



Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: June 4, 2019

Report Number: SRCM.19.04

Department: Office of the City Manager

Division: Strategic Initiatives and Communication Services

Subject: **SRCM.19.04 - 2019 Community Survey**

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the 2019 Community Survey, which was completed to obtain residents' views on the City's services and quality of life in Richmond Hill.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That staff report SRCM.19.04 and the results of the 2019 Community Survey, attached as Appendix A to this report, be received.

Contact Person:

Lise Conde, Manager, Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs, ext. 6410

Ashley Dickinson, Researcher, ext. 3829

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Meeta Gandhi, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Communication Services

Approved by: Neil Garbe, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

Since 2000, Richmond Hill has conducted five community surveys (in 2000, 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2016) to collect feedback from residents on the City and the services we provide.

In 2019, between March 25 and April 9, Richmond Hill completed its sixth community survey to measure residents' perceptions on life in Richmond Hill and the services the City delivers. Where possible, questions from previous surveys were included to allow for tracking of trends.

On April 9, 2019, Richmond Hill passed By-law 56-19 to officially change Richmond Hill's name to The Corporation of the City of Richmond Hill. As the survey was conducted prior to this change, residents were asked questions about the "Town" of Richmond Hill. In the 2019 Community Survey report (Appendix A), Richmond Hill is referred as a City, except when the exact wording of survey questions or responses is being quoted.

2019 Community Survey Methodology

Ipsos LP was selected through a Request for Quotation (RFQ) process to conduct a statistically representative survey and synthesize the results. They conducted a telephone survey, roughly 15 minutes in length, of 800 randomly selected Richmond Hill residents aged 18 and over. The margin of error for this sample size is +/-3.5% or 19 out of 20.

Age and ward quotas were set to ensure that survey responses were based on an accurate representation of the City's population. The age quota was set specifically for residents aged 18 to 35 to ensure enough residents in this age bracket responded to the survey, as it has traditionally been a difficult demographic to reach. Additionally, a quota of 120 responses per ward was set to ensure results reflect views of residents evenly across the wards. The response rate for this survey was 12 percent, which is typical of a telephone survey with multiple quotas.

In an effort to be as inclusive as possible, respondents were given the option to complete the survey in English, Cantonese, Farsi or Russian, as these are the top languages spoken in Richmond Hill based on Census 2016 data from Statistics Canada. All randomly selected respondents were asked if they were comfortable conducting the interview in English. Respondents who said they were not were offered a call back to complete the survey in either Cantonese, Farsi or Russian. A total of 34 call backs were requested in a different language (seven in Russian, 20 in Cantonese, and seven in Farsi). Of the requested call backs four were completed in Cantonese and one in Farsi.

Attempts were made to include cell phones in the 2019 survey. Ipsos LP expected that it would be possible to isolate Richmond Hill-specific cell phone numbers based on the information available from cellular service providers. However, once the survey was

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underway it was determined that the majority of Richmond Hill-specific cell phone numbers have not yet been assigned (i.e. they are with cell providers waiting for people to purchase new cell numbers). As a result, it was not possible to isolate a list of assigned cell numbers for Richmond Hill residents, thus only a few cell phone participants were included in this survey, less than originally intended. However, Ipsos made additional efforts to ensure that all quotas were met despite this unanticipated challenge.

2019 Community Survey Results

The 2019 Community Survey results are attached to this staff report as Appendix A. Key highlights of these results include the following:

- An overwhelming majority (92%) of residents are satisfied with Richmond Hill as a place to live; however, slightly fewer residents indicate this compared to in 2016 (down 4 points from 96%).
- Residents find the most appealing aspects of Richmond Hill to be 'location/close to amenities' (42%, down 4 points from 2016), and 'lots of parks and open spaces' (27%, up 7 points from 2016). The third most appealing thing about the City was tied between two aspects; 'Close-knit/high community spirit' (up 6 points from 2016) and 'good services/amenities' (a new theme identified in this survey).
- Residents continue to identify traffic as the most important issue the City will have to deal with in the next 5 to 10 years (35%, down 10 points from 2016), followed by 'improving public transit' (29%, down 2 points from 2016) and 'urbanization/overcrowding/population growth' (28%, down 1 point from 2016).
 - Compared to 2016, there is a significant increase in the number of residents who identified 'improving the road system' (26%, up 15 points) as a top issue for Richmond Hill. As the survey was conducted at the end of March, this may have been influenced by anticipated road repair required as a result of the winter season that had not yet been completed.
- 89% of residents agree that Richmond Hill has a good network of parks, natural areas and trails. In previous years, this question was asked in a different way which means we can't directly compare this response to previous years. However, satisfaction with our parks, natural areas and trails has historically been high.
 - Consistent with the results of the last two community surveys, 85% of residents agree Richmond Hill is a welcoming community. 82% of residents agree that diversity is one of the City's strengths (up 4 points from 2016), and 81% agree that Richmond Hill is a vibrant community (down 2 points from 2016). Compared to 2016, less residents agree that infrastructure is well maintained (78% in 2019, down 5 points). As infrastructure continues to be a topic of ongoing dialogue at all levels of

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government, this result may be influenced by the profile of this issue due to media coverage.

- The vast majority of residents (92%) are satisfied with the overall services offered by Richmond Hill (down 2 points from 2016).
- Consistent with all four previous community surveys, resident satisfaction is highest with fire protection services (98%, down 1 point from 2016). Satisfaction with recreation facilities, and with parks, open spaces and pathways increased to 95% (up 4 points from 2016) and 94% (up 5 points from 2016), respectively. Notably, satisfaction with by-law and parking enforcement increased by 7 points from 2016 to 81%.
 - Satisfaction with the condition and maintenance of Town sidewalks decreased by 7 points from 2016 to 81%, and road quality and maintenance decreased by 14 point to 65%. As with residents' identification of improving the road system as a top issue, this may be influenced by the winter/spring time period during which the survey was conducted making maintenance more top of mind.
- Satisfaction with specific areas of service impact the level of satisfaction with our City services as a whole more than others. For example, satisfaction with recreation and culture programs is strongly correlated to overall satisfaction with City Services. Using this analysis, Ipsos identified areas that are City strengths that should be protected, and areas where we may wish to focus to improve overall resident satisfaction.
 - The top three areas of strength are recreation and culture programs, Access Richmond Hill and administrative services. These are areas of strength for the City of Richmond Hill, as these services are of high importance and have high satisfaction levels.
 - The top three areas for improvement are snow clearing from roads and sidewalks, land use planning and road quality and maintenance. These are areas for improvement for the City of Richmond Hill, as these services are of high importance and have lower satisfaction levels.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

There are no financial, staffing or other implications to this report.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan:

Understanding residents' perceptions of Richmond Hill helps us to measure our progress in implementing our Strategic Plan's vision and goals. The survey also demonstrates Richmond Hill's commitment to citizen engagement as we use the community's overall views of the City to help guide our future areas of focus.

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Conclusion:

The community survey provides the City with information about our residents' thoughts about our services and programs, and helps determine areas where further focus may be required. The survey also allows us to understand how our residents overall views about the City have changed over time.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. If you require an alternative format please call contact person listed in this document.

- Appendix A: 2019 Community Survey Results

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCM.19.04 2019 Community Survey.docx
Attachments:	- Richmond Hill 2019 Community Survey Draft Final.pptx
Final Approval Date:	May 14, 2019

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Meeta Gandhi - May 14, 2019 - 1:22 PM

Neil Garbe - May 14, 2019 - 2:22 PM