

CITY OF HAMILTON CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Digital, Innovation & Strategic Partnerships

ТО:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	May 3, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Our City Survey 2022 Results (CM23011) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) That Report CM23011, respecting the Our City Survey 2022 results, be received,
- b) That staff are directed to report back with recommendations on the next steps for the evolution of the Our City Survey, including best practices, recommendations on methodology, resourcing and data integration opportunities, prior to initiation of the 2024 budget process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Our City Survey helps the City to understand the resident's perceptions and perspectives on various issues and topics related to the City. It covers a wide range of topics including:

- Perception of the quality of life;
- Views toward the City's vision and priorities;
- Views toward tax direction and service level;
- Assessment of quality and usage of City services;
- Assessment of the quality of interaction with the City;
- Preference for service delivery and communication channels; and
- Views toward community engagement.

The 2022 City of Hamilton Our City Survey was conducted between November 1 and December 18, 2022 via two distinct survey methodologies; a random phone survey and an open online survey. The phone survey collected 1,052 completed surveys. The margin of error +/-3.0%, 19 out of 20 times. The open online survey, which allowed a broader audience to participate, received 2,500 responses. Under this open online format, a margin of error can not be applied.

Amid the challenges facing the community since the last Our City Survey undertaken in 2019, the survey, particularly via the random phone methodology, continues to find positive assessments in most areas. The online survey results are consistent with the expectation that self-selected methodologies report lower satisfaction rates than a random sample survey. Although the online survey supplements the phone survey, the results between the online survey and phone survey can not be directly compared due to the differences in survey methodology, sample size, and respondent profile. Generally though, the distribution of the results between phone and online, followed similar patterns.

Overall, the large majority of phone respondents (78%) are satisfied or very satisfied with their life in Hamilton, and close to half of the phone respondents (46%) are satisfied or very satisfied with what the City of Hamilton is doing in providing and supporting services for the community. Only a little more than half of online respondents (58%) are satisfied or very satisfied with their life in Hamilton, with slightly less than one quarter of online respondents (23%) satisfied or very satisfied with what the City of Hamilton is doing in providing and supporting services for the community.

The insights gained from the survey can help to inform recommendations on strategic planning, and continuous improvement activities across the City.

FINANCIAL - STAFFING - LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: None.

Staffing: None.

Legal: None.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Our City Survey was first launched in 2018 (as the Our Citizen Survey), funded through the 2017 Council approved Capital Project #3381757506. The 2018 survey results were presented as part of Report CM18016 and was completed at the City-wide level only (no ward level data) with a targeted sample size of 550 completed phone surveys, resulting in a margin of error accurate to within +/-4.2%, 19 times out of 20.

1,307 online surveys recieved a response for at least one survey question. The survey was active for 3 weeks.

As part of the 2019 budget process, the Our Citizen Survey Business Case (BC-08) was approved at \$130,000 on a biennial basis (\$65,000 annually). These operating funds supported the undertaking of the 2019 Our City Survey to a +/-1.3% margin of error at the City level, 19 times out of 20, with ward level results at a margin of error of +/-5%, 19 times out of 20, which was new in 2019. The cost difference to achieve the Council approved ward level margin of error was \$130,000 over the cost of the 2018 survey, with the survey active for a total of 18 weeks. The length of the survey was due to the high number of completed surveys required to meet the ward level margin of error, which was challenged in part due to changes in social behaviours in answering phones. The online survey collected 3,374 surveys, where a response was provided for at least one survey question, and the phone survey had 5,771 completed surveys. Prior to the undertaking of the 2019 Survey, the name was changed from Our Citizen Survey to the Our City Survey to be more inclusive. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, the results of the 2019 Our City Survey were delayed till November 2020 and presented as part of Report CM20009.

The costs associated with internal staff resourcing of both the 2018 and 2019 survey, including the planning, analysis and reporting, were covered from surplus operating budgets from the City Manager's Office and Healthy and Safe Communities Departments. To accommodate future iterations of the survey within the existing Our City Survey operating budget, including in-house resource requirements to support the planning, analysis and reporting (although there is no permanent full-time equivalent (FTE) attached to the Our City Survey operating budget), while maintaining an acceptable margin of error at both the City and ward level, the following changes to the Our City Survey were put forward and approved by Council as part of Report CM20009:

- Reduction in the phone survey sample size from 5,775 (margin of error of +/-5%, 19 times out of 20 at the ward level) to 1,500 surveys (City-level margin of error accurate to +/-2.5%, and ward level results accurate to +/-10%, 19 times out of 20);
- Frequency of conducting the Our City Survey moved to a triennial (every three years) cycle as opposed to a biennial (every two years) cycle.

As part of the 2022 Our City Survey, 2,500 online surveys were collected, where a response was provided for at least one survey question and 1,052 phone surveys were completed, with a margin of error +/-3.0%, 19 out of 20 times. Although the undertaking of the 2022 Our City Survey is considered statistically significant, the Council approved margin of error was not met for either the City or ward level, although the time the survey was active was extended by 10 days (total 6 weeks). Due to the inability to meet the Council approved margin of error at the ward level, and in keeping in line with the objective of the Our City Survey, the 2022 Our City Survey analysis and reporting contained within this report highlights city-wide results only; no ward level results.

The full 2022 Our City Survey (phone results) is attached as Appendix A to Report CM23011 and the full 2022 Our City Survey (online results) is attached as Appendix B. Table 1 summarizes the changes from year to year in Council approved direction related to the undertaking of the survey.

Table 1: Survey Changes from Year to Year

Year	2018	2019	2022
Phone Surveys Completed (target, if not met)	550	5,771(5,775)	1052 (1,500)
Phone Margin of Error 19 times out of 20 - City (target, if not met)	+/- 4.2%	+/- 1.3%	+/- 3.0% (+/- 2.5%)
Phone Margin of Error 19 times out of 20 – Ward (target, if not met)	NA	+/- 5%	(+/- 10%)
Phone Margin of Error 19 times out of 20 – Ward (target, if not met)	NA	+/- 5%	+/- 10% to +/- 17% (+/- 10%)
Online Surveys Completed	1,307	3,374	2,500
Total Survey Active Time	3 weeks	18 weeks	6 weeks
Survey Cost (undertaking - third party vendor)	\$12,500	\$143,000	\$32,665
Internal Resourcing (planning, analysis and reporting)	Funded through surplus operating budgets (City Manager's Office and Healthy and Safe Communities Departments)	Funded through surplus operating budgets (City Manager's Office and Healthy and Safe Communities Departments)	Funded from approved Our City Survey operating budget (no FTE)

Challenges in meeting the Council approved margin of error for the phone survey are a concern going forward, leading staff to review potential alternatives to support future iterations of the Our City Survey. Staff will report back to Council prior to the initiation of the 2024 budget process with proposed recommendations, including best practices, recommendations on methodology, resourcing and data integration opportunities.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

None.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Through the course of planning, analyzing and reporting on the results of the 2022 Our City Survey, internal consultation was undertaken with Procurement and Communications staff as required to ensure alignment with procurement policies and to support awareness and participation in the Our City Survey when it was active. In addition, the Senior Leadership Team and subject matter experts were consulted in the development of the survey for applicable service areas.

A best practice review and conversations with 11 municipalities was also undertaken, particularly around trends seen in the results of these types of surveys and to discuss challenges experienced with undertaking phone surveys in today's social environment.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

SURVEY AND METHODOLOGY

The 2022 City of Hamilton Our City Survey was conducted between November 1 and December 18, 2022, through phone, online and paper formats. To qualify to participate in the survey, the participant had to be an adult age 18 years or over, residing in Hamilton.

The Our City Survey 2022 is an updated version of the Our City Survey 2019 with enhancements to question-wording to clarify the overall survey intent while ensuring questions remain comparable to previous years. In particular, the service-specific questions were revised to focus on those who have used the service in the past year. The survey also included the addition of general information questions related to COVID-19 impact, demographic details, digital access and communication preferences.

The phone survey was administerd by a third-party vendor, using a random sample method, where Hamilton-based residential and cellular phone lines were randomly called using Computer Assisted Phone Interviews (CATI), and phone respondents were invited to participate in the survey. The survey collected 1,052 completed phone surveys. Approximately 60% of completed phone surveys were landline, and 40% were cellular. The phone results are weighted by ward and age according to the latest 2016 census data to reflect the population of the City of Hamilton. The phone survey results are accurate to +/-3.0%, 19 out of 20 times at the City level.

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Neither the Council approved margin of error at the ward level nor City wide level was met due to the challenges experienced with the methodology. Challenges in meeting the Council approved margin of error were experienced in 2019 and this trend has been confirmed as a challenge experienced by other municipalities due to changes in the social behaviour of not answering calls from an unknown number.

An online version of the survey was made available on the Engage Hamilton website to supplement the phone survey and allow more residents to participate. The online survey collected 2,500 surveys where a response was provided for at least one (1) survey question. While the open online survey greatly expanded the opportunity for participation, this methodology may be subject to self-selection bias and a margin of error can not be applied. In addition, the online results cannot be directly compared to the phone results due to the differences in methodology, sample size & respondent profile.

Paper surveys were also made available at Hamilton libraries, recreation centres and municipal service centres. No completed paper surveys were submitted.

The phone, online and paper version of the survey was available in English and French, and teletypewriter service was available for phone surveys.

Digital/online ads, city newsletter ads, local newspaper ads, digital banners (City Hall, Gage Park, Farmers Market), social media and promotional posters were used to raise awareness about the survey and encourage participation from residents.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The survey development, data analysis and reporting for the 2022 Our City Survey has been completed in-house to ensure the Our City Survey could be delivered within the available operating budget (although there is no permanent full-time equivalent (FTE) attached to the Our City Survey operating budget).

SURVEY RESULTS

It is important to note that significant, ongoing events at the time the survey was conducted, such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and reputational issues present in the media, may have influenced some of the survey responses. While the phone survey results find positive assessments in most areas, the 2022 results are lower compared to previous years. This trend is not however unique to the City of Hamilton, with a trend of lower satisfaction in post-COVID surveys being observed by other municipalities/cities in Canada, although the degree of severity varied. Municipalities that observed a similar trend to Hamilton include the City of Vaughan, City of Winnipeg, Municipality of Halifax and City of Thunder Bay.

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The results highlighted as part of Report CM23011, primarily come from the statistically representative random phone survey in accordance with Council approved CM20009. The online survey results are consistent with the expectation that the self-selected method reports lower satisfaction rates than the random phone sample survey, but generally, the distribution of the results followed similar patterns. Trend analysis is for phone only, given previous online survey results were not analysed in detail as the focus of previous analysis was on the statistically significant results achieved through the random phone survey.

Complete survey findings for the phone and online survey are attached as Appendix A and Appendix B to Report CM23011.

PERCEPTION OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Phone - Most respondents (78%) are satisfied with their life in Hamilton and agree that Hamilton is a great place to live (75%), work (70%), play (69%), and learn (83%). There is a growing trend that the perception of quality of life has worsened in the past two years. This is a decrease from previous years' results where satisfaction with life was at 87% in 2019 and 92% in 2018.

One of the many variables that impacted the quality of life is the COVID-19 pandemic, where many respondents described that it has worsened their mental health (38%), financial situation (35%) and physical health (27%).

Online – Most respondents (59%) are satisfied with their life in Hamilton and agree that Hamilton is a great place to live (59%), play (54%), and learn (62%). Less than half (44%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that Hamilton is a great place to work. The majority of respondents (59%) viewed the quality of life in Hamilton as worsened in the past two years.

One of the many variables that impacted the quality of life is the COVID-19 pandemic, where many respondents described that it has worsened their mental health (58%), physical health (44%) and financial situation (43%).

VIEWS TOWARD THE CITY'S VISION AND PRIORITIES

Phone - Less than half (42%) of the respondents agree that Hamilton is on the right track toward its vision. There is a downward trend in the agreement that Hamilton is on the right track from 2019 (51%), and 2018 (61%).

The top priority (33%) identified to reach the City's vision is to address social issues. Social issues mainly comprised of comments related to "housing and rental affordability", "homeless and poverty", "daycare and children services", "youth services" and "senior services".

The next top-mentioned common themes are related to "parks, activities & recreation" (8%), "invest in/clean up the City" (7%), "City's work principles and values" (6%) and "safety and policing" (6%).

Online – Less than a quarter (22%) of respondents agree that Hamilton is on the right track towards its vision of being "the best place to raise a child and age successfully".

One fifth (19%) of respondents identified addressing social issues as the top priority to reach the city's vision.

The next top mentioned common themes are related to "City work principles and values" (11%), "Infrastructure, Transit and Roads" (10%), "Safety and Policing" (8%) and "Parks, Activities and Recreation" (8%).

VIEWS TOWARD TAX DIRECTION AND SERVICE LEVEL

Phone - The majority (70%) of respondents indicated that the City should maintain taxes and keep the current service levels. This is consistent with the results of both the 2018 (72%) and 2019 (72%) surveys.

Online - Most respondents (53%) prefer to maintain tax and keep the current service level.

ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY AND USAGE OF CITY SERVICES

Phone:

Nearly half (46%) of the respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with what the City of Hamilton is doing in providing and supporting services for the community. This is significantly higher than those who are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (29%).

Although the result of this question is lower than previous years' results, with satisfaction at 62% in 2019 and 66% in 2018, the change was expected given the modified question wording, which is to get a high-level look at how residents feel about services being provided across the community rather than the overall satisfaction of services, which is difficult to gauge from this type of survey.

29 service-specific questions were included in the survey, including Police and Libraries. 23 out of the 29 service areas are rated as good, very good or excellent by most respondents. While the service-specific questions were revised in 2022 and focused on those who have used the service in the past year, the survey methodology cannot verify whether the respondent used the service.

The ratings should not be compared between service areas.

The services most rated excellent, very good or good by respondents are:

- Fire Department (97%)
- Libraries and Bookmobiles (92%)
- Paramedic Services (88%)
- Cemeteries (87%)
- Parks and Open Space (84%)

The services most rated poor by respondents are:

- Community Housing (49%)
- Roads and Sidewalks (39%)
- Services for Seniors including Long Term Care (30%)
- Traffic Flow and Roadway Safety (30%)
- Social Services (28%)
- Wastewater Management (28%)

The rating for most service areas did not change significantly compared to the 2019 results. The services that had the greatest change are:

	2022	2019	Change
Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) Buses	75%	66%	+ 9%
Snow Plowing of City-owned Facilities	78%	70%	+ 8%
Social Services	45%	52%	- 7%
Legislative Services and Information Management	61%	67%	- 6%

Online:

Nearly a quarter of the respondents (23%) reported that they are satisfied or very satisfied with what the City of Hamilton is doing in providing and supporting services for the community.

29 service-specific questions were included in the survey, including Police and Libraries. 20 out of the 29 service areas are rated as good, very good or excellent by most respondents. While the service-specific questions were revised in 2022 and focused on those who have used the service in the past year, the survey methodology cannot verify whether the respondent used the service.

The ratings should not be compared between service areas.

The services most often rated as good, very good or excellent are:

- Libraries and Bookmobiles (89%)
- Fire Department (87%)
- Drinking Water (80%)
- Paramedic Services (77%)

Parks and Open Space (74%)

The services most often rated as poor are:

- Community Housing (69%)
- Social Services (54%)
- Roads and Sidewalks (47%)
- Traffic Flow and Roadway Safety (40%)
- Building Permits (40%)

There may be gaps between the rating by residents of the City's services, service standards and the actual performance. The ratings are based only on those respondents that provided specific feedback to the questions and not those that indicated they have not used this service or do not know. These ratings along with other city data help to identify communication and knowledge gaps between the City's service performances and the perceptions of the community. In some cases, though every effort was made to clarify the specific service area related to the city, some respondents may associate the questions with services provided by other levels of government or community providers. The 2022 Our City Survey questions have been attached as Appendix C to report CM23011.

ASSESSMENT OF THE CITY'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A new question was added to the 2022 Our City Survey to address Council direction in response to (Report CM22010(a)) After Action Report COVID-19 Pandemic Response, which is to understand the public's perception of the city's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Phone - More than 3 out of 4 (77%) respondents rated the City's response as good, very good or excellent.

Online –More than 6 out of 10 (62%) respondents rated the City's response as good, very good or excellent.

ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF THE INTERACTION WITH THE CITY

Phone - 4 out of 10 respondents (42%) reported they had contacted the City of Hamilton in the past year, and for those who have contacted the City, the majority (74%) reported a positive experience. They felt that city staff were courteous (87%) and knowledgeable (75%), their question was answered (75%) and they received a timely response (74%).

This is consistent with the 2018 and 2019 survey results:

- Overall positive experience 72% (2019) and 83% (2018)*
- Staff courteous 86% (2019) and 88% (2018)
- Staff knowledgeable 79% (2019) and 81% (2018)

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- Question answered 74% (2019) and 80% (2018)*
- Timely response received 74% (2019) and 79% (2018)
- * denotes a significant change between 2019 and 2018

Online –More than 6 out 10 (62%) reported they had contacted the City of Hamilton in the past year, and for those who have contacted the City, just over one-third (34%) reported a positive experience. Only 45% felt that city staff were courteous, 36% felt that staff were knowledgeable, 37% felt their question was answered and that they received a timely response (37%).

PREFERENCE FOR SERVICE DELIVERY AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

There have been notable shifts in the preferred way of interacting with the City. The majority of respondents preferred the City of Hamilton website, phone, and email services over in-person services for all types of interactions. This is mostly consistent with the online survey.

Resident service channel preferences were as follows:

- Residents most prefer to use the City of Hamilton website to get information, register for programs and services, apply for licenses and permits, book/rent city facilities or parks, and make payment for programs, services, permits, licenses, fines etc.
- Residents prefer to use phones to make complaints / provide feedback or compliment.
- Residents prefer to pay their property taxes through their bank

Topic areas where most respondents reported that they would like to receive information on from the City of Hamilton are:

- Updates on what the City of Hamilton is doing or planning to do and the impacts in the community
- City of Hamilton service changes and updates, resident safety tips and reminders
- Events run/sponsored by the City of Hamilton

Residents have a broad range of preferences for how they like to get information about the City of Hamilton's programs, initiatives, news and events. The top three methods are E-mail, the City of Hamilton website (hamilton.ca) and postal mail. The top three methods for the online survey included social media instead of postal mail.

This data help to inform the digital services and communication planning process.

VIEWS TOWARD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Phone - One-third of the respondents agree that the City of Hamilton engages residents (34%) and uses residents' input (32%) in the decision-making process for City programs, services, and initiatives. This is consistent with the 2019 responses of 32% and 33% respectively (the first year the question was asked). Fewer respondents strongly disagreed that the City engages residents (3%) and uses input from residents in decision-making (3%) compared to 2019 where responses were 11% and 11% respectively.

Online - Nearly a quarter (23%) of the respondents agree that the City of Hamilton engages residents and nearly one fifth agree residents' input (19%) is used in the decision-making process for City programs, services, and initiative.

SHARING & USING SURVEY RESULTS

Survey results have been shared with the Senior Leadership Team and Departmental Leadership teams, who were responsible for sharing the results within their respective service areas. The Our City Survey results, combined with more specific data, including service satisfaction data where available, can help to identify potential opportunities for improvement within city services. In addition, Our City Survey results on questions related to service delivery and communications preferences and digital services helps to identify opportunities within these service areas for alignment with the needs and preferences of our community.

The survey findings will be available through the City of Hamilton website hamilton.ca/ourcitysurvey and open data files for 2018, 2019 and 2022 are all available via the City's open data portal at open.hamilton.ca. The 2022 data are non-aggregated to provide a more open and transparent source of information that can be accessed and read by the public.

A communications plan has also been created for further public outreach to advise around the results of the 2022 Our City Survey. A one-page infographic, attached as Appendix D to Report CM23011, is a quick reference tool and can be utilized for a general snapshot of random phone results.

SURVEY LEARNINGS

Areas of improvement were identified for future surveys including ensuring future iterations align with the intent of the survey by minimizing non-relevant questions and linking the survey structure and questions to the City's priorities and initiatives to inform decision-making. This will achieve a greater understanding around how the City is doing in meeting the expectations of the community, while allowing for future integration of survey results with more focused surveys that support more specific questions

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related to levels of services, budget and service satisfaction, resulting in a more complete picture around how the City is doing in regards to service delivery.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Not Applicable.

Subject to Council approval of the recommendations to Report CM23011, more Information related to survey learnings will be included in a follow-up report, including best practices, recommendations on methodology, resourcing and data integration opportunities.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement and Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.

Economic Prosperity and Growth

Hamilton has a prosperous and diverse local economy where people have opportunities to grow and develop.

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive City where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

Clean and Green

Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Hamilton is supported by state-of-the-art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

Culture and Diversity

Hamilton is a thriving, vibrant place for arts, culture, and heritage where diversity and inclusivity are embraced and celebrated.

Our People and Performance

Hamiltonians have a high level of trust and confidence in their City government.

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APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report CM23011: Our City Survey 2022 Phone Survey Report

Appendix "B" to Report CM23011: Our City Survey 2022 Online Survey Report

Appendix "C" to Report CM23011: Our City Survey 2022 Survey Questions

Appendix "D" to Report CM23011: Our City Survey 2022 Results Infographic