



INFORMATION REPORT

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| TO: | Mayor and Members General Issues Committee |
| COMMITTEE DATE: | February 28, 2019 |
| SUBJECT/REPORT NO: | 2019 Operating Budget: Our Citizen Survey Business Case (BC-08) (CM19002) (City Wide) |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | City Wide |
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COUNCIL DIRECTION

At the General Issue Committee Budget Meeting of February 8, 2019, staff was directed to provide information about various options relating to the execution of the “Our Citizen Survey”, the City’s citizen satisfaction survey.

INFORMATION

Background:

The Our Citizen Survey is a survey that is completed via mobile and land line telephone interviews and is also available online. Survey results are posted on the city’s website and an open data set of the results has been released.

This funding request, if approved, would provide the funding to increase the sample size of surveys completed via telephone (mobile phone and land line) so that a low (about +/-5%) margin of error can be achieved at the ward level. The online version of the survey would also be conducted.

This would mean that that the City can better:

- 1) Understand the needs and perceptions of Hamiltonians
- 2) Identify areas for improvement in City service delivery, quality of life and well-being
- 3) Understand similarities and differences of Hamiltonian's feedbacks across the 15 Wards

Why Conduct the Our Citizen Survey Regularly?

- When the 2018 results were presented at the General Issues Committee, Councillors were requesting that this survey be performed regularly.
- The ability to monitor change over time and conduct both city-wide and ward level analyses are the strengths of performing the survey bi-annually.
- If this request is not approved, survey results that contain ward-level analysis with a low margin of error will not be able to be provided to Council and residents.

Survey Focus Areas

The focus areas of the survey are:

- Quality of City services
- Well-being/Quality of Life in Hamilton
- Customer Service and Service Channel preferences

The survey also asks residents:

- Preferred method for communicating with City of Hamilton
- Experience and satisfaction with contacting the City
- Ways the City can improve

Without Survey, Resident Satisfaction With Service Provision is Unknown

Without this information, the City of Hamilton does not have comprehensive resident satisfaction information and communications preferences for doing business with the City. With the survey results, the City of Hamilton is able to consider resident satisfaction and feedback in future service delivery decisions and ensure that the communication channels most preferred by residents are utilized.

2018 Survey Results Were Positive

Overall, the results for the 2018 Our Citizen Survey were very positive, particularly regarding satisfaction with quality of life and with some of our city's most essential services. There are some areas where the City can improve; but by and large, the results were positive. An infographic that summarizes the 2018 Our Citizen Survey results can be found in Appendix "A" to Report CM19002.

The Request

The objective of this request is to obtain funding to complete the citizen satisfaction survey, known as "Our Citizen Survey" on a bi-annual basis, with a large enough sample size to achieve a low margin of error (about +/-5%) at the ward level. This requires that a sample size of about 5,700 surveys be completed via telephone. The online version of the survey would also be conducted and while these results can not be considered to be statistically representative, it does provide all residents an opportunity to complete the survey and provide the City with more feedback for consideration. For reference, the 2018 Our Citizen Survey Tool (including all survey questions) is included as Appendix "B" to Report CM19002.

Detailed Ward Results and Fair Ward Representation

The Our Citizen Survey is conducted by both a telephone interview and an online format, and will be available in both English and French. The telephone survey is conducted in a manner that ensures all wards are fairly represented in the survey sample and as such, is a statistically representative sample of the Hamilton population. By completing the Our Citizen Survey bi-annually, both City-wide and ward-level results would be available at a low margin of error (about +/-5% or lower).

Important to Listen to Resident Feedback

Knowing that the City is listening to its most important customers, its residents, is critical and is one of the most valuable types of information that the City needs to deliver services in a manner that achieves value for money and ensures resident satisfaction. Without these survey results, it is difficult for the City to know what residents' perceptions of the City's effectiveness in service delivery are.

Value for Money Approach

The survey development work is conducted in-house by staff to keep the costs as low as possible for this project. This funding request is for procuring contractual services for the administration of the telephone survey using CATI (Computer Automated Telephone Interviewing) technology with live agents and a license fee for the online survey tool.

Annual Per Ward Cost: \$4,300

At a cost of about \$4,300 annually per ward, the information gained at the ward level about resident satisfaction with City service provision and service channel preferences is well worth the cost to conduct the survey. This information is useful to both staff and councillors when creating communication and engagement strategies to ensure that residents are effectively communicated with.

Costs Are Estimates, RFP to be Completed, Actuals May be Lower

A Request for Proposal would be completed to procure the contractual services required to complete the telephone component of the survey. The costs included are a preliminary estimate. The project team is committed to keeping costs as low as possible by having a competitive procurement process.

Options

Recommended Option

That operating funding of \$65,000 be approved to conduct the Our Citizen Survey bi-annually beginning 2019. The actual cost of the survey is estimated to be \$130,000; however, given that the survey will be conducted bi-annually the budget will be spread out over 2 years. In a year that the survey is not conducted the \$65,000 surplus will be transferred to the Tax Stabilization reserve.

Annual Per Ward Cost: \$4,300

If you break down the annual cost to the ward level (there are 15 wards), the estimated annual cost of conducting this survey per ward is about \$4,300. At this cost per ward, this survey provides excellent value-for-money spent when compared to the useful information received.

This option would permit the Our Citizen Survey to be conducted with a large enough sample size to achieve a low margin of error (about +/-5%) at the ward level. This means that a sample size of about 5,700 completed surveys completed via telephone would be needed. The online version of this survey would also be completed.

Alternative #1

Conduct the Our Citizen Survey with the same sample size as the 2018 survey (550 completed telephone surveys). Ward-level results would not be reported.

Annual Per Ward Cost: \$420

(Note: ward-level results cannot be reported for this option)

Pros:

- This is a low-cost option (estimated to be about \$12,500) when compared to the requested enhancement
- City-wide low margin of error (less than +/- 5%)
- Can utilize previously approved capital funding to complete the survey in 2019, additional funding would not be required until 2020.

Cons:

- Ward level margin of errors would range from +/-14.0% to +/-19.2%, results cannot be reported with that type of swing (up to a 38% margin).
- Resident satisfaction with City Services and customer service will not be known at the ward level with the level of precision needed to support local decision-making
- Resident communication preferences with the City will not be known at the ward level with the level of precision needed to support local decision-making.
- Well-being and quality of life results will not be known at the ward level with the level of precision needed to support local decision-making.

Alternative #2

Conduct the Our Citizen Survey with an increased sample size of about 2,000 completed telephone survey and a ward level margin of error of about +/-10%

Annual Per Ward Cost: \$1,600

Pros:

- The actual cost of the survey is estimated to be \$48,000; however, given that the survey will be conducted bi-annually the budget will be spread out over 2 years.
- If completed bi-annually, annual operating budget cost would be \$24,000
- In a year that the survey is not conducted the \$24,000 surplus will be transferred to the Tax Stabilization reserve.
- City-wide low margin of error (less than +/- 5%)

Cons:

- Ward level margin of errors would be as high as +/- 10.1% in some wards, results cannot reliably be reported with that type of swing (20.2% margin).
- Resident satisfaction with City Services and customer service will not be known at the ward level with the level of precision needed to support local decision-making
- Resident communication preference with the City will not be known at the ward level with the level of precision needed to support local decision-making.
- Well-being and quality of life results will not be known at the ward level with the level of precision needed to support local decision-making.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report CM19002: 2018 Our Citizen Survey Results Infographic

Appendix B to Report CM19002: Our Citizen Survey 2018 – Survey Tool