



# Standing Committee Report *Committee of the Whole*

**To:** Committee of the Whole  
**From:** Director of Communication and Information Services  
**Date:** January 12, 2023  
**Subject:** RDCO Citizen Survey

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**Objective:** To review the results of the statistically valid citizen survey conducted in the fall of 2022, as one of several inputs available to the Regional Board for data-driven decisions about priority setting and allocating resources

## **Discussion:**

The RDCO conducted its first regional citizen survey from October 27 to November 16, 2022. Data was collected by Ipsos through a randomly sampled, 12-15 minute telephone survey. With 700 surveys completed, the results are statistically valid and overall results for the region are accurate to + or – 3.7 percent, 19 times out of 20.

Key survey results are largely positive with:

- 94% of residents reporting their overall quality of life as good
- 94% of residents reporting they are satisfied with the overall level of RDCO services they receive
- 79% of residents reporting they get good value for their taxes.

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. The survey is statistically valid and overall results for the region are accurate to + or – 3.7 percent, 19 times out of 20.

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

The survey was funded through a COVID Restart grant from the Provincial government and the Regional Growth Strategy projects budget.

## **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 and community communication

### **Survey result highlights**

- Key survey measures are largely positive.
  - Overall Quality of Life: 94% good
  - Overall Satisfaction with Services: 94% satisfied
  - Overall Value for Taxes: 79% good value
- Satisfaction with individual services is also strong.
  - Overall highest ratings going to regional parks, collection of household garbage, recycling, and yard waste, and fire protection services.
  - Relatively lower scores for Regional District water systems, electoral area planning, and regional planning and growth management –but even these are rated satisfactory by the majority of citizens.
- While perceptions of overall quality of life are high, many feel this has worsened over the past two years. This is primarily due to the rising cost of living as well as safety concerns, population growth, and COVID-19.
- Social issues top the public issue agenda, led by concerns around poverty/homelessness and housing/affordable housing.
- Transportation is also a key issue. There is strong interest in having a regional transportation function.
- Overall perceptions of safety are positive. However, most feel the Central Okanagan has become less safe over the past two years.
- Overall familiarity with the Regional District and its services is mixed. Only a few demonstrate a strong understanding of the organization's role and purpose.
- Citizens prefer tax increases over service cuts.
- While overall satisfaction with communications is positive, one-quarter of citizens are dissatisfied with the Regional District's performance in this area.

- Overall satisfaction with the Regional District's customer service is high.
  - Highest ratings for staff's courteousness, knowledge, and helpfulness.
  - Speed and timeliness of service, ease of reaching staff, and staff's ability to resolve issues score relatively lower but still high overall.

Statistically valid data from the survey can be used as an input to establish priorities and allocate resources. It should be noted that not all issues as outlined by residents in the survey can be directly addressed by the RDCO.

**Next Steps:**

The total cost of the survey was \$52,000, funded through the COVID restart grant and funds allocated to Regional Growth Strategy projects. It is anticipated that the survey will be conducted every two years for the Regional Board's first and third year of each term.

**Recommendation(s):**

**THAT** the Committee of the Whole of the Regional Board receives the RDCO Citizen Survey from the Director of Communication and Information Services dated January 12, 2023, for information.

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Respectfully submitted by:



Jodie Foster, Director of Communication and Information Services

Attachment(s):

1. Ipsos Final Report RDCO 2022 Citizen Survey

**Approved for Committee of the Whole Agenda**



**Brian Reardon, CAO**