



Standing Committee Report Committee of the Whole

To: Committee of the Whole
From: Director of Communications and Information Services
Date: January 30, 2025
Subject: RDCO 2024 Citizen Survey Results

Objective: To review the results of the statistically valid citizen survey conducted in the fall of 2024, as one of several inputs available to the Regional Board for data-driven decisions about priority setting and allocating resources.

Discussion:

The RDCO conducted a regional citizen survey from October 28 to November 14, 2024. Data was collected by Ipsos through a randomly sampled, 12-15 minute telephone survey.

Key regional survey results are largely positive with:

- 92% of residents reporting their overall quality of life as good
- 88% of residents reporting the Central Okanagan is a safe place to live
- 92% of residents reporting they are satisfied with the overall level and quality of RDCO services they receive
- 82% of residents reporting they get good value for their taxes.

Ipsos was contracted for the project as an established company that specializes in surveying and using Ipsos allows benchmarking against other local governments from across Canada.

With 700 surveys completed, the survey uncovered geographically and demographically representative data about regional residents using postal codes to fill quotas. The final sample was weighted by gender, age and community population. While survey is statistically valid and overall results for the region are accurate to + or – 3.7 percent, 19 times out of 20, the margin of error is larger for the sample subgroups.

The importance of citizen surveys

Surveying is an excellent tool to gather citizen feedback, determine citizen priorities, and to gauge resident satisfaction with current RDCO programs and services.

The citizen survey provides a snapshot of citizen perceptions and priorities:

- One of several inputs that can be used by the Regional Board to help inform decisions about corporate priorities and budget allocation
- A statistically valid community pulse, fulfilling the Regional Growth Strategy's requirement for community measures
- An opportunity for residents to identify the community issues most important to them

- A representative view of how residents feel about the RDCO's performance
- A representative view of resident satisfaction with services, their priorities, and their overall perception of quality of life in their community

Citizen survey focus

This survey focuses on:

- Perception of quality of life and community safety within the region
- Community issue identification
- RDCO services, performance, financial planning and priority setting
- Satisfaction with customer service
- Housing
- Community resiliency

Survey results highlights

- Key regional survey results are largely positive with variations by community within the Central Okanagan:
 - Overall quality of life: 92% good
 - Overall safe place to live: 88% safe
 - Overall level and quality of RDCO services: 92% satisfied
 - Overall value for taxes: 82% good
- Perceptions of overall quality of life remain overwhelming positive with more than 9 in 10 residents (92%) reporting quality of life if good. Despite overall positive perceptions, more than half (54%) feel this has worsened over the past two years, citing growing concerns about the rising cost of living.
- The top three regional issues are social (46%), transportation (39%) and government services (21%)
 - Social issues continue to be seen as the most important issue facing the region, mentioned by nearly half of the residents. The social issues category is predominantly comprised of mentions related to poverty, homelessness and housing / affordable housing.
 - Transportation is second with mentions of traffic congestion, public transportation, condition of roads.
 - Government issues include water supply / quality, infrastructure, fire prevention / management, garbage collection / recycling / composting
- Overall perceptions of regional safety are consistent with the 2022 survey, with just under 9 in 10 residents (89%) describing the Central Okanagan as a safe place to live. While residents continue to say the Central Okanagan is a safe place to live overall, 59% feel it has become less safe over the past two years.
- Familiarity with the Regional District has not changed, with just over half (51%) saying they are familiar with the organization's role and purpose.

- Overall satisfaction with RDCO services remains high at 92%. This year's satisfaction ratings are statistically consistent with 2022 with the exception of 9-1-1 call service and Westside Residential Disposal and Recycling Centre, which both increased in satisfaction. None have statistically declined.
 - The highest satisfaction is with:
 - Westside residential disposal and recycling centre (93%)
 - Collection of household garbage, recycling and yard waste (92%)
 - Regional Parks (92%)
 - Regional emergency management program (91%)
 - The lowest scoring service, regional planning and growth management still has the majority of resident reporting they are satisfied at 59%
- Key financial metrics hold steady with this year's results consistent with 2022. The perceived value for taxes remains high (82%) and residents continue to prefer tax increases over service cuts (54%).
 - There are statistical differences for Electoral Areas in these measures. Electoral Area residents are more likely to say they receive poor value for their tax dollars, particularly in Electoral Area West.
- Residents continue to emphasize the importance of having a regional transportation function with nearly all residents (90%) saying it is important.
- Satisfaction with the Regional District's customer service remains high with 89% of people who contacted or dealt with RDCO saying the overall services they received was satisfactory.
- There is support for initiatives aimed at increasing the housing supply in neighbourhoods:
 - 71% of residents saying they support increasing the amount of housing to address housing shortages
 - 73% reporting support for additional housing types to support a diverse range of income levels and family types
- Suggestions for increasing community resiliency focus on public education and wildfire mitigation.

Next Steps:

It is anticipated that the survey will be conducted every two years for the Regional Board's first and third year of each term. The next survey will take place in fall 2026.

Recommendation:

THAT the Committee of the Whole receive the report RDCO 2024 Citizen Survey Results from the Director of Communication and Information Services dated January 30, 2025, for information.

Respectfully submitted and approved by: Jodie Foster, Director of Communications and Information Services

Approved for Agenda: Sally Ginter, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment(s): 1. Ipsos Final Report RDCO 2024 Citizen Survey
 2. Ipsos presentation
