

**TO: Budget and Corporate Services Committee** 

**SUBJECT: 2011 Community Survey Results** 

Report Number: CL-18	File Number(s):				
Report Date: May 11, 2	Ward(s) Affected: 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ All x				
Date to Committee: Mag	y 31, 2011 Date to Council: June 13, 2011				
Recommendation:	X For information only				
Purpose:	<ul> <li>□ Address goal, action or initiative in strategic plan</li> <li>□ Establish new or revised policy or service standard</li> <li>□ Respond to legislation</li> <li>□ Respond to staff direction</li> <li>□ Address other area of responsibility</li> </ul>				
Reference to Strategic Plan:	N/A				
Background:	The City of Burlington has conducted community surveys over the years to better understand the importance residents place on the services delivered by the city and their use of and satisfaction with these services.				
	In April 2011, a survey was conducted of Burlington residents. This report will present the findings of the 2011 Community Survey conducted by Foundation Research Group Inc.				
	The 2011 survey marks the sixth wave of community surveys commissioned by the city. The first survey was done in 1998 and then again in 2001, 2003, 2006 and 2008.				

## **Discussion:**

In March 2011 the city selected Foundation Research Group Ltd. (FRG) to conduct the 2011 Community Survey. The Request For Proposals (RFP) also included conducting a second survey, the exact timing of which has yet to be determined, but we expect that it will be done sometime in late June or early July.

The focus of the first survey was to determine resident satisfaction with a list of 11 city services. Residents were asked how important the various services were to them, as well as their usage and satisfaction with these services. The list of services was the same list that was used in the 2008 Quality of City Services Survey, in order to be able to benchmark the results. The second part of the survey gathered information on how residents receive information from the city and their preferred methods of public involvement. The design of the second part of the survey reflected, in part, similar questions posed by the Region of Halton in their survey.

# Strategy/Process

The 2011 Community Survey was a telephone survey of 752 randomly selected Burlington residents aged 18 or older. The survey was conducted from April 4 to 11, 2011. In order to compare results at the ward level, over-sampling was employed to ensure there was a total of 125 interviews completed in each of the six wards. The overall data has been weighted by ward, age and gender to be representative of the entire city and is accurate to within +/-3.6%, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error at the ward level is +/- 8.8%, 19 times out of 20.

# **Survey Design**

- The survey had 11 questions and took an average of 17 minutes to complete.
- Residents were asked to rate the importance, usage and level of satisfaction with a city service.
- If a service was ranked low in satisfaction residents were then prompted to explain why they ranked the service poorly.
- Residents were asked to rate their satisfaction with a service even if they did not use the service. \*

\*In the 2008 survey residents were not asked to rate their satisfaction with services they did not use. The purpose of adding this question in 2011 was to determine if there were any barriers preventing the use of services such as hours of operation, location, routes, or fees. It is recommended that we continue to ask non-users about their satisfaction in future surveys.

#### Results

Overall, residents remain pleased with the quality of life in Burlington and despite some changes from 2008, results remain positive. A strong majority of residents, 87% consider Burlington to be an excellent or very good place to live. This is a 5% increase over 2008. Of significant importance is the 11% increase in 2011 of those who consider Burlington to be an excellent place to live versus good (2008, 42% excellent versus 53% excellent in 2011).

Residents continue to place a high importance on most city services. The importance rating has increased for almost all city services over 2008, with the greatest increases

going to city arenas (40% to 53%), city community centres (55% to 73%), availability of public parking (61% to 72%) and clearing snow from city sidewalks (74% to 81%).

The services that received the lowest scores for importance (scores for somewhat important, not very important or completely unimportant were combined) were special transit services (58%), on-road bike lanes (59%), regular transit (55%) and off-road bike lanes (51%).

**Potential opportunities:** The transit service review in 2011 will provide additional information about regular transit services. Cycling routes, on-road and off-road, are covered by the cycling master plan. Council has an opportunity, through its strategic planning process and through annual budget decisions, to consider current and future service levels in these areas, based on council's vision and desired future for Burlington.

Overall, usage has dramatically increased for most city services. The greatest increases since 2008 were seen with community centres (21% to 36%), city arenas (16% to 23%), regular and special transit services (17% to 22% and 2% to 7% respectively).

Satisfaction with services varies widely. As noted above residents were asked to rate their satisfaction with a service even if they did not use that service, however when comparing results with previous surveys, responses only from users were used. Satisfaction with the following services saw the greatest increases from 2008 to 2011: snow clearing from city sidewalks and roads (50% to 61% and 65% to 74% respectively), and regular transit service (63% to 71%). It is interesting to note that the use of regular transit has increased from 2008, as has the satisfaction with the service.

When a service received a poor rating from a respondent they were asked what the main reason was for this rating. A list of all the comments received is contained in Appendix A the Community Survey May 11, 2011 report from FRG. Some of the comments of particular interest are noted here. The availability of public parking has been cited as one of the most important services to residents and those who are not satisfied with the service indicated "difficulty finding a parking space and lack of parking in the downtown" as the most common reasons for rating the service poor (55% of the 94 who commented).

**Potential opportunities:** With each service, council has an opportunity to determine its desired future for the community: leading in the service area, lagging in the service area, or somewhere in between. Council's strategic goals related to various transportation methods will impact parking demand and the parking study in 2011 will provide additional information. If there is a particular area of service that council wants to see enhanced, the next survey provides an opportunity to explore more about where additional effort can be targeted.

There were some interesting findings by ward, gender and age. Some of the highlights are listed below. A more complete comparison is available in Appendix A, pages 4 to 8.

#### Ward 1

- The maintenance and condition of city roadsides is significantly more important to Ward 1 survey respondents when compared to Wards 5 and 6 (82% compared to 72% and 68%).
- Residents from Ward 1 are significantly more likely than those from Wards 4 and 6 to consider regular transit services important (56% compared to 36% and 36% respectively).
- Residents in Ward 1 were significantly more likely to be satisfied with special transit services when compared with residents from Ward 6 (59% compared to 39%).

#### Ward 2

- The maintenance and condition of city roadsides is more important to residents in Ward 2 when compared to Wards 5 and 6 (85% compared to 72% and 68%).
- Ward 2 residents were significantly more likely to consider regular transit services important when compared to Wards 4 and 6 (57% compared to 36% and 36%).
- Residents in Ward 2 were also significantly more likely to use regular transit when compared to those in Wards 3, 4, or 6 (34% compared to 15%, 15% and 19%).
- Residents in Ward 2 were also significantly more likely than those in Ward 6 to show high satisfaction levels for regular transit services (62% compared to 46%).
- Those residing in Ward 2 were significantly more likely to consider special transit services important when compared to Wards 3, 4, 5 and 6 (59% compared to 42%, 35%, 39% and 39%).
- Ward 2 residents were significantly more likely than those from Ward 6 to consider the availability of public parking as important (80% compared to 64%).

### Ward 3

- Residents from Ward 3 were more likely than those from Ward 1 and 6 to consider clearing of snow from city roads as important (99% compared to 93% and 91%).
- Ward 3 residents were more likely to be satisfied with special transit services when compared to residents from Ward 6 (58% compared to 39%).

### Ward 4

- Residents living in Ward 4 were significantly more likely to consider Burlington as an excellent or very good place to live when compared to those living in Wards 1 and 2 (92% compared to 80% and 82%).
- Clearing snow from city roads was more important to Ward 4 residents than residents from Wards 1 and 6 (99% compared to 93% and 91%).
- Ward 4 residents were more likely to use off-road multi-use bike paths than residents in Wards 1 and 5 (42% compared to 24% each).

#### Ward 5

- Residents in Ward 5 were significantly more likely to be satisfied with special transit services when compared to residents from Ward 6 (55% compared to 39%).
- Ward 5 residents were also more satisfied with city community centres than residents from Ward 1 (93% compared to 80%).

### Ward 6

- Those residents living in Ward 6 were significantly more likely to use city arenas on a regular basis when compared to residents from Wards 1, 3 and 5 (34% compared to 20%, 17% and 17%).
- Residents from Ward 6 were also more likely to make use of community centres on a regular basis when compared to residents living in Ward 4 (34% compared to 28%).

### Gender

### **Female**

 Women considered the clearing of snow from city roads more important than to men (98% compared to 93%).

#### Male

- Men were more likely to use city arenas and on-road bike lanes on a regular basis than women (29% and 29% compared to 18% and 17%).
- Men were significantly more satisfied than women with the availability of public parking (63% compared to 52%).

## Age 18-34

- Not surprisingly residents 18-34 were significantly more likely than residents aged 55+ to rate the importance of city arenas high (62% compared to 45%).
- This group along with residents aged 35-54 were also more likely to make the most use of city arenas when compared to those aged 55+ (32%, 28% compared to 10%).

### 35-54

- Residents in this age range were more likely to make use of community centres on regular basis when compared to those aged 55+ (39% compared to 25%).
- This group is also more likely to make use of parks, open spaces and sports fields when compared to those aged 55+ (39% compared to 25%)
- It is interesting to note that residents in this age group along with those aged 55+ are more likely to show a high level of dissatisfaction with the availability of public parking when compared to those aged 18-34 (13% and 16% compared to 3%).

### 55+

 As you might expect residents in this age group were significantly more likely to rate importance for special transit services high when compared to residents aged 35-54 (49% compared to 34%).

## City of Burlington Information Source, Usage and Preference

The Burlington Post, the city's website and the city's recreation and leisure guide (Live & Play Guide) were rated as the top three sources of information on city programs and services. These three sources of communication together reach 92% of the city's residents. It is interesting to note that while only 1% of residents indicated that social media was their preferred source for information from the city, 20% said that they would provide input to the city via the city's Facebook page, and 47% would prefer to use Internet surveys. Residents seem to prefer social media as a method for providing input versus a means of getting information from the city.

**Potential Opportunities:** The use of surveys on the city's website, and the use of social media, particularly for information sharing and input. Further planning and/or information about the use of surveys will ensure that opportunities are regularly available, without overloading citizens, and being sure to summarize the citizen input, share it, and use the results so that the impact of the input is clear.

## **Engagement Opportunities**

When asked to rate their satisfaction with the city's efforts to seek input and engage residents, four out of five respondents indicated that they were somewhat or very satisfied with the city's efforts. While there is always opportunity to improve these results are very positive.

**Potential Opportunities:** Through added effort in this area, respondents that are somewhat satisfied may become very satisfied with the city's efforts. This measure of satisfaction can be used in future surveys to assess results from the city's efforts following up on the Shape Burlington and Burlington Inclusivity Advisory Committee recommendations.

### **Effectiveness of Communications**

Residents were asked to rate the city's efforts across a number of communication and consultation-related areas. We seem to doing well at providing information in a form that is clear and understandable (82% for good, very good and excellent) and being open and honest in our communications (76% for good, very good and excellent).

However, the number of opportunities available to the public to provide input into decisions received one of the lowest scores (65% good, very good and excellent). This is clearly an area where we need to do better. Council has made a commitment to bettering the city's efforts in public involvement with their approval of funding for a public involvement co-ordinator for the city. We can expect that scores on this question would increase in future surveys.

**Potential Opportunities:** Again, added effort in this area may change responses from somewhat satisfied to very satisfied with the city's efforts. This measure of satisfaction can be used in future surveys for comparison.

## **Spending Preferences**

In this final section of the survey residents were asked to comment on whether the city should be spending more, less or about the same amount on the 11 city services they were asked about earlier.

It was not surprising that residents wanted more money spent on the services they considered to be the most important. The maintenance and condition of city roads, the availability of public parking, which increased in importance by 11% from 2008 and parks, open spaces and sports fields were the three areas where residents wanted to see more money spent.

City arenas and community centres increased in importance for residents from 2008 (40% to 53% and 55% to 73%), however, residents felt that the same amount of money should be spent on them.

**Potential Opportunities:** These results may be further tested in future surveys by asking questions that allow respondents to choose the type of investments (specific to roads, parking and parks, open space and sports fields, for example) that they encourage. Another opportunity is to allow respondents (in a phone survey or online survey) to choose between pairs of investments, so that additional detail is available to council and staff, possibly during the annual budget process. More information on the city's website and through other means, about such topics as the condition of roads and availability of parking, will also foster increased knowledge and understanding of the investment tradeoffs that are required in annual budget processes.

# **Stated versus Derived Importance**

FRG has evaluated importance in two ways: stated importance, the way we have traditionally measured importance, and derived importance, a statistical calculation based on the correlation between the independent variables (input variables) and a dependent variable (outcome variable). The correlation between satisfaction with services (inputs) and overall satisfaction with city services (outcome) reveals the extent to which the input variables are related to or drive the outcome. With stated importance, there is no statistical relationship between satisfaction with inputs and the output. The relationship, if any, is simply assumed, i.e. what services people say are important must be related to overall satisfaction. In marketing research circles, derived importance is considered more reliable than stated importance.

Using derived importance, regular transit services, clearing snow from city sidewalks and special transit services are identified as being important to residents (latent motivators). The model suggests that investing in these services will result in higher

overall satisfaction scores. That being said, using the stated importance model reveals the availability of public parking is important but investing in it may not drive up satisfaction levels.

Staff recommend that we continue to ask the importance question of residents in future surveys, but we study the use of the derived importance model further.

**Potential Opportunities:** Based on derived importance results, council may choose to invest further in these areas to ensure continued overall satisfaction with the city as a whole, rather than considering the top of mind needs as most important for further action.

#### **Public Consultation**

The first community survey was well received by residents and provides the city with some very useful information as we move forward with the development of our strategic plan. A second survey will be conducted sometime in late June or early July. This survey will allow for more targeted questions on areas of interest as we move further into the strategic planning process. As with the first survey council will have an opportunity to review the questions.

These two surveys combined with the various other opportunities made available to the community such as the Talk About It...Group Workbook, the online survey Burlington, Our Future, and community presentations to council demonstrate Burlington's continued commitment to community involvement.

## **Financial Matters:**

The cost of the second survey will be \$18,750.

## **Source of Funding**

A budget of \$80,000 was carried over from 2010 to fund these surveys.

## **Environmental Matters:**

N/A

### **Communication Matters:**

The survey results are now available on the Burlington, Our Future section of the city's website.

Once the timing of the second survey has been confirmed staff in community relations will once again inform residents and the media by issuing a media release, advertising in the City Update section of The Burlington Post and posting information on the city's website, Facebook page and Twitter.

### **Conclusion:**

The results of the 2011 Community Survey demonstrate that residents in Burlington believe that Burlington is a great place to call home. They remain satisfied with the quality of services we provide, but there are opportunities for improvement.

Our residents are informed and involved in what's going on in our community but they want more opportunities to participate in decision making. As we move forward we must provide meaningful opportunities for involvement.

In the coming weeks staff will prepare a draft list of questions for the summer survey for review by council. This next survey will provide us will further insight into the important issues that are coming out of our strategic planning process.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Walihura Communications Advisor 905-335-7600, ext 7483

## Appendices:

A. Foundation Research Group Ltd.2011 Community Survey, May 11, 2011

В.

Notifications: (after Council decision)

)	Name	Mailing or E-mail Address			

Approvals: *required										
roquirou	*Depar	tment C	ity Treasure	r Genera	l Manager C	ity Manager				
	To be completed by the Clerks Department									
Committee										
Disposition & Comments										
	01-Approved	02-Not Approve	ed 03-Amended	04-Referred	06-Received & Filed	07-Withdrawn				
Council										
Disposition & Comments										
	01-Approved	02-Not Approve	ed 03-Amended	04-Referred	06-Received & Filed	07-Withdrawn				