



Staff Report

Strategic Initiatives

Report To: COW- Admin, Corp and Finance, SI, Comm. Services
Meeting Date: October 27, 2025
Report Number: SI.25.012
Title: 2024 Resident Satisfaction Survey Analysis and Action Plan
Prepared by: Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report SI.25.012, entitled “2024 Resident Satisfaction Survey Analysis and Action Plan” for information.

B. Overview

This report provides Council with a summary of the recommended action plan in response to the results of the 2024 Resident Satisfaction Survey.

C. Background

The Resident Satisfaction Survey was conducted from October 16, 2024, to November 24, 2024, and received 828 responses. The survey questions were approved by Council in August 2024 through report [FAF.24.082](#). The results from the survey were presented to Council in January 2025 through report [SI.25.001](#).

The purpose of the Resident Satisfaction Survey is to better understand resident satisfaction related to the Town’s service delivery, customer service and communication, financial management and leadership. The survey also included questions regarding resident satisfaction with Town-owned infrastructure, including roads, sidewalks, bridges, water and wastewater systems and recreational facilities/amenities.

The survey results have been reviewed in detail by the Town’s Senior Management Team and will be used to track and implement measures to strengthen service delivery. In addition, the results were provided to StrategyCorp to help inform the [Corporate Strategic Plan update project](#), which launched in June 2025.

D. Analysis

The analysis of survey results included a comparison of the 2024 survey results against the 2022 survey results. Notably, the 2024 survey received a higher response rate, which is attributed to the strong promotional campaign that was conducted.

The analysis included a review of satisfaction levels related to demographic segments (age ranges and length of residency) and geography (communities and urban/rural areas). A detailed overview of the analysis is included as Attachment #1 to this report.

At a high level, respondent satisfaction softened across all survey questions. The general shift was from higher satisfaction levels to more moderate satisfaction levels. Notably, there were no significant differences in satisfaction related to age; instead, the most considerable changes in satisfaction were observed in relation to geography and length of residency. At a high-level observation, respondents from Thornbury and Clarksburg were generally less satisfied than other areas of the community, and longer-term residents were generally less satisfied than newer residents.

It's important to highlight that the survey was conducted as an opportunity-based survey, meaning that the response base consisted of residents who were aware of the survey and took the time to complete it. As a result, the age distribution in both years of surveying does not reflect the actual breakdown of the population as per the census. As directed through Councillor Maxwell's Notice of Motion, staff are actively reviewing opportunities to strengthen and improve how surveys are conducted and to consider the use of statistically significant surveying methodologies.

Action Plan

Following the review of the survey results, the Senior Management Team developed the following list of actions to improve service delivery and address resident satisfaction concerns.

It's important to note that the list of actions is not comprehensive and does not encompass the entire work plan of Town departments; instead, it prioritizes actions based on the key areas identified in the report.

1. Satisfaction & Service Quality

Focus Areas	Recommendation and Actions
Customer Service	The Manager of Communications & Customer Service is actively conducting a customer service review to assess how the Town manages customer service. The project is focused on reviewing internal policies and procedures, including customer service standards, staff training, software/tools and the internal staffing structure to ensure customer service consistency and excellence. A staff report with an overview of the assessment and recommendations will be presented to Council in Q4 2025.
Town Services	The following section focuses on recommendations and actions related to the <u>four</u> Town services that experienced a 5% or greater decrease in satisfaction between the 2022 and 2024 survey results.

	1. Corporate Communications: The Communications Division is actively working to improve internal processes to ensure that public communication and notices are provided in an accurate, consistent and timely manner. Communications staff regularly attend department and project meetings to ensure that proactive communications planning and lead time are incorporated into work plans. To further support the efforts of the Communications Team, a communications review project has been recommended for consideration in the 2026 Town Budget. The project's focus will be on refining internal processes and standards to enhance communication efficiency and consistency. 2. Town Clerk Services: The Clerk's Department is actively working with Council to review and update the Procedural By-law. This work is on track and is expected to be completed by the end of 2025. The Clerks Department is also working with the Communications Division and the Accountability and Transparency Committee to update content on the Town website to make information related to engaging with Council (correspondence, deputations, public comment, etc.) more easily understood. In addition, the new Records Management Coordinator is assisting in responding to requests made under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. 3. By-law Enforcement: The By-law Department is enhancing public understanding of by-law requirements by offering more FAQs and public notices. This aims to clarify processes and enforcement for residents. Officer training is being expanded to include de-escalation and customer service skills. Software upgrades for parking, AMPs, and STA licensing are underway to boost efficiency and accessibility. Weekly meetings and complaint summaries ensure officers remain informed. Collaboration with other departments has been enhanced to address resident concerns more comprehensively. The department's more effective enforcement approach has led to increased statistics and ticket issuance compared to past years. 4. Land Use Planning & Building Services: The Planning and Development Services Department is committed to strengthening processes, enhancing service delivery and improving communication with the public. Following the results of the 2022 Resident Satisfaction Survey, the Planning and Development Services Department (PDS) launched a user-focused survey to gather feedback directly from its service users. The survey was shared with members of the public who interacted with PDS staff through inquiries or formal applications, including but not limited to planning inquiries and applications, as well as building permit inquiries and applications.
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A summary is included below, and a report detailing the findings and recommended department-specific actions is attached to this report.

Building Services

The user survey indicated that 88.57% of customers who completed the survey were Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the service received by the Building Department.

Summary of Key Themes: The majority of feedback was highly positive, emphasizing professionalism, helpfulness, accessibility, and positive staff interactions. Clients consistently praise specific staff members for their knowledge, responsiveness, and personal service. Many note that their experiences with the Building Services Department were superior to those in other municipalities.

Development Engineering

The user survey indicated that 85.71% of customers who completed the survey were Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the service received by Development Engineering.

Summary of Key Themes: Feedback about the Development Engineering Department is mixed. While individual staff members are praised for being professional, responsive, and helpful, there are recurring concerns about delays in the overall process and a lack of clarity in post-approval steps involving other departments.

Planning

The user survey indicated that 77.78% of customers who completed the survey were Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the service received by the Planning Department.

Summary of Key Themes: Feedback regarding the municipality's Planning Department is generally positive, with users expressing appreciation for helpful staff, in-office support, and the online zoning map. However, there are a few concerns about communication issues, particularly with email reliability, phone messaging clarity, and unanswered follow-ups.

Cloudpermit Implementation

Throughout 2025, the Town introduced Cloudpermit, an online permitting system designed to make the planning and development application process more efficient, user-friendly, and transparent for

	residents, builders, developers, and other members of the community. Cloudpermit was launched for the Building Department in January 2025 and expanded to the Planning Department in April 2025, allowing applicants to apply for, track, and manage building and planning applications online. The continued implementation of Cloudpermit supports the Town’s commitment to improving customer service and directly responds to key findings from the PDS Customer Service Survey, which identified the need for improved communication and greater transparency throughout the application process. Through real-time application tracking, centralized file sharing, and streamlined communication tools, Cloudpermit enhances clarity around application timelines, next steps and decision-making, resulting in a more consistent and predictable customer experience.
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2. Fiscal Responsibility & Taxation

Focus Areas	Recommendation and Actions
Value for Tax Dollars	The results of the 2024 survey noted that roughly two in three respondents expressed that they feel they receive ‘very good’ and ‘good value’ for their tax dollars, which is comparable with 2022 results. Further, <i>‘Enhancing service levels by increasing fees for users of the service’</i> and <i>‘Maintaining current service levels, with a property tax increase matched to inflation’</i> continue to be the two preferred tax strategy options reported by respondents. When asked which services should be reduced to maintain taxes, <i>‘Council/Town Administrative Operations’</i> continued to be reported as the primary area to reduce the level of service, followed by <i>‘Events/Festivals/Family Activities’</i>. Given that the Town’s primary focus is on fiscal responsibility and efficient service delivery, feedback shared through the 2024 survey was used to help shape the framework of the 2026 Town budget. The focus of the 2026 Town budget is on core services, ensuring that essential and legislated obligations are met first. This includes integrating the Asset Management Plans into the budgeting process to address lifecycle costs and support infrastructure sustainability. The development of Integrated Capital Plans demonstrates the commitment to aligning financial resources with long-term infrastructure needs. These measures are designed to enhance transparency, accountability, and service efficiency while balancing taxpayer affordability in a challenging economic environment.

3. Governance & Strategic Direction

Focus Areas	Recommendation and Actions
Town Council	The results of the 2024 survey noted that the level of satisfaction with Council softened across all satisfaction metrics in 2024 versus 2022. The largest declines in satisfaction were with respect to the <i>'Quality of Decision Making'</i> (65% to 53%) and <i>'Strategic Planning and Strategy Development'</i> (60% to 49%). When it comes to overall performance, younger respondents had the lowest levels of satisfaction (53%), as did residents of Thornbury (55%). Council has proactively committed in 2025 to updating the Corporate Strategic Plan. This aims to clearly define long-term goals and strategically allocate resources for the Town's future development. Furthermore, Council is actively collaborating with staff on key initiatives to enhance governance, communication, decision-making, and financial management.
High Priority Projects	The results of the 2024 survey noted that increased access to family healthcare continues to be a high priority for the majority, outpacing all other topics again. When looking at other areas, there is more of a reductive mindset when it comes to high-priority areas. The biggest shifts were declines as opposed to increases. The largest declines in high-priority areas were: • Waterfront Acquisition for Public Use (17%) • Cycling Infrastructure (13%) • Servicing for Clarksburg (10%) • Attainable Housing Units (9%) • Outdoor Skating Rink (9%) The following section provides specific details related to the plans and work underway to support the <u>top five</u> ranked priority projects. 1. Increased access to Family Health Care: Significant progress has been made to increase access to family health care in the community. In June 2025, the Town established a Family Physician Recruitment Working Group comprised of residents and stakeholders with a mandate of facilitating the recruitment of new physicians to support the local community by leveraging municipal authority to address this critical need. In October 2025, the Working Group proudly announced and welcomed Dr. Bali to the community, marking the first new doctor to join the community in recent years. The Working Group has also been actively supporting the expansion of Family Health

	Team services in The Blue Mountains, through recent advocacy efforts at the 2025 Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference. 2. Preservation and Retention of Mature Trees on Public Land: Understanding the value and importance of trees for our community, the Town approved a new Urban Forestry Coordinator staff position that was filled in mid-2025. The new position will focus on developing and implementing the Urban Forest Management Plan, including functions such as completing technical tree guidelines, hazard risk assessments, tree inventories, and invasive species control efforts. 3. Increased Access to Long Term Care: In May 2025, the Town announced a partnership with peopleCare Communities to enable the development of a new long-term care (LTC) home in the Craigeleith area on a section of the former Tee's Please property. Through the partnership, peopleCare will purchase three acres of the 18-acre Town-owned land to build the new LTC home, which will provide care and services for up to 192 people. The project was made possible through Council's commitment to work with peopleCare to identify potential sites and options to build a LTC home. 4. Investing in Infrastructure Replacement: The Town is proactively planning, prioritizing and investing in key projects throughout the community to revitalize aging infrastructure and support future growth. This includes multiple road reconstruction projects, water and wastewater system upgrades, stormwater management improvements, bridge and culvert replacements, master plans and environmental assessments. In total, the Town is projecting to invest more than \$400 million in capital infrastructure in the next 10 years. 5. Increased Supply of Attainable Housing Units: In August 2026, Council approved entering into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Home Opportunities, a non-profit housing corporation, to explore the possibility of an attainable housing project on town-owned land. The MOU is intended to be a tool to assess community interest and review opportunities for a potential partnership. As part of the early stages, an inventory of vacant municipal land is being reviewed with the parameters of 6 – 10 acres, with the potential to allow for 150 – 250 units at 25 units per acre.
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E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

No environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of this report.

G. Financial Impacts

No direct financial impacts are anticipated as a result of this report. Budget to support the 2024 Resident Satisfaction Survey was approved in the 2024 Town Budget.

Budgets associated with the actions mentioned in this report have been either supported through the 2025 Town budget or will be considered in future budgets based on department work plans.

H. In Consultation With

Adam Smith, Chief Administrative Officer
Senior Management Team
Shawn Postma, Manager of Community Planning
Kent Waugh, The W Group
Erin Deviney, Independent Market Research Consultant

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required.

However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives si@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

1. Resident Satisfaction Survey – Analysis and Trends
2. Secondary Survey – Planning and Development Services Department

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Hendry
Director of Strategic Initiatives

For more information, please contact:
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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SI.25.012 2024 Resident Satisfaction Survey Analysis and Action Plan.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - Resident Satisfaction Survey.pdf - Attachment 2 - Planning and Development Services Department Survey.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Oct 8, 2025

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

Tim Hendry - Oct 8, 2025 - 3:59 PM