

2023 Civic Services Survey Results

ISSUE

The City of Saskatoon (City) conducts two civic surveys: (1) Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey and (2) Civic Services Survey: Performance, Priorities & Preferences. These two surveys measure residents' perspectives on quality of life in Saskatoon, satisfaction with civic services, areas for improvement, and future priorities.

BACKGROUND

City Council, at its meeting held on October 18, 2021, received the [2021 Civic Service Surveys](#) report outlining the results of the two civic surveys.

CURRENT STATUS

In May and June 2023, two surveys were conducted by Forum Research Inc through their online panel. For each online study, panelists were selected at random from the panel to complete surveys online, ensuring the accuracy of online research results. Panel members who are residents of Saskatoon were provided with a link to access the survey online.

Survey #1, the Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey, was completed May 23 – June 1, 2023. The online panel (802) survey responses gathered provided insights on the City's performance and residents' experience/impressions related to quality of life, satisfaction, important issues, and the value of programs and services provided.

Survey #2, the Civic Services Survey: Performance, Priorities and Preferences, was completed June 7 – 28, 2023. The online panel (848) survey responses gathered provided insights on residents' experience/impressions related to the quality of services and preferences on service levels.

While previous waves of research involved a random digit dial telephone sample and online panel sample, the 2023 survey was exclusively conducted via online panel for data collection. Due to the random sampling efforts for the online surveys, the data is reliable and is representative of Saskatoon's population based on age and gender. The online methodology and consistency of many questions in the surveys help for trend and comparative analysis relative to previous years.

One additional modification was the discontinuation of the self-selected survey option. Self-selected surveys can be an effective engagement tool for quickly and efficiently soliciting feedback and input when asking specific questions to inform specific decisions. However, for the purpose of the Civic Services Surveys, self-selected survey results are not generalizable to the population whereas the online panel survey is reliable and representative.

This difference is because self-selected surveys are neither random nor controlled and are subject to the problem of selection bias, which occurs when individuals who choose

to participate differ from those who do not participate. Demographic responses to the self-selected civic services surveys are not aligned with Saskatoon's population demographic breakdown. For example, in 2021, respondents skewed towards those that own a home versus renting, those with a high household income and living on the east side of the river. Furthermore, the demographic results for the self-selected participants shows a shortfall in reaching those traditionally hard to reach groups including those who identify as a person with a disability, Indigenous or person of colour, or newcomer.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The purpose of the civic services surveys is to develop baseline performance data and identify trends, opportunities, and issues of importance. The City aims to use the results to inform decisions related to strategic priorities, budgeting, and service delivery, as well as to highlight opportunities for continuous improvement.

The Appendices provide the main highlights from the online panel respondents:

- Appendix 1 provides an additional overview of the results for online respondents for Survey #1 the 2023 Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey.
- Appendix 2 provides detailed results for the 2023 Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey #1 for each question, along with a detailed description of the data collection methodology for online panel respondents.
- Appendix 3 provides an additional overview of the results respondents for Survey #2 the 2023 Civic Services Performance, Priorities and Preferences Survey.
- Appendix 4 provides detailed results for the 2023 Civic Services Performance, Priorities and Preferences Survey #2 for each question, along with a detailed description of the data collection methodology for online panel respondents.

Survey #1 - 2023 Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey Results

Quality of Life & Satisfaction

- A large majority of respondents (86%) indicated that they are satisfied with living in Saskatoon, consistent with the 2021 results.
- A large majority of respondents (78%) indicated the quality of life in Saskatoon is good or very good, comparable to the 2021 results.
- A large majority of respondents (71%) indicated that the quality of life has either improved or stayed the same over the past three years. This is a decrease of 9 percentage points from 2021.

Most Important Issues

When asked the question, what is the single most important issue facing the City, the most common responses were:

- Homelessness (19%)
- Crime/Public Safety/Policing (15%)
- Roads/Sidewalk Maintenance (8%)

Quality & Value of Services

- A large majority of respondents (81%) indicated they are satisfied with the quality of services provided by the City. This is a decrease of 6 percentage points from 2021.
- A large majority of respondents (83%) indicated they receive good or very good value from the services provided by the City of Saskatoon. This is consistent with 2021.

Balancing the Budget

- 25% of respondents prefer a combination of both property tax and user fee increases to balance the budget. This is a decrease of 7 percentage points from 2021.
- 19% of respondents prefer to stop providing a service to balance the budget. This is consistent with 2021.
- 18% of respondents prefer to introduce a new user or service fee to balance the budget. This is an increase of 3 percentage points from 2021.
- 14% of respondents prefer to increase existing user fees and 12% prefer to reduce services to balance the budget. This is consistent with 2021.

Survey #2 - 2023 Civic Services Survey: Performance, Priorities and Preferences Results

Satisfaction with City Services (Performance)

- Overall satisfaction remains the same or higher since 2021 for many of the 29 civic services included in Survey #2.
- Reliability of electrical services, quality of drinking water, and speed of water main break repairs continue to remain the top transportation and utility services where respondents are most satisfied. Most services apart from snow and ice road maintenance and maintenance of major roadways/freeways in the city saw an increase in satisfaction compared to 2021.
- Fire protection, maintenance of city parks, and police services continue to remain the top community and public services where respondents are most satisfied. Most services saw an increase in satisfaction apart from mosquito control and planning for growth and development, which both saw a small decrease in satisfaction compared to 2021.
- Respondents continue to remain satisfied with garbage collection, recycling collection and landfill services. All waste management services saw an increase in satisfaction and reached the highest satisfaction levels since 2015.
- Indoor leisure centres, outdoor sports fields, paddling pools and spray parks, and recreation programs and services remain the top recreation and culture services where residents are the most satisfied. All recreation and culture services saw an increase in satisfaction compared to 2021.

Civic Services (Preferences)

- The majority of respondents indicated they would like the City to provide more service for:
 - Affordable Housing (60%)
 - Road Maintenance (58%)
 - Snow & Ice Management (55%)

- The majority of respondents indicated they would like the City to provide about the same service for:
 - Parks Maintenance (58%)
 - Fire (57%)
 - Garbage Collection & Waste Reduction Programs and Services (57%)
 - Recreation & Cultural Programs (51%)
 - Traffic Management (50%)

- To a much smaller degree, respondents indicated they would like the City to provide less service for:
 - Community Grants (19%)
 - Planning and Growth (17%)
 - Recreation and Cultural Programs (16%)

Service Priorities: Key Weaknesses and Key Strengths

Comparing the satisfaction and priorities questions were used to determine key weaknesses (high priority, low satisfaction), and key strengths (high priority, high satisfaction).

- Priorities for service improvement include snow & ice road maintenance, maintenance of major roadways and freeways, traffic management, planning for growth and development, and accessibility of infrastructure for people with disabilities.
- Priorities for maintaining service include quality of drinking water, reliability of electrical services, fire protection, speed of water main breaks repairs, garbage collection, police services, and maintenance of city parks.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2023 operating budget includes a budget to be used towards the costs associated with the two civic services surveys. The cost of each survey in 2023 is approximately \$11,200 plus applicable taxes.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, social or environment implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

The City will use the results to inform decisions related to strategic priorities, budgeting, and service delivery, as well as to highlight opportunities for continuous

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improvement. To avoid unexpected disruptions to future surveys, Administration will move from conducting both surveys on an annual basis with online panel participants.

APPENDICES

1. 2023 Civic Satisfaction and Performance Survey, 2023 Results
2. Civic Satisfaction and Performance Survey 2023
3. 2023 Civic Services Performance, Priorities and Preferences Survey, 2023 Results
4. Civic Services Survey - Performance, Priorities and Preferences 2023

Report Approval

Written by: Carla Blumers, Director of Communications and Public Engagement

Reviewed by: Celene Anger, Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer

Approved by: Jeff Jorgenson, City Manager

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