clicked on a link to learn more.

The survey findings are intended to be read in conjunction with other sources of data and information available to Council, including:

- 2018 Citizen Survey results: <https://www.greatersudbury.ca/city-hall/open-government/surveys/> - independent and statistically valid survey conducted in summer 2018 related to citizen priorities.
- 2018 Employee Engagement Survey results: Full results available on City's intranet. Summary report available here: https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=15&id=1249&utm_source=sudbury.com&utm_campaign=sudbury.com&utm_medium=referral The organizational report provides a high-level overview of the issues top of mind for employees.
- 2018 municipal election constituent feedback: the recent municipal election provided elected officials with significant opportunity for discussion with constituents. It is expected that Council will be able to use feedback received through that process to inform their strategic planning process.
- 2019 Budget Public Input: <http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&attach=1>

[hment=25590.pdf](#) Results of the 2019 budget public input were provided to Council on the Finance and Administration Committee meeting of February 19, 2019. The public input results provide an understanding of citizen priorities related to the 2019 budget and for the future.

A summary of these sources of data can be found further on in this report.

Survey Findings

The survey was divided into two sections, the first asked respondents to prioritize options in five categories (Public Infrastructure, Natural Environment, Community Adaptability, Inclusive Growth, and Community Trust and Confidence), and the second asked specific questions regarding risks, services, opportunities, and other factors that Council should consider in strategic planning.

In the prioritization section of the survey, the categories with the most variation between the first and last choices were Community Adaptability, Public Infrastructure and Inclusive Growth, indicating a divide between respondent priorities. The area with the least variation was Natural Environment, indicating that respondents generally had the same view on priorities.

The answers indicated as being most important in each category are as follows:

- Public Infrastructure: Management and renewal of municipal assets
- Natural Environment: Protection and enhancement of the natural environment (though in this area, there was little variation in importance of all options)
- Community Adaptability: Responsible financial planning and service levels
- Inclusive Growth: Affordable housing with Accessible transportation close behind
- Community Trust and Confidence: Culture of public transparency and accountability, with Community engagement as a close second

Where respondents were asked to provide comment or answer specific questions many of the comments had reoccurring themes.

Infrastructure

- Repair current infrastructure and assets (in a number of cases, this was mentioned as an alternative to infrastructure expansion)
- Better use of existing facilities

- Focus on sustainable building

Transportation

- Affordable transit and enhanced service levels for transit
- Importance on walking trails and bike paths

Recreation

- Access to affordable recreation
- Continued and sustainable maintenance of recreation facilities

Downtown Core

- Focus development in the city core
- Limit urban sprawl (in a number of cases, this was specifically linked to the need to maintain green spaces)

Protection of Waterways

- Limit the use of salt on roadways to impacts on drinking water

Climate Change

- Identified as a key risk by a large number of respondents
- Expect businesses to be more energy efficient
- Update infrastructure and the city in general to be better prepared for extreme weather (storms, flooding) including the establishment of appropriate response plans

Affordable Living

- Find cost savings and limiting spending/taxes
- More affordable housing options

Social Services

- Increase services for the aging population

- Enhance accessibility in all types of buildings (including businesses)
- Improve support for mental health

Business

- Attract more businesses to Greater Sudbury
- Retain young talent

The full report of findings is attached. *Note that it has not been redacted for compliance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. As such, this report cannot be publicly shared. A redacted version will be made available publicly at a later date.*

Other Sources of Data

2018 Citizen Survey

This semi-annual survey, conducted in 2016 and 2018 by Metroline Research Inc., generally sought to better understand:

- Issues that are most important to residents;
- Residents' opinion about the quality of life in Greater Sudbury;
- Residents' opinions about municipal services and programs; and
- Residents' general sense of the future of Greater Sudbury.

Generally speaking, Greater Sudbury residents were satisfied with their quality of life: 92% of respondents said their quality of life is fairly good to excellent. Only 8% of residents surveyed were unhappy with their quality of life. Residents cited the local environment (availability of green space, water, beaches, etc.) as well as the community as a whole as significant factors in their overall satisfaction with the quality of life.

By a wide margin, the top issue for almost 4 in 5 Sudbury residents were road conditions, expressed in the top three by 78% of residents. This includes current road conditions and construction, new road planning and construction. On a somewhat similar track to roads, the second mentioned item was infrastructure (33%). Level of taxes, value received for taxes, and what taxes are spent on rounded out the top three items, reported by 30% of residents.

The Large Projects were infrequently mentioned as part of the survey responses. This was also the case in the feedback received in the strategic plan public input: the Large Projects were mentioned a number of times, but did not emerge as a strong theme.

Overall levels of satisfaction were consistent with those from 2016; however, road quality and “planning for the future” remain issues of concern for residents. The comments provided by respondents clearly suggest a link between overall satisfaction and negative perception of municipal roads infrastructure.

The full report of the 2018 Citizen Survey results is available here:

<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=23&id=1245>

2018 Employee Engagement Survey

The 2018 employee engagement survey was conducted in the summer and had a participation rate of 59%. The top three drivers of engagement were identified as: professional growth, innovation, and organizational leadership. Note that these drivers were not necessarily the lowest scoring drivers, but those that had the highest correlation with engagement scores.

One of the most significant challenges identified as part the survey was that employees do not understand the link between their work and the overall vision of the organization. Employees expressed a desire for a stronger connection to the organization's vision.

More than 25% feel they are not able to meet their career goals at the City and are not getting the “right” opportunities for growth. It is important to note that this represents a 5 percentage point increase over 2016, indicating that strategies such as talent development, talent benchmarking, and the City's competency dictionary, are having the intended effect.

Comments and themes related to innovation demonstrate that employees feel there is a resistance to change in the organization, as well as a fear of failure.

2018 Municipal Election

Members of Council were invited to share any feedback they received during the municipal election period with the CAO to compile as part of the input report. No feedback was provided through this medium.

2019 Budget Public Input

A total of 331 responses were received as part of the 2019 budget public input process through a range of different media.

- Budget allocator tool: in every service area, except Road Maintenance and Corporate Administration, the most popular response was to maintain current

funding levels, thereby continuing current service levels. The majority of respondents chose to increase funding for Road Maintenance and reduce funding to Corporate Administration.

- Budget survey: When asked their position regarding taxation, just over a third of survey respondents supported a tax increase in order to enhance services. The next most common response from just under a third of respondents, was those who were not in support of a tax increase and were in favour of a reduction in services. Road maintenance was the most popular choice for a spending increase by almost half of respondents and Corporate Administration was the most popular response for a reduction in spending by approximately a quarter of respondents.
- Idea board: common themes raised on the idea board included environmental and social matters.
- Overall themes:
 - Infrastructure: Many comments focused on the city's infrastructure requirements including the reparation of roads, winter road maintenance, drains and water/wastewater infrastructure requesting that funding be concentrated in these areas.
 - Efficiencies: Residents focused heavily on finding efficiencies and tax savings, requesting that needs be considered over wants and that money go toward "core service" items.
 - Large Projects: several of the Large Projects were the subject of comments, with residents requesting that money be spent differently and suggesting the private sector take on the projects.
 - Environment: regreening efforts and lake protection were referenced as resident priorities.

The full report on the 2019 budget public input is available here:

<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&attachment=25590.pdf>

Alignment of Responses

As can be seen above, there is alignment between the results of the strategic planning public input and previous reports and sources of information. Specifically, there is alignment on key themes, including:

- The importance of infrastructure maintenance

- A focus on “core services”
- Emphasis on social and environmental issues (homelessness, climate change, environmental responsibility and sustainability)
- A focus on sustainable and multimodal transportation networks
- Community engagement and a culture of continued openness and transparency

There were no identified areas of significant discrepancy between areas of importance for residents.

Public Input – Phase II

The second phase of public consultation on the strategic planning process will take place once an initial draft of the strategic plan has been established. The consultation will take place under various formats, including: circulation to stakeholders, loopback with those who participated in the first phase of public input, engagement with stakeholders, employee engagement, etc. More specific information will be provided at a later date.

Conclusion

This report summarizes the key findings associated with the strategic planning public input (phase I) as well as the alignment between these findings and those from previous data sources. As previously noted, these processes are intended to be supplemental to other, previous, consultative processes that may inform Council's discussions and their identification of priorities.