

STAFF REPORT: Administration



REPORT TO: Council
MEETING DATE: March 9, 2009
REPORT NO.: CEDC.09.01
SUBJECT: 2008 Citizen Survey Results

**PREPARED BY: Lisa Kidd, Communications and
Economic Development
Coordinator**

A. Recommendations

That Council receive Staff Report CEDC.09.01 '2008 Citizen Survey Results' for information purposes.

B. Background

On May 12, 2008, Council adopted a recommendation to receive Staff Report CEDC.08.09 'Community Communications Initiatives' for information purposes; and authorize proceeding with the communication initiatives outlined within the report. This included the development and distribution of a citizen survey to all ratepayers within The Blue Mountains.

In September 2008, a short citizen survey, consisting of six questions, was delivered to all ratepayers. The survey was included as part of the tax billing envelope.

The survey included six questions (see Attachment 1) and measured the following dimensions:

- Perceived quality of life in The Blue Mountains
- Satisfaction with quality of services provided by The Blue Mountains
- Perceived effectiveness of Council
- Contact with The Blue Mountains or one of its employees
- Residential status (part-time/seasonal or full-time/permanent)

The survey included pre-paid postage on the reverse side so ratepayers could return the surveys to the Town, by mail, free of charge.

Respondents were asked to complete and return the survey before September 30, 2008.

In total, 976 ratepayers responded to the survey, out of a possible 8,323. Today, satisfaction surveys generally reap a response rate between 10% and 30%. The Blue Mountains Citizen survey garnered a response rate of 12%. This is within a commonly expected response rate, particularly as this methodology did not include the use of incentives. Because the entire population of ratepayers in The Blue Mountains was surveyed through a convenience sample, there can be no true margin of error calculated. We do know however that the profile of the respondents is reflective of the population when it comes to residential status (part-time/ full-time residency).

Staff consider this survey as part of a multi-pronged approach to increasing citizen participation and involvement. Considering some of our approaches to increasing broad citizen participation, to date, this method of citizen participation has garnered the largest, single source of citizen involvement, with nearly 1,000 responses.

Summary of Results

Please refer to Attachment 2- Citizen Survey 2008 PowerPoint Presentation

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

Strategic Action 6.3 Practice open and proactive communications
Strategic Action 6.6 Implement process for continuous improvement

D. Budget Impact

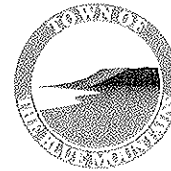
The material cost of the citizen survey was \$1200.00 and was considered as part of the 2008 Budget.

E. Attached

Attachment 1- Citizen Survey 2008
Attachment 2- Citizen Survey 2008 PowerPoint Presentation

Respectfully submitted,

Signature



The Town of the Blue Mountains is pleased to present our 2008 Community Survey! We encourage you to spend a couple of minutes responding to our Survey. Your opinions are important to us! All responses are completely anonymous and results will be presented in aggregate so that no one particular completed Survey may be identifiable.

Please complete and submit the Survey by **September 30, 2008**. Completed Surveys may be dropped off at Town Hall (26 Bridge Street, Thornbury) or dropped off in any Canada Post Mail Box, free of charge.

Results of the Survey will assist the Town in understanding your opinions about quality of life here in The Blue Mountains and the level of service the Town is currently providing.

1. How would you rate the overall quality of life in The Blue Mountains today?
 Very Good Good Poor Very Poor

2. Do you feel that the quality of life in The Blue Mountains in the past three years has:
 Improved Stayed the same Worsened

3. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the overall quality of services provided by the Town of The Blue Mountains:
 Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied
 Not very satisfied Not at all satisfied

4. How effective do you feel Town Council is overall, at dealing with important issues in the community?
 Very effective Somewhat effective
 Not very effective Not at all effective

5. In the last 12 months, have you contacted or dealt with the Town of The Blue Mountains or one of its employees? This may include staff at Town Hall, recreation facilities or fire services.
 Yes No

6. Which of the following best describes your residential status in The Blue Mountains:
 Part-time/Seasonal Resident Full-time/Permanent Resident
 Other: Explain _____

Thank you for your time! Results will be presented to the Public in the Fall of 2008!



**The Blue Mountains
2008 Citizen Survey
Results**

March 2009

**“Public Participation is the
linchpin of local government”**

**Miller and Kobayashi,
ICMA**

What does a survey do that other types of engagement may not?

The citizen survey finds and gives voice to all types of citizens, from different social and economic backgrounds, those whose health may keep them from attending meeting and those who may live permanently elsewhere....

**Miller and Kobayashi,
ICMA**

Objectives

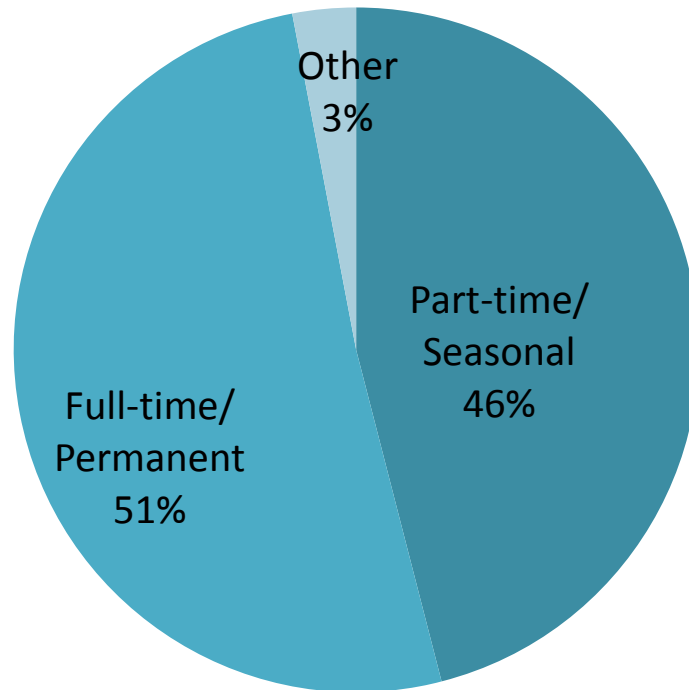
- **Evaluate citizens' opinion of the quality of services being provided by The Blue Mountains**
- **Measure the extent to which citizens have had contact with The Blue Mountains or one of its Employees over the last 12 months**
- **Understand the perceived level of quality of life in The Blue Mountains and changes over the last three years**
- **Understand the perceived level of effectiveness of Council in dealing with important issues in the community**
- **Improve relations with citizens through one of numerous communication initiatives**

Methodology

- **The 2008 Citizen Survey used a convenience sampling method.**
- **The survey was mailed to all ratepayers using the Fall tax bill envelope.**
- **The survey took place between September 1 and September 30, 2008.**
- **In total, 976 surveys were completed.**
- **It is estimated that the respondents are representative of the true population when it comes to residential status.**

Results

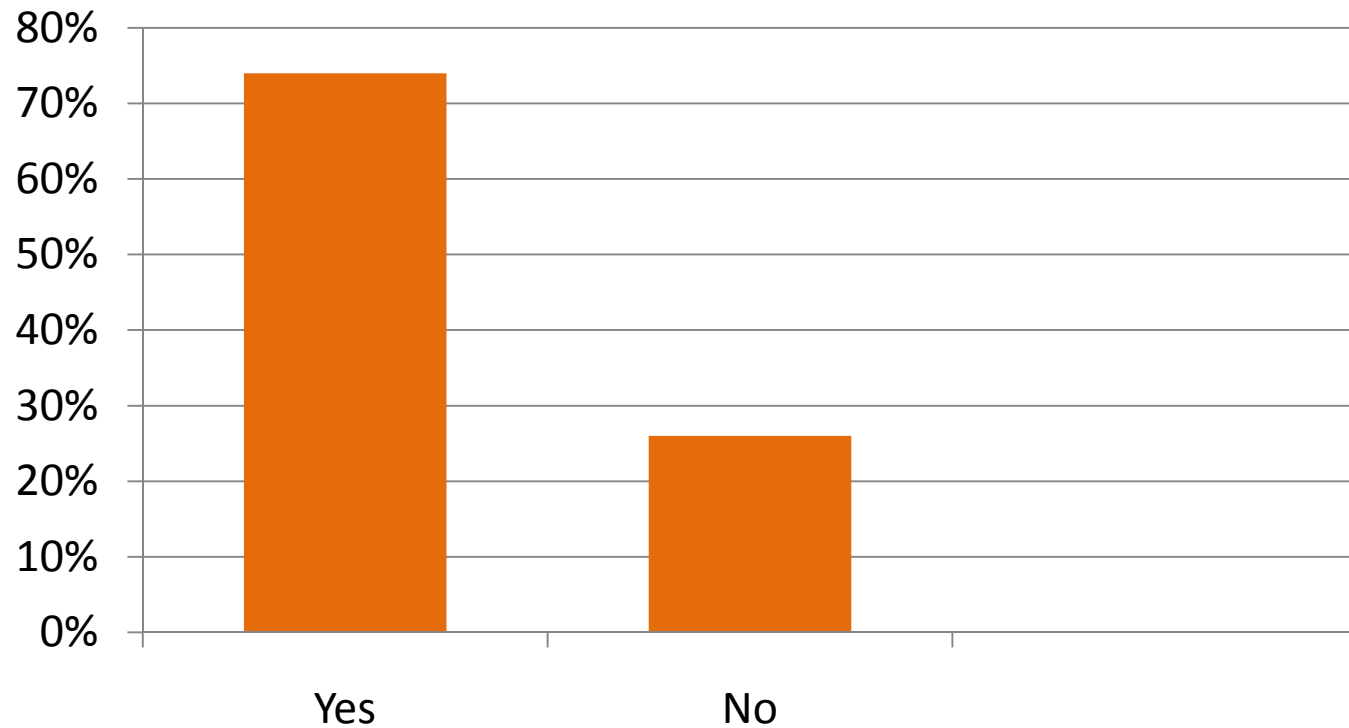
Residential Status



Q. Which of the following best describes your residential status in The Blue Mountains?

Results

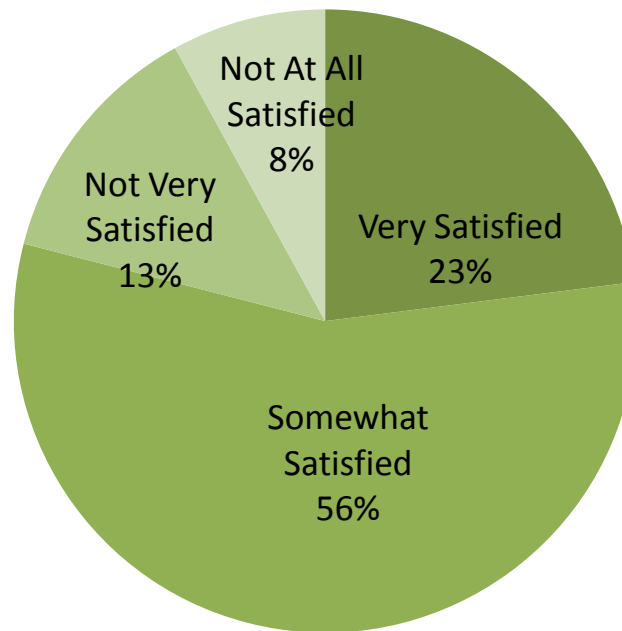
Contacted or Dealt with The Blue Mountains or one of its Employees in the Last 12 Months



Q. In the last 12 months, have you contacted or dealt with the Town of The Blue Mountains or one of its employees? This may include staff at Town Hall, recreation facilities or fire services.

Results

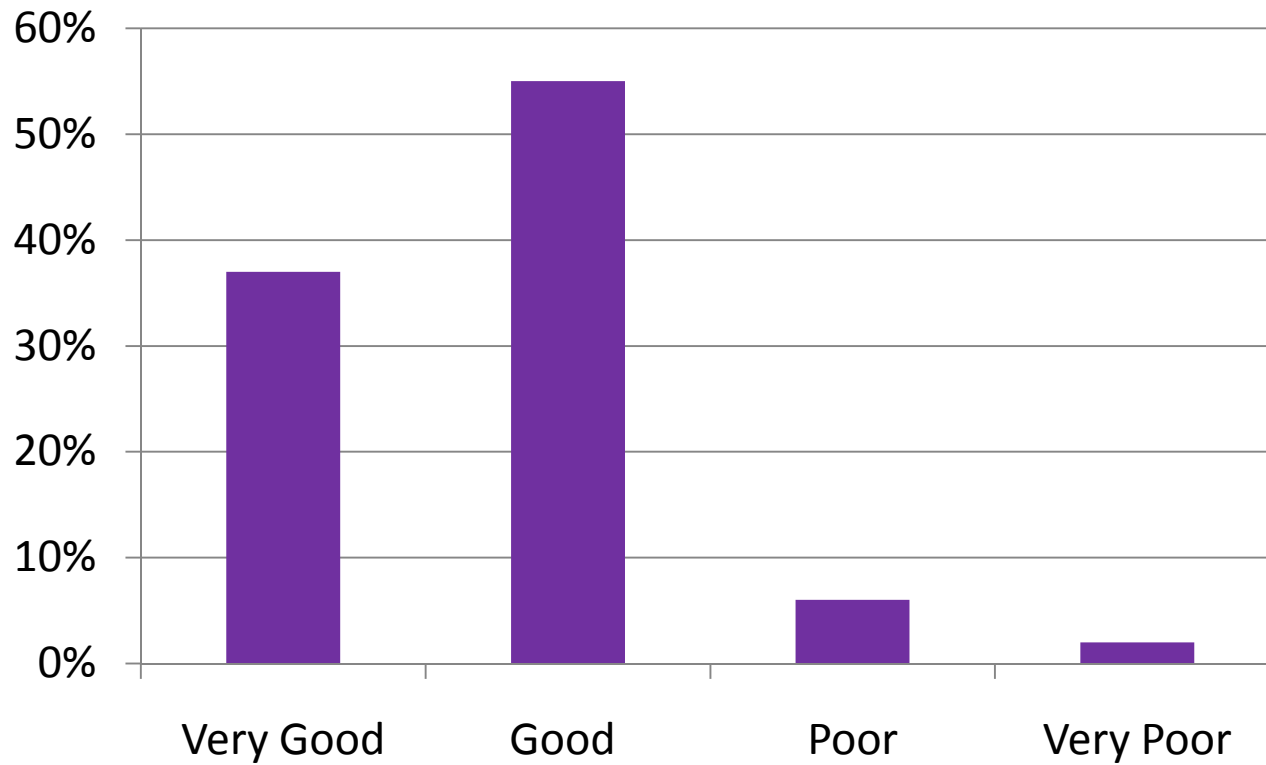
Satisfaction with Quality of Services provided by The Blue Mountains



Q. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the overall quality of services provided by the Town of The Blue Mountains:

Results

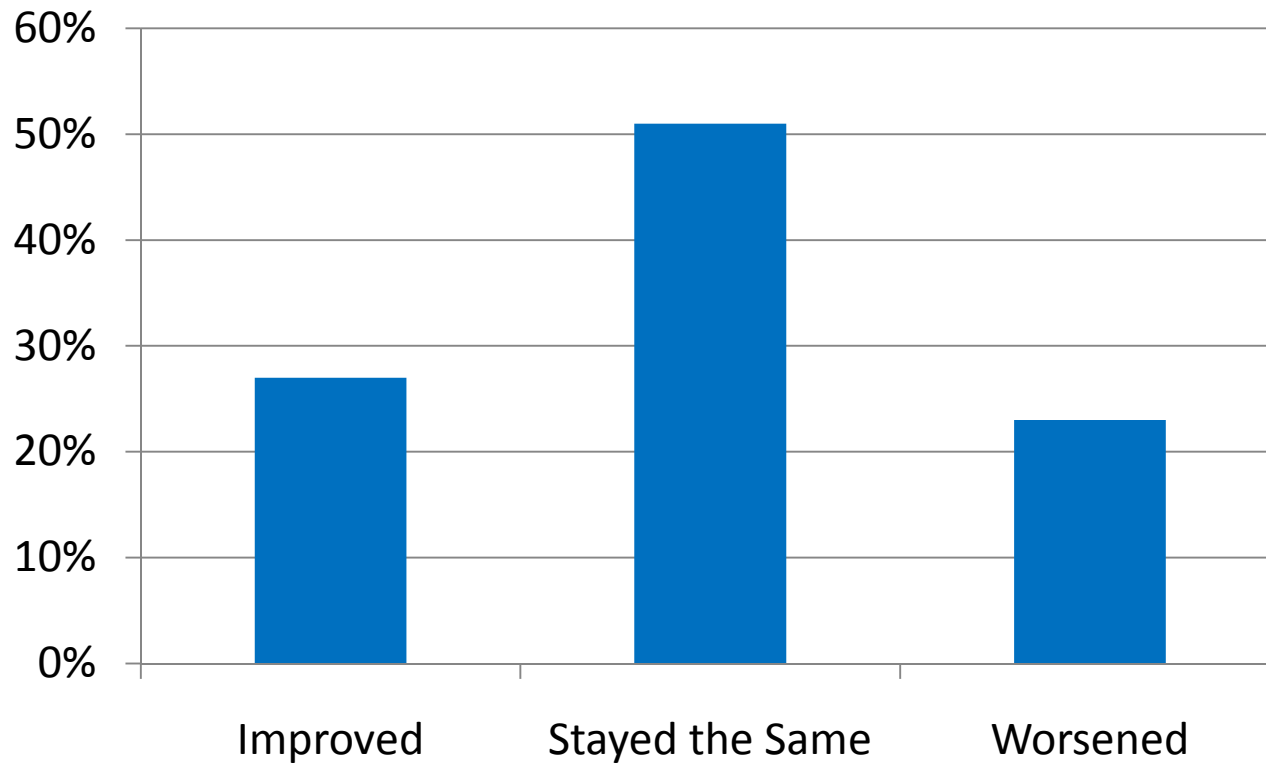
Perceived Quality of Life in The Blue Mountains



Q. How would you rate the overall quality of life in The Blue Mountains today?

Results

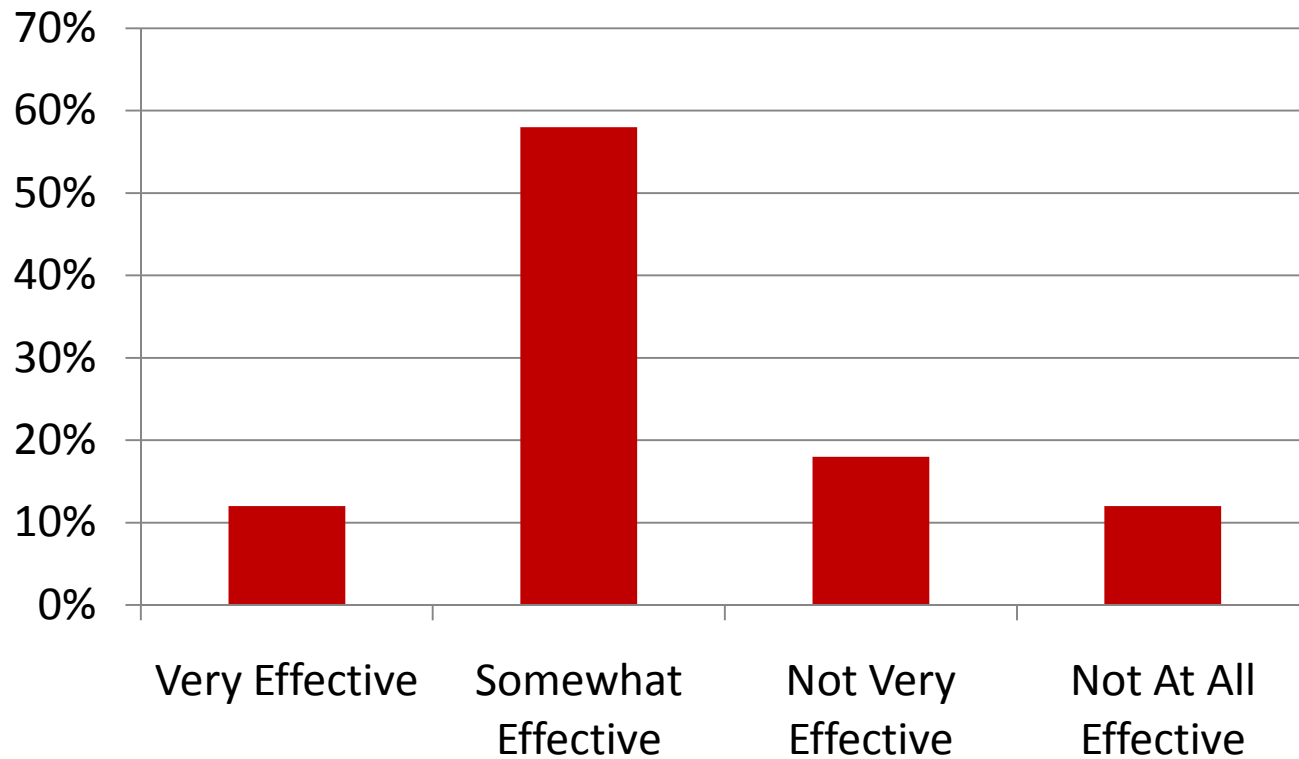
Perceived Quality of Life in The Blue Mountains in the Past Three Years



Q. Do you feel that the quality of life in The Blue Mountains in the past three years has:

Results

Perceived Effectiveness of Town Council in Dealing with Important Issues



Q. How effective do you feel Town Council is overall, at dealing with important issues in the community?

Results

<i>Satisfaction with Quality of Services Provided by The Blue Mountains</i>	Contact with The Blue Mountains or Employees in Last 12 Months	No Contact with The Blue Mountains or Employees in Last 12 Months
Very Satisfied	21%	29%
Somewhat Satisfied	56%	56%
Not Very Satisfied	13%	12%
Not At All Satisfied	10%	3%

Analysis: Satisfaction with Quality of Services Provided by The Blue Mountains By Contact with The Blue Mountains or Employees in Last 12 Months

Results

<i>Quality of Life Over the Last Three Years</i>	Part-time/Seasonal Residents	Full-time/Permanent Residents
Improved	36%	18%
Stayed the Same	48%	53%
Worsened	16%	29%

Analysis: Quality of Life Over the Last Three Years By Residential Status

Conclusion

- **The Citizen Survey was a successful survey:**
 - Engaged a substantial number of ratepayers through a single method of engagement
 - Supplemented other methods of citizen engagement
 - Reached out to those who may not normally participate in more traditional methods of communication with local government
 - Captured both part-time and full-time residents' perspectives on quality of life in The Blue Mountains
 - Helped create the beginning of a 'trend-line'
 - Provided valuable information to assist with future decision-making processes



**The Blue Mountains
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