



Subject: Community Survey Results

To: Council

From: Chief Administrative Office

Report Number: 2021-137

Meeting Date: May 10, 2021

Recommendation:

That Chief Administrative Office report 2021-137 and accompanying presentation be received for information; and

That the Manager of Strategic Initiatives be directed to bring forward the final draft of the Strategic Plan as well as the detailed Implementation Plan for Council's final review and approval at the May 25, 2021 Council meeting.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to review results from a survey conducted to obtain resident input on community issues and priorities, which will assist Council and staff in finalizing a new strategic plan.

Background:

City staff have been developing a new strategic plan based on facilitated roundtable discussions with Council and staff in 2019 and 2020. This project was postponed in March 2020 because of the COVID-19 global pandemic and resumed in the fall of 2020. A draft strategic plan framework was presented at the March 22 Council meeting. Council directed staff to survey the community to ensure the plan aligns with and reflects the pulse of the community in terms of issues and priorities.

A survey was developed and posted on the City's website from Monday, April 12 to Friday, April 23, 2021. Hard copies of the survey were also made available at the Public Library and City Hall. The survey was promoted through a news release, a newspaper advertisement, frequent mentions on the City's social media channels, and email

invitations to key contacts and community stakeholders who were also encouraged to share the information and survey link with others.

In total, 620 residents completed the survey. Residents who completed surveys and provided their email addresses have been entered into a draw for one of six \$50 gift certificates to a Port Colborne business of their choice.

Discussion:

City staff are encouraged by the survey participation rate. Based on 620 completed surveys and the number of residents over 18 years of age (estimate of 15,530 based on census information), the participation rate is 4%. Municipal surveys for an Ontario city with a population size similar to Port Colborne generally average 600 responses.

The purpose of the survey was to obtain resident input on a broad range of community issues in order to assist Council and staff in finalizing a new strategic plan that aligns with the community's priorities.

The survey results are shared in the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Graphs and tables present the data in descending order based on percentage and the question's rating scale. After the responses to each question were analyzed according to their weighted percentage, a consistent pattern in ranking across questions helped to reveal important issues and priorities. A list of issues and priorities was compiled and analyzed in conjunction with the contents of the draft strategic plan. This part of the analysis involved a thoughtful and thorough process whereby the plan's statements, principles, pillars, goals and action items were assessed in relation to the issues and priorities uncovered.

Staff provide the following comments regarding alignment between the survey results and the draft strategic plan:

- The community was given the opportunity to identify issues and priorities without viewing and being influenced by the draft strategic plan;
- Services and programs must continue to be delivered in quality and innovative ways and demonstrate excellence in meeting the community's needs;
- The input received suggests there is a shared vision and common goals for the unique and valued assets found throughout the community;
- The issues identified by the community underpin and link to the various studies and plans in the draft strategic plan, including areas such as arts and culture, parks and recreation, economic development and tourism, and land use planning;

- The priorities that matter most to the community reflect the numerous projects, initiatives and action items included in the draft strategic plan;
- Overall, the community's needs, values and vision show a strong connection to the concept of sustainability, which serves as a foundation for the path forward.

A section summarizing the survey results will be added to the final draft of the strategic plan and a full report of these same results will be added to the City's website. Staff would like to thank the residents who participated in the survey and shared their invaluable feedback.

Internal Consultations:

Prior to the survey going live, it was tested by a group of City staff to work out any technical glitches and make any revisions to questions.

Financial Implications:

There are no cost implications associated with this report and its recommendations. The survey, along with the development of the strategic plan, is being completed in-house by City staff. The \$300 in gift certificates will be funded from the Economic Development and Tourism Services Division operating budget.

Public Engagement:

As per Council direction at the March 22nd meeting, City staff developed a survey to obtain community input that will be used to assist Council and staff in finalizing the City's strategic plan.

Conclusion:

A new City strategic plan is being completed that will include vision and mission statements, guiding principles, community and corporate pillars, goals and action items, and an implementation plan. Council directed staff to survey residents to ensure that community issues and priorities are reflected in the key themes of the strategic plan. In total, 620 surveys were completed, which represent favourable participation relative to municipal survey averages.

Based on an analysis of the results, the residents surveyed are supportive of the current direction and priorities of the City. They have also outlined areas for improvement and

identified community issues that should be given more attention. A copy of the survey results will be shared with City staff.

Appendices:

- a. Community Engagement Survey PowerPoint Presentation

Respectfully submitted,

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Report Approval:

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final approval is by the Chief Administrative Officer.