



What We Heard Report – Draft 2022-2025 Strategic Plan Survey

Engagement Summary

November 16, 2021



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1 Background

The City of Saskatoon's Strategic Plan is a guiding document. It sets the direction and priorities for the organization over the next four years to help the City move closer to its vision of making Saskatoon *a great place to live, work, learn, and play*.

The Strategic Plan is considered a 'living document', meaning it will be monitored regularly to assess progress and support successful outcomes. Also, there will be opportunities for City Council and City Administration leadership to assess the relevancy of the document during the four-year lifespan and ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the organization and the community.

The purpose of this engagement was to collect feedback on the content of the plan's three pillars: 1) Advance City Council's Priorities, 2) Deliver Excellence in Core Services and Operational Priorities, and 3) Drive Corporate Transformational Change, as well as receive any general comments respondents may have regarding the draft 2022-2025 Strategic Plan.

2 Engagement Results

A public survey and staff survey were both open for responses from October 27 to November 10, 2021. Shortened descriptions of the priorities were provided within the survey. As well, a link to the full draft 2022-2025 Strategic Plan was provided in the survey for those interested in reading the full content.

The results for each survey are presented separately below. Comments received were paraphrased and, where appropriate, pulled together into themes.

2.1 Public Survey

In total, there were 538 responses to the public survey.

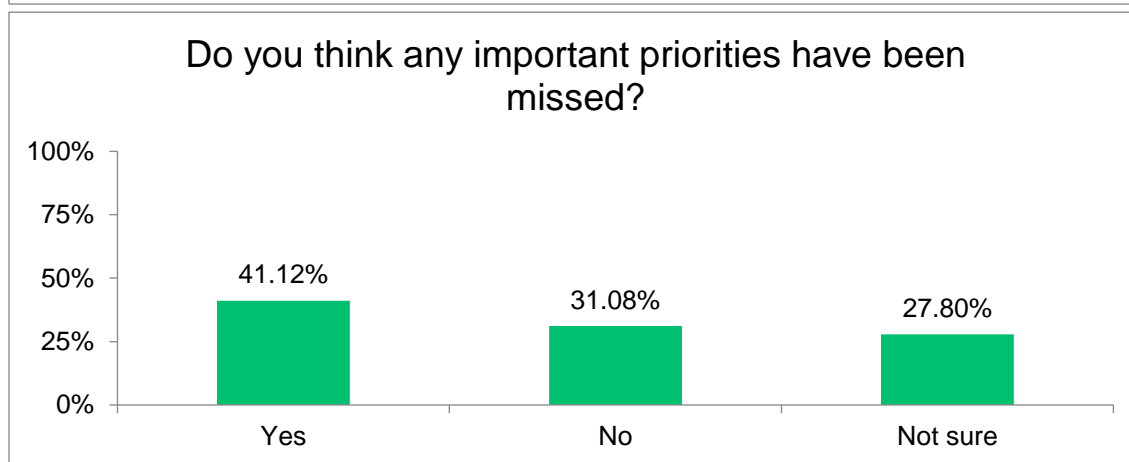
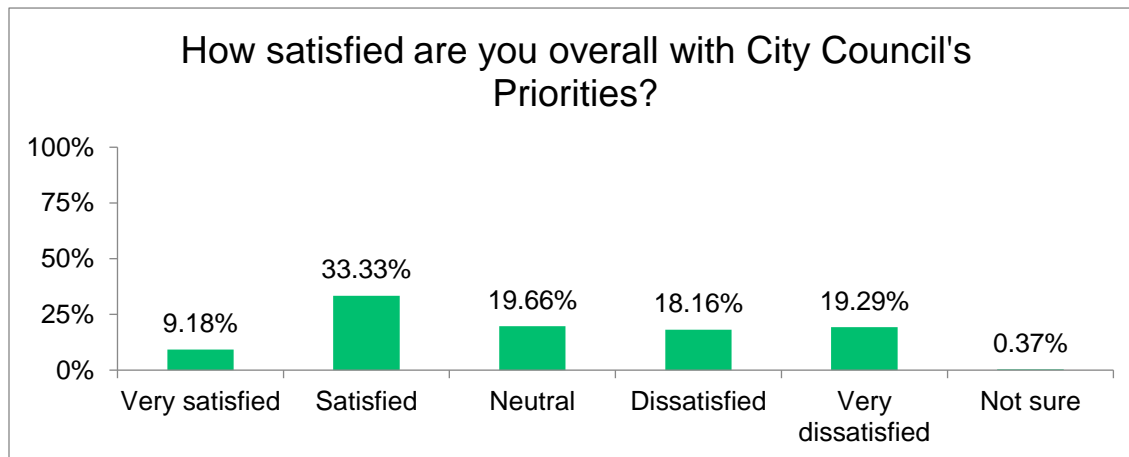
General Themes

The following themes were evident in responses to questions for all three pillars, as well as in general comments.

- Demands to cut costs and improve fiscal responsibility
 - opposed to tax increases
 - opposed to increases to utility fees / user fees
 - opposed to high-cost projects (e.g., arena, library, bus rapid transit, bike lanes) / maintain what we have rather than build new
 - Strategic Plan does not address affordability / cost of living for residents
- Focus on core services
 - more focus needed on maintenance of infrastructure (e.g., road, sidewalk, playground equipment and parks maintenance)
 - more focus on transportation services to improve safety, access and flow
 - the City is overreaching its jurisdiction (e.g., addressing racism, social and health issues)
 - sentiment that some priorities in the draft plan do not align with the wants of the general public / is more responsive to special interest groups
- Focus on crime and safety

- more focus needed on crime and safety, especially downtown
- some call for increased police presence to address crime
- some call for re-investment of police budget toward other social supports to address well-being
- Agreement with priorities
 - by a small margin more respondents selected “very satisfied” or “satisfied” when asked about their overall feelings regarding priorities outlined under all three pillars, compared to “dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied”
 - support was also expressed for the stated directions
- Anti-racism, Diversity and Inclusion
 - reconciliation, decolonization, and anti-racism need to be part of all priorities
 - must be authentic
- The Strategic Plan document and process
 - critiques:
 - too vague / uses political rhetoric and ‘buzzwords’ / needs more concrete actions and measures
 - too lengthy / wordy / should use plainer language
 - trying to do too much / list of Council priorities is too long
 - confusion regarding the order / rank of priorities
 - support:
 - good foundation for future work
 - thanks for opportunity to provide feedback
 - alignment:
 - connect to the previous Strategic Plan / no indication of progress on carry-over items
 - must align with other planning efforts
 - process:
 - more comprehensive engagement throughout the strategic planning process is needed to inform City direction
 - referendums / plebiscites needed for major decisions
- COVID-19
 - frustration with vaccine requirements for employees and for public access to civic facilities / a form of discrimination
 - the plan does not adequately address the impacts of or recovery from COVID-19

Advance City Council's Priorities

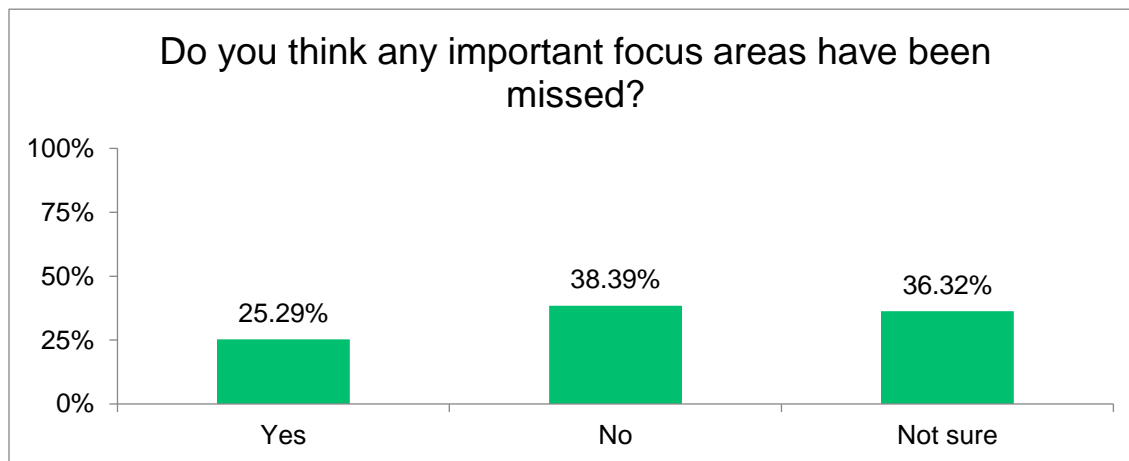
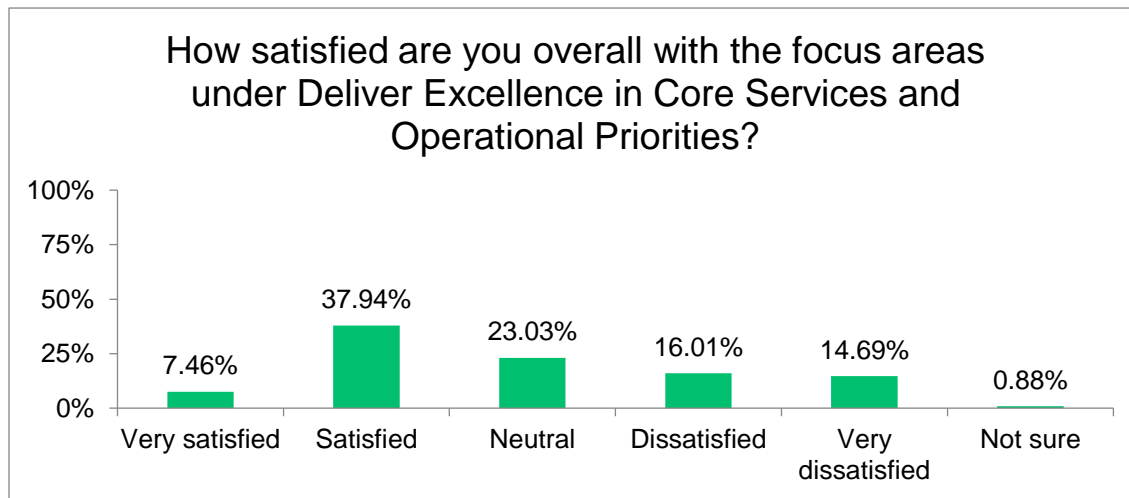


Comments

- general comments on this pillar:
 - consider costs / taxes are too high
 - should focus on core services and existing infrastructure instead of major projects
 - too many priorities / too much focus on social issues
 - disagreement with what has been included as priorities
 - others support what has been included as priorities
 - more focus needed on seniors / children
 - confusion on which are the short-term and long-term priorities?
- Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
 - needs to be authentic
 - Indigenous representation and employment needed
 - urban Indigenous voice is missing from the document
- Economic Development
 - support small business
 - focus on local job creation
 - support also needed for resource industries and agriculture
- Community Safety and Well-Being

- focus on housing, homelessness and poverty / should be a separate priority rather than referenced within other priorities
- focus on addictions and mental health
- increased supports and protections specific to renters
- focus on downtown safety / concerns with activity around the Lighthouse
- calls for more police presence / innovation in policing
- calls for police budget to be redirected to social programs / supports
- need for more public washrooms
- Engagement on Infill and Growth
 - concerns with urban sprawl
 - concerns with industrial areas adjacent to residential zones in core neighbourhoods
 - move the rail lines
 - focus needed on affordable housing
- Recreation, Culture and Leisure
 - maintenance of parks is important
 - recreation options for newcomers' interests (e.g., cricket)
 - market what we have today to attract tourism
- Regional Planning
 - concerns with urban sprawl / speed of development
- Downtown Development
 - concerns with safety and activity around the Lighthouse
 - concerns with the costs of an arena and the library
 - concerns with parking
 - too much focus on downtown
- Environmental Sustainability
 - green space / naturalized space / healthy space is important
 - dispute climate change / dispute that Saskatoon is a high greenhouse gas emitter
 - concerns with costs and funding models of waste management and recycling
- Transportation
 - opposition to bike lanes
 - focus on relieving traffic congestion / traffic flow / heavy vehicle traffic
 - need to move away from 'car culture' and provide safe options for other modes
 - need better public transit
 - improved maintenance of roads and sidewalks
 - increased snow removal
 - more focus on accessibility
- Smart City
 - some support for more Smart City goals needed / some concern over digital transition leaving those with lower levels of computer literacy behind
 - data security is crucial / surveillance concerns

Deliver Excellence in Core Services and Operational Priorities

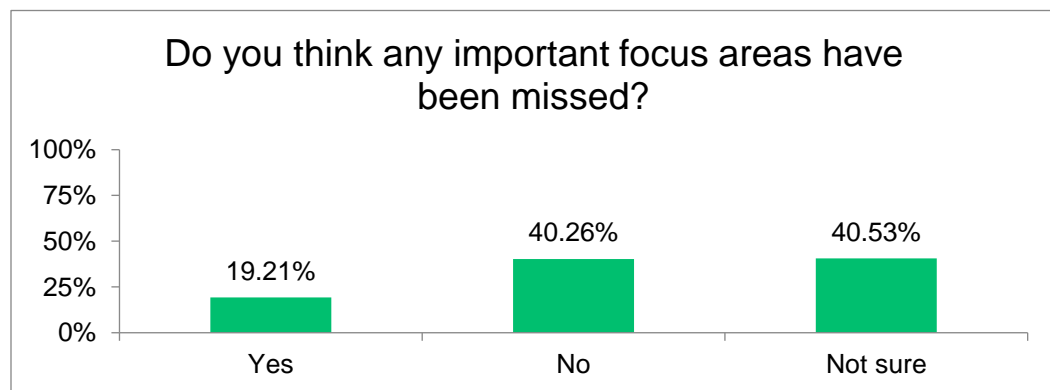
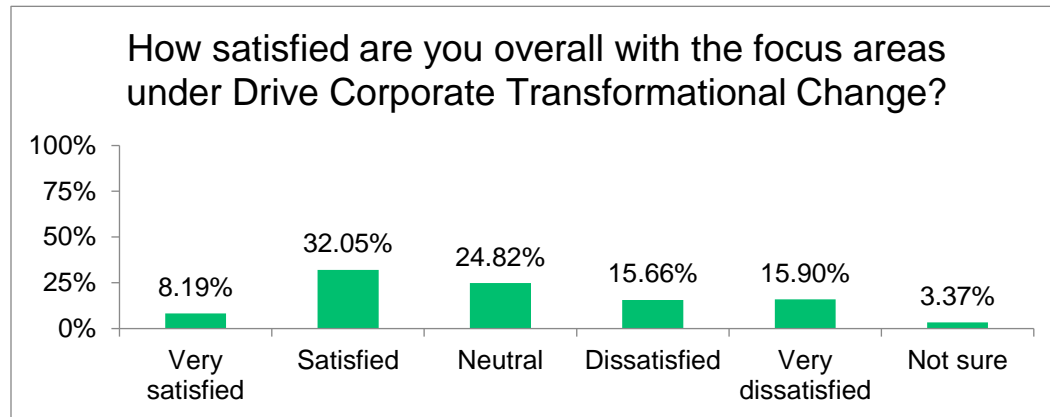


Comments

- general comments on this pillar:
 - vague / business rhetoric / lacks concrete goals and measures
 - focus should be on core services / the basics / maintenance of existing infrastructure and services
 - concerns with cost implications
 - better coordination needed between Departments
 - include marginalized renters in decision-making / engagement prioritizes businesses, homeowners, etc.
- Equitable and Accessible Service:
 - some call for reduced preferential treatment
 - support for newcomers
 - accessibility for those with disabilities and seniors
 - accessibility for low-income renters and those experiencing poverty
 - social programs in core neighbourhoods needed
- Civic Assets:
 - focus on maintenance of existing infrastructure and facilities rather than building new

- Quality of Life and Public Safety
 - focus on downtown safety and crime
 - focus on homelessness, mental health and addictions supports
 - more public washrooms needed
 - invest in policing
 - utilize funds directed to police for other social supports and programs
- Procurement and Project Management:
 - desire for prioritization of local hires and contracts
 - spending needs to be transparent and accountable

Drive Corporate Transformational Change



Comments

- general comments on this pillar:
 - vague / business rhetoric / lacks concrete goals and measures
 - concerns with cost implications
 - empower 'bottom-up' solutions from front-line staff
 - be willing to listen to new ideas that challenges the status quo
- Customer-Centric Service Delivery:
 - should be easier to contact specific departments / frustration with the call centre model / process for feedback on customer service needed

- residents should not be considered 'customers' / frames the relationship as a transaction rather than the City providing basic human rights
- accessibility considerations for seniors as the City continues to explore new technologies
- People and Culture:
 - too much focus on social issues
 - decolonization, equity and anti-racism at the City are important considerations for driving change
- Efficiency and Effectiveness
 - reduce bureaucracy and red tape
 - concerns with the size of Administration / number of managers / staff wages
 - ethics are more important than efficiency

Demographics

Respondents were asked to provide demographic information to better understand who in Saskatoon we reached with our survey. All questions were optional. Statistics Canada information on the demographic make up of the city of Saskatoon, from the 2016 Census, is provided to contextualize survey demographics.¹

What is your age?		
Under 18	0.26%	1
18 to 29	9.74%	38
30 to 41	30.26%	118
42 to 53	20.00%	78
54 to 65	22.56%	88
66 to 77	14.62%	57
78 to 89	2.56%	10
Over 90	0.00%	0
Total Responses		390
Skipped		148

StatCan 2016 Age %: 19-29 (24%), 30-41 (23%), 42-53 (19%), 54-65 (18%), 65+ (16%)

What is your gender?		
female	50.16%	160
male	47.96%	153
non-binary	0.94%	3
intersex	0.31%	1
cis	0.31%	1
x	0.31%	1
Total Responses		319
Skipped		199

StatCan 2016 Gender %: Male (48%), Female (52%)

Are you an Indigenous person (First Nation, Métis, or Inuk)?		
yes	10.93%	40
no	89.07%	326
Total Responses		366
Skipped		172

StatCan 2016 Indigenous or Person of Colour: 31%

Are you a member of a visible minority group?		
yes	15.62%	57
no	84.38%	308
Total Responses		365
Skipped		173

StatCan 2016 Indigenous or Person of Colour: 31%

¹ Stats Canada information comes from the Civic Services Survey: Performance, Priorities and Preferences 2021. For more information view the report in full here: https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/corporate-performance/communications/Engagement/saskatoon_civic_services_ppp_report_telephone_sept_21_2021_-_final.pdf

Are you a person with a disability?		
yes	16.62%	61
no	83.38%	306
Total Responses		367
Skipped		171

StatCan 2016 %: Yes (22%), No (78%)

Do you rent or own your accommodations?		
Rent	15.45%	59
Own	81.94%	313
neither	2.62%	10
Total Responses		382
Skipped		156

StatCan 2016 Housing %: Own (67%), Rent (33%)

Neighbourhoods with 10 or more responses.	
Stonebridge	23
Nutana	16
Caswell Hill	14
Silverwood Heights	14
Briarwood	10
City Park	10
Erindale	10
Evergreen	10
Willowgrove	10

2.2 Staff Survey

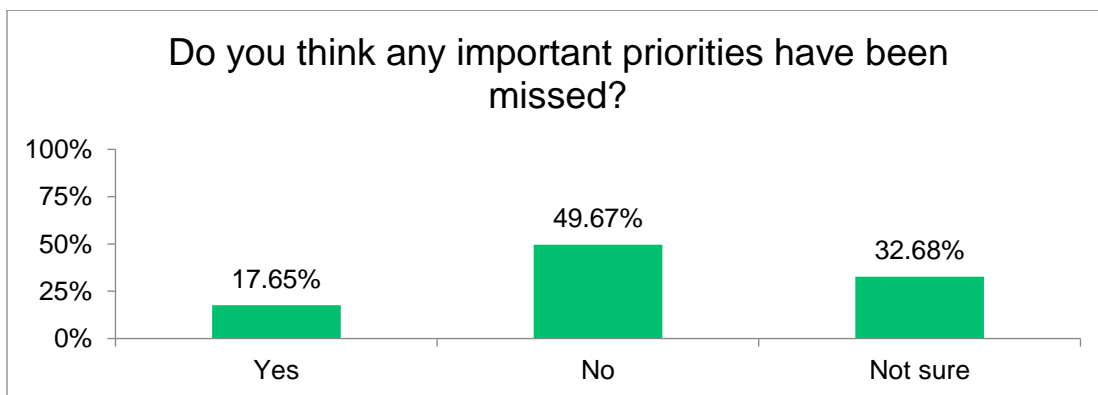
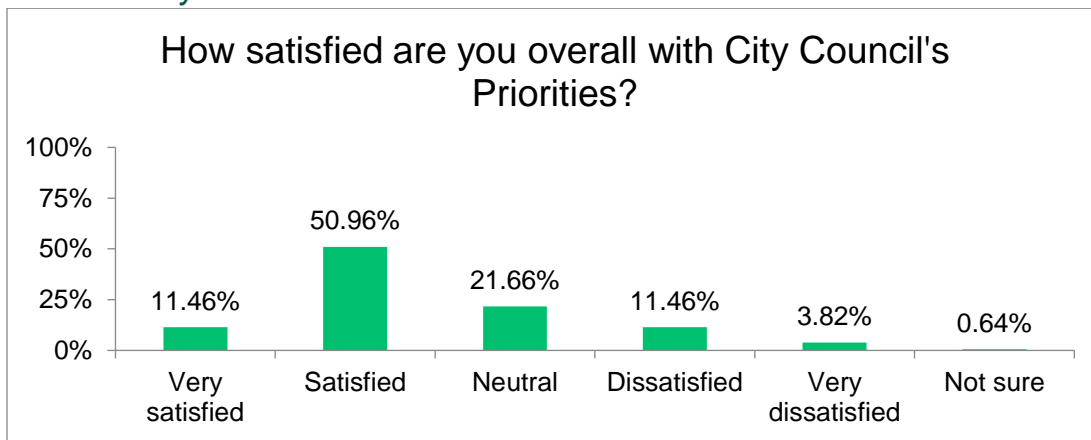
In total, there were 158 responses to the staff survey.

General Comments

- Focus on core services:
 - infrastructure maintenance and core services not a large enough part of the document
 - too much focus on social issues
 - too many priorities / would prefer fewer, more focused priorities
- The Strategic Plan document and process:
 - great framework for future work
 - like the layout, design, and look
 - need to strengthen links with the Official Community Plan
 - appreciate that reconciliation and inclusion is incorporated throughout
 - wordy / vague / needs more specifics
 - some specific suggestions on wording and imagery shared, sent to project team for consideration
 - need more time between Strategic Plan finalization and the budget process
 - need to know the 'why,' not just the 'what' and 'how' behind priorities

- Needs for success
 - initiatives require proper resourcing and budgets
 - strong leadership and management
 - measurement, reporting, and accountability
 - cross-project and cross-departmental coordination
 - permanent staff rather than temporary positions in key roles
- Affordability
 - keep tax increases minimal / cost of living
 - COVID-19 continues to have impacts and will continue to be a challenge
- Agreement with priorities
 - more respondents selected “very satisfied” or “satisfied” when asked about their overall feelings regarding priorities outlined under all three pillars, compared to “dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied”

Advance City Council's Priorities

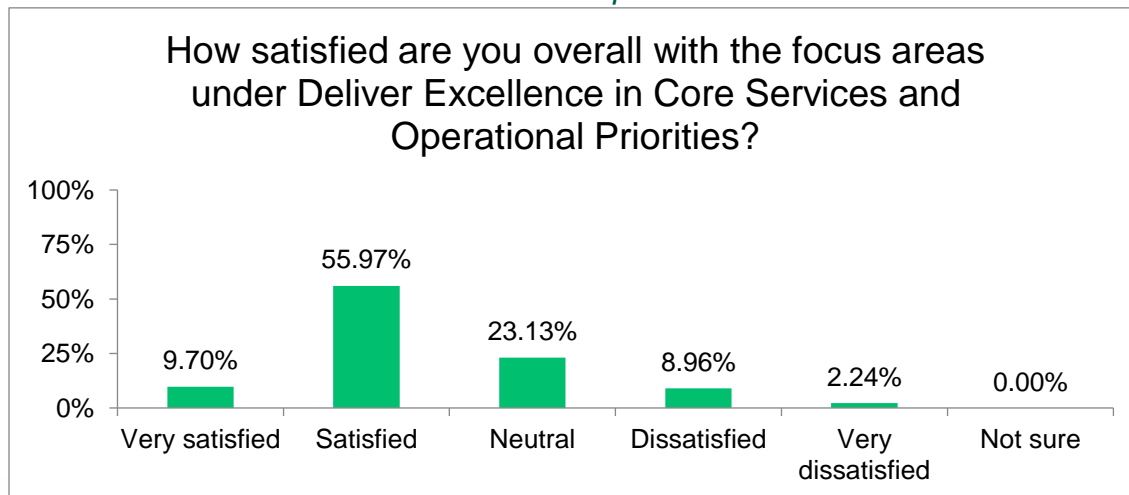


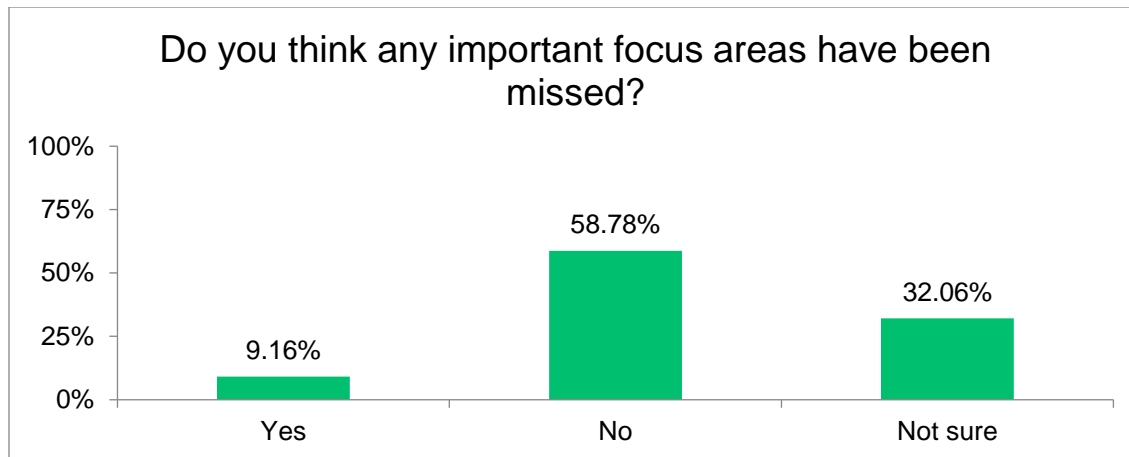
Comments

- general comments on this pillar:
 - consider cost of living / tax implications
 - core services and existing infrastructure need prioritization
 - too many priorities / too much focus on social issues / concerns with scope creep
 - COVID-19 has put a strain on resources
 - will require resources, budget, and leadership to achieve

- Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
 - elevate the work of the Indigenous Technical Advisory Group
 - more training for staff
 - need greater inclusivity with respect to procurement, specifically on Indigenous participation but also for other underrepresented groups
- Community Safety and Well-Being
 - more focus needed on housing, homelessness and poverty, addictions and mental health, and downtown safety
 - downtown safety
- Engagement on Infill and Growth
 - concerns with urban sprawl
 - concerns with condition of older neighbourhoods
 - concerns with lack of attention to affordable housing and gentrification
- Recreation, Culture and Leisure
 - Improving existing facilities is a high priority
- Regional Planning
 - concerns with urban sprawl
- Downtown Development
 - not enough attention on safety
 - not currently residential friendly
 - should also specify the cycling network
- Environmental Sustainability
 - green space / naturalized space / river valley is important
 - need to also reduce demand for water and energy as green policy
- Transportation
 - traffic diversion to freeway
 - improvements needed to public transit
- Smart City
 - inequitable access to technology (both for staff and public)
 - big analytics can miss local nuance

Deliver Excellence in Core Services and Operational Priorities

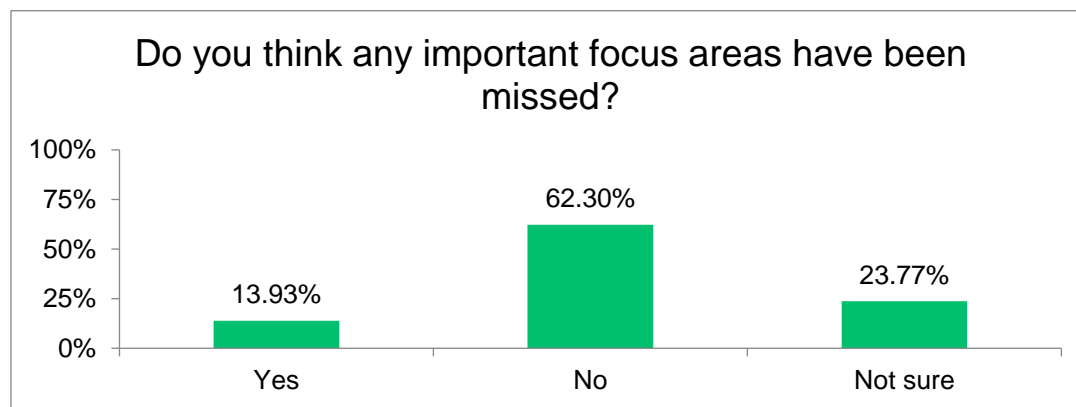
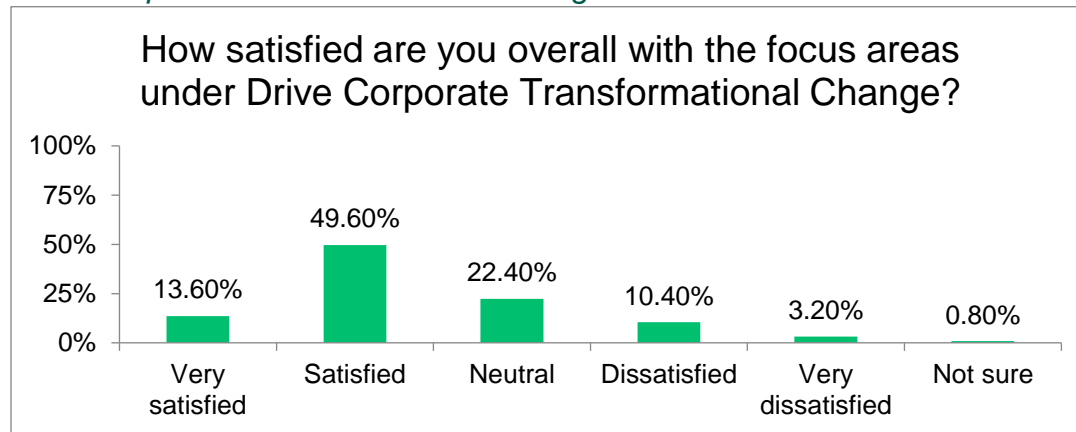




Comments

- general comments on this pillar:
 - utilities / core services should have greater focus
 - change management required to achieve success
 - consider affordability
- Equitable and Accessible Service:
 - barriers to service, such as income and mental health, persist
 - more digital options
- Civic Assets:
 - natural areas should be considered civic assets
 - maintenance of what we have rather than building new
- Quality of Life and Public Safety
 - safety and well-being of employees providing service also of importance / more concerns in recent months with the pandemic / don't feel this is being addressed or taken seriously
 - Indigenous placemaking needs to be a higher priority
- Procurement and Project Management:
 - equitable procurement is important
 - develop a more robust supplier/vendor/contractor management system
 - current procurement process is not efficient
 - procurement focuses more on lowest cost than best value
 - appreciate focus on project management

Drive Corporate Transformational Change



Comments

- general comments on this pillar:
 - questions on how successful the City will be in improvements to these priorities
 - does the City have the right tools to support improvement
 - questions on why the need for so many 'transformational' changes rather than tweaks
 - accountability needed for poor work / recognition of good work
 - cross-project and cross-departmental coordination needed for success
 - change needs to be resourced and budgeted for to be successful
 - importance of training and development mentioned
 - importance of recruiting and retaining great employees mentioned
- Customer-Centric Service Delivery:
 - need more multi-lingual staff
 - prioritize employee safety when working with the public
- People and Culture:
 - more focus needed on reconciliation and inclusion internally / an Indigenous lens
- Efficiency and Effectiveness
 - run the City like a business
 - need for support for integrated management system and audit process

Demographics

Respondents to the staff survey were asked to indicate which Division they work in.

Which Division do you work in?	
Community Services	33 (5.8 %)
Utilities & Environment	26 (3.2 %)
Transportation & Construction	20 (2.2 %)
Strategy & Transformation	18 (8.2 %)
Human Resources	11 (13.1 %)
Corporate Financial Services	6 (3.2 %)
Saskatoon Fire	4 (1.2 %)
Other	4 (5.7 %)

3 Communications and Marketing

Public Survey

City Website

An [Engage webpage](#) for the project was created on the City website. The website included a link to the public survey, background information, a link to the draft 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, a project timeline, a comment forum, and contact information.

The engagement information was also available on the City's [Strategic Plan webpage](#) and included among the homepage announcement carousel.

Marketing

The public engagement was marketed through the following methods:

- news release / public service announcement
- social media advertisements (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Star Phoenix advertisements (October 30 and November 6)
- radio advertisements (Media Group, Rawlco)
- email invite to the Citizen Advisory Panel
- email invite to the Indigenous Technical Advisory Group
- posters

Staff Survey

Internal Website

A link to the staff survey was added to the internal MyCity website.

Marketing

The staff engagement was marketed through the following methods:

- email to all staff
- MyCity update emails
- Microsoft Teams background image and email banner
- corporate newsletter

- posters

4 Challenges and Limitations

- Due to COVID-19, we were not able to conduct any in-person engagement. Online engagement can be less inclusive as some who would be interested in providing input may have limited or no Internet access. Paper copies of the public survey were available on request.
- Not all City of Saskatoon staff have equal access to work computers. For example, the staff survey would have been less accessible for operational staff who do not work in an office. Paper surveys of the staff survey were available on request. The Service Saskatoon team, located at City Hall, supported less than ten individuals in accessing paper copies of the survey.
- Residents and staff were asked to provide feedback on draft priorities. These draft priorities presented for engagement were informed indirectly through other public and staff engagements, such as Saskatoon Speaks (2010), the bi-annual civic services surveys, and other public engagement inputs.
- Both the shortened descriptions of the priorities and three pillars, as well as the full draft 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, required more reviewing content by respondents than we would typically require for our surveys. The content also includes some technical and business terms that may not be easily understood by all audiences. As such, the amount and nature of information we were requesting feedback on may have been a barrier for some to participate.
- 'Self-selected,' or open, surveys – in which a link to a survey is publicly available to those interested in completing it – are not considered statistically representative of the population because they do not use a random sampling method. Although the results of this survey provide an important information source, they will be considered with other important inputs, such as the [Saskatoon Speaks Community Vision](#) developed in 2011, the [civic services surveys](#) conducted in 2021, feedback received by City Councillors from their constituents, as well as input received through other engagement activities.