

CITY SERVICES

City of Guelph Survey of Residents April 2011

Prepared for the City of Guelph

Introduction

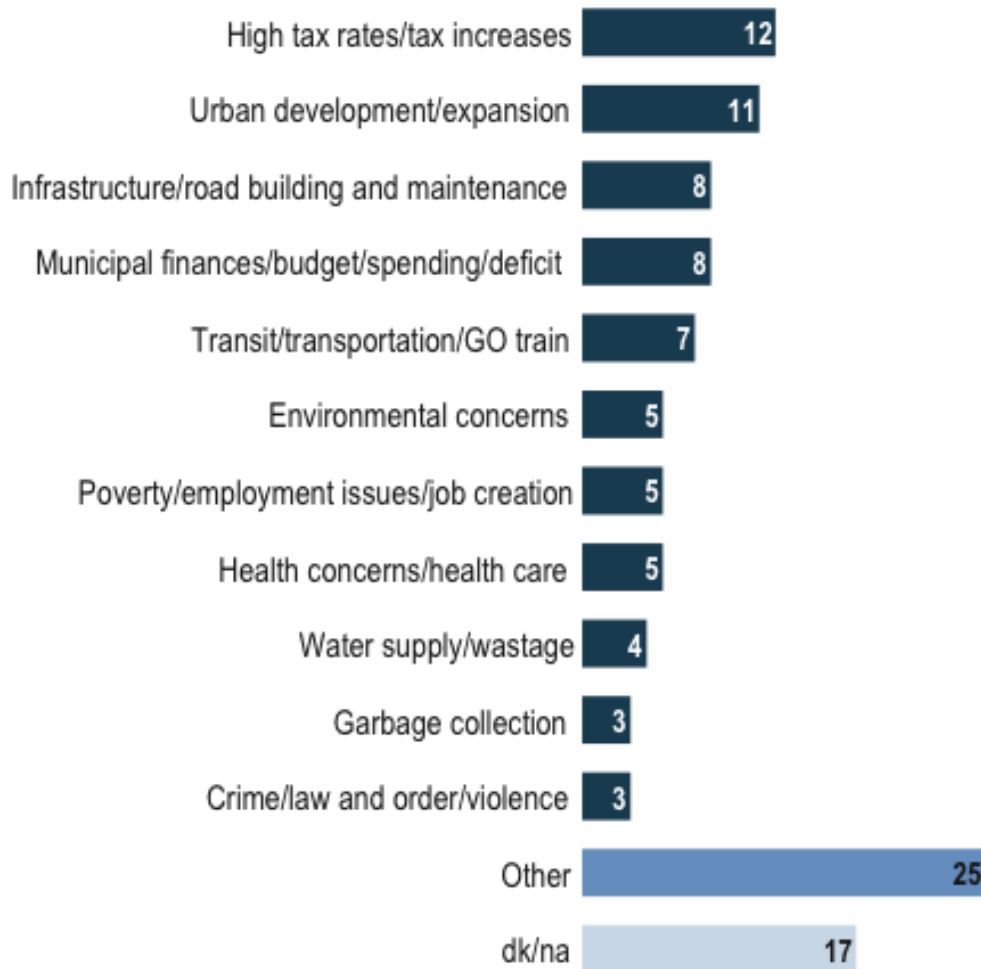
- Environics conducted a survey of residents for the City of Guelph.
- The main topics included:
 - Issues of importance
 - Quality of life
 - Satisfaction with and preferred spending on specific services
 - Contact with City of Guelph and satisfaction with service
 - Perceptions of the City on environmental issues
 - Views toward the future
- Council members and the Executive Team of Guelph developed an initial list of potential focal areas for further discussion and debate at a February 2011 strategic planning meeting. At that time new ideas were also surfaced. Following the meeting, Council members and the Executive Team then individually ranked all suggestions raised and the summarized findings were provided to Environics as the foundation from which to develop the survey tool.

Methodology

- The survey was conducted by telephone among 600 City of Guelph residents 18 years of age and older between March 16 and April 4, 2011.
- Prior to the official launch of the survey, a full-pretest of the survey instrument was conducted with “live” respondents to assess the questionnaire as to clarity of questions, sequencing of items, and respondent sensitivity or reaction to specific questions or language.
- The sampling included cell phone sample to reach residents who do not have landlines (who are heavily concentrated among younger age groups). A minimum quota was set to include 120 interviews with those aged 18 to 29.
- The data was weighted by the six wards encompassing the City of Guelph to ensure that the results are representative of the population.
- The margin of error for a sample of 600 is plus or minus 4.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Most important issue facing Guelph today

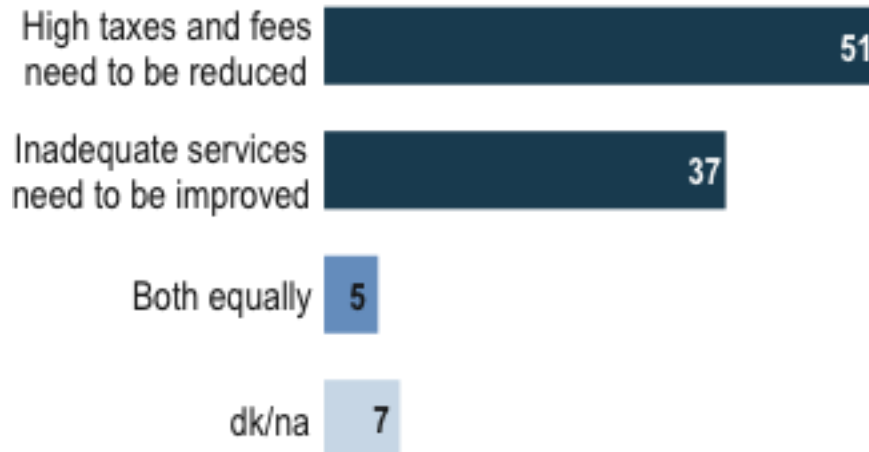
- High tax rates or tax increases and urban development or expansion are at the top of the public agenda.
- Following closely behind are infrastructure, municipal finances/spending and transit/transportation issues.



- Those aged 30 years and older are more inclined to mention municipal finances and spending issues.
- Homeowners are more likely than renters to cite high tax rates, urban development and municipal finances.
- Renters are more inclined than homeowners to mention transit/transportation issues.

Biggest challenge – inadequate services or high taxes & fees

- When presented with two views on the biggest challenge facing Guelph, five in ten residents (51%) take the view that fees and taxes are too high and need to be lowered even if it means a small reduction in services compared to about four in ten (37%) who hold the view that inadequate services need to be improved even if it means a small tax increase.

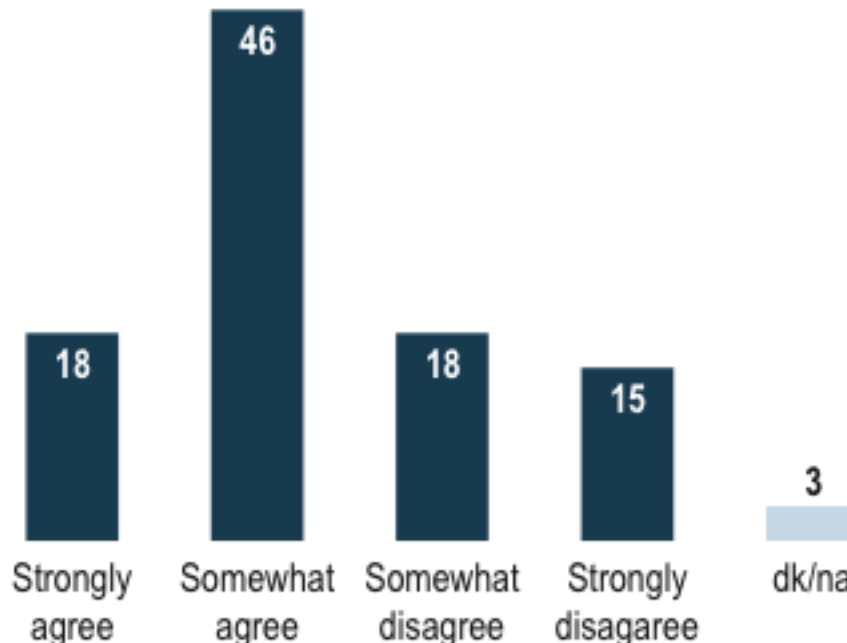


- Majorities of those aged 30 and older think high taxes and fees is the biggest challenge facing Guelph, while a plurality of those aged 18 to 29 think it is inadequate services.
- Majorities in wards 1, 2, 4 and 6 think the biggest challenge facing Guelph is high taxes and fees, while residents residing in wards 3 and 5 are divided between these two views.
- A majority of homeowners think high taxes and fees is the biggest challenge, while a majority of renters think it is inadequate services.

- Some people think that the biggest challenge facing Guelph is inadequate services to residents and we need to improve these services even if it means a small tax increase. Others think the biggest problem is fees and taxes that are too high and we need to lower them even if it means a small reduction in services. Which of these views is closest to your own?

Services received are good value for tax dollars

- However, when asked to assess the services they receive for their tax dollars, two-thirds of Guelph residents (64%) agree that considering the services they receive, they get good value for their City tax dollars.

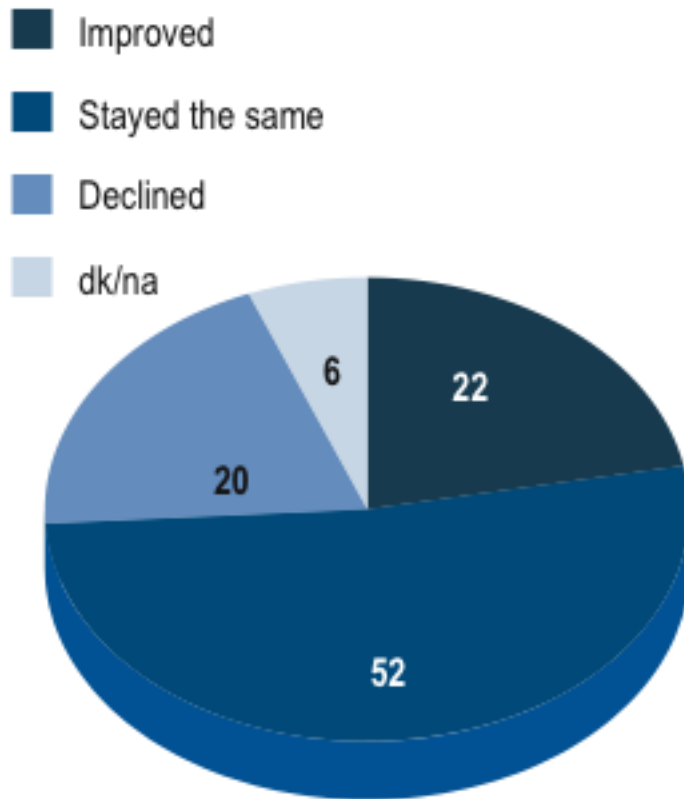


- Majorities across nearly all regional and demographic subgroups agree that the services they receive are good value for their City tax dollars.
- Disagreement is higher than average among those aged 45 to 59.
- Among those who think the biggest challenge facing the City is inadequate services, a large majority (87%) agree that the services they receive are good value for their tax dollars.
- Among those who think the biggest challenge is high taxes and fees, opinion is divided between those who think the services they receive are good value for their tax dollars and those who do not (50% vs. 48%).

7. Do you agree or disagree that considering the services you receive, you get good value for your City tax dollars?...Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree

Perception of quality of life in Guelph

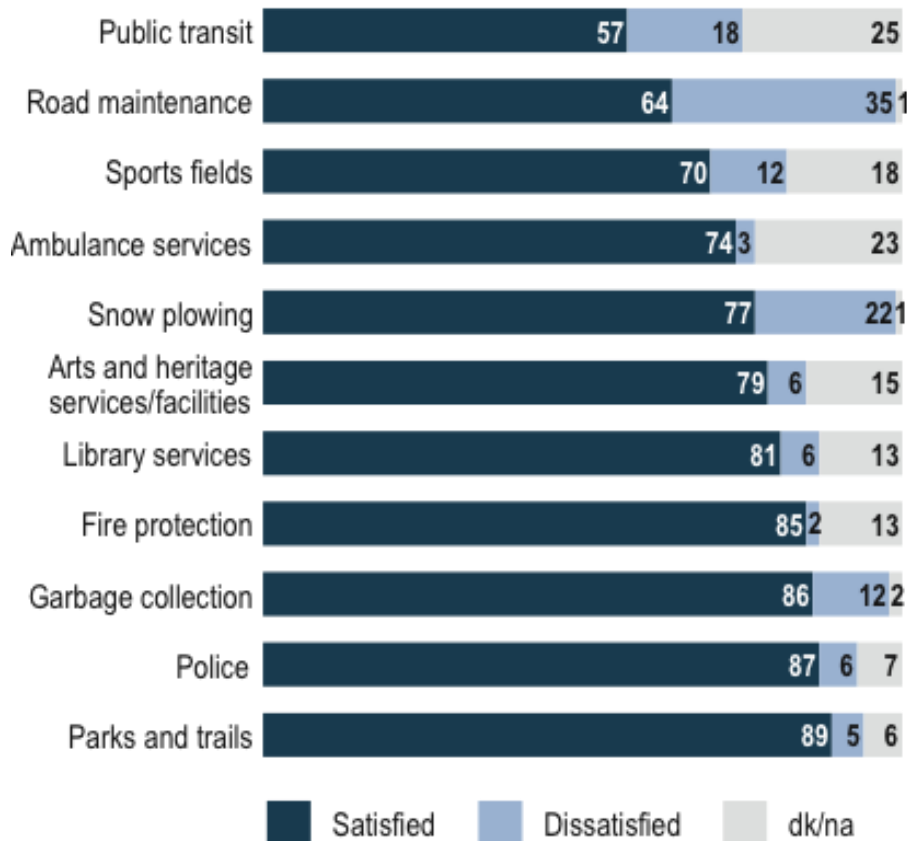
- Half of Guelph residents (52%) say the quality of life in the City over the past few years has stayed the same.
- Two in ten think it has improved (22%), while a similar proportion (20%) think it has declined.



- Majorities or pluralities across nearly all demographic subgroups think the quality of life in Guelph has stayed the same over the past few years.
- Those aged 18 to 29, single residents are more inclined to think the quality of life in Guelph has improved rather than declined.
- In contrast, those aged 45 to 59 and those with a high school or community college education are more likely to think the quality of life in Guelph has declined rather than improved.
- Majorities or pluralities across all wards see no change in quality of life.
- But residents living in wards 3 and 5 are more likely to see an improvement rather than a decline, while those living in ward 2 are more inclined to see a decline rather than an improvement.
- Those who think the services they receive are good value for their tax dollars are more likely to think there has been an improvement rather than a decline, while those who think the services they receive are not good value for their tax dollar are more inclined to see a decline rather than an improvement.

Satisfaction with City of Guelph services

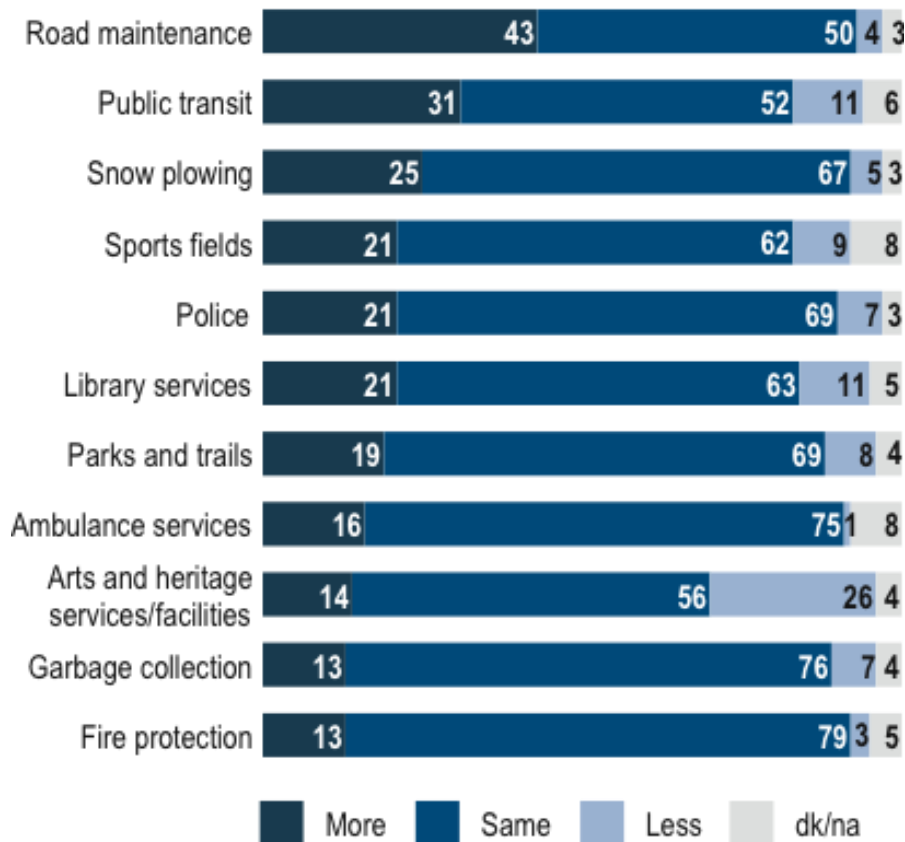
- Majorities of Guelph residents express satisfaction with all of the services tested in the survey.
- The highest marks go to parks and trails, police, garbage collection and fire protection, with more than eight in ten expressing satisfaction with these services.
- Public transit receives the lowest rating, with fewer than six in ten expressing satisfaction. However, it should be noted that one-quarter of residents are unable to express an opinion about this service.
- Two in ten or more are also unable to express an opinion on sports fields and ambulance services.



- Majorities across most demographic subgroups express satisfaction with all the services tested.
- Residents aged 60 and older express higher than average satisfaction with snow plowing, but lower than average satisfaction with parks and trails and sports fields. However, it should be noted that about a third of people in this age group offer no opinion on sports fields and more than one in ten offer no opinion on parks and trails.
- Those aged 18 to 29 express higher than average satisfaction with sports fields and public transit, but are less likely than average to be satisfied with snow plowing.
- Residents of ward 2 are more likely than average to be satisfied with library services and ambulance services, but express lower than average satisfaction with road maintenance.
- Residents of ward 3 express higher than average satisfaction with snow plowing.

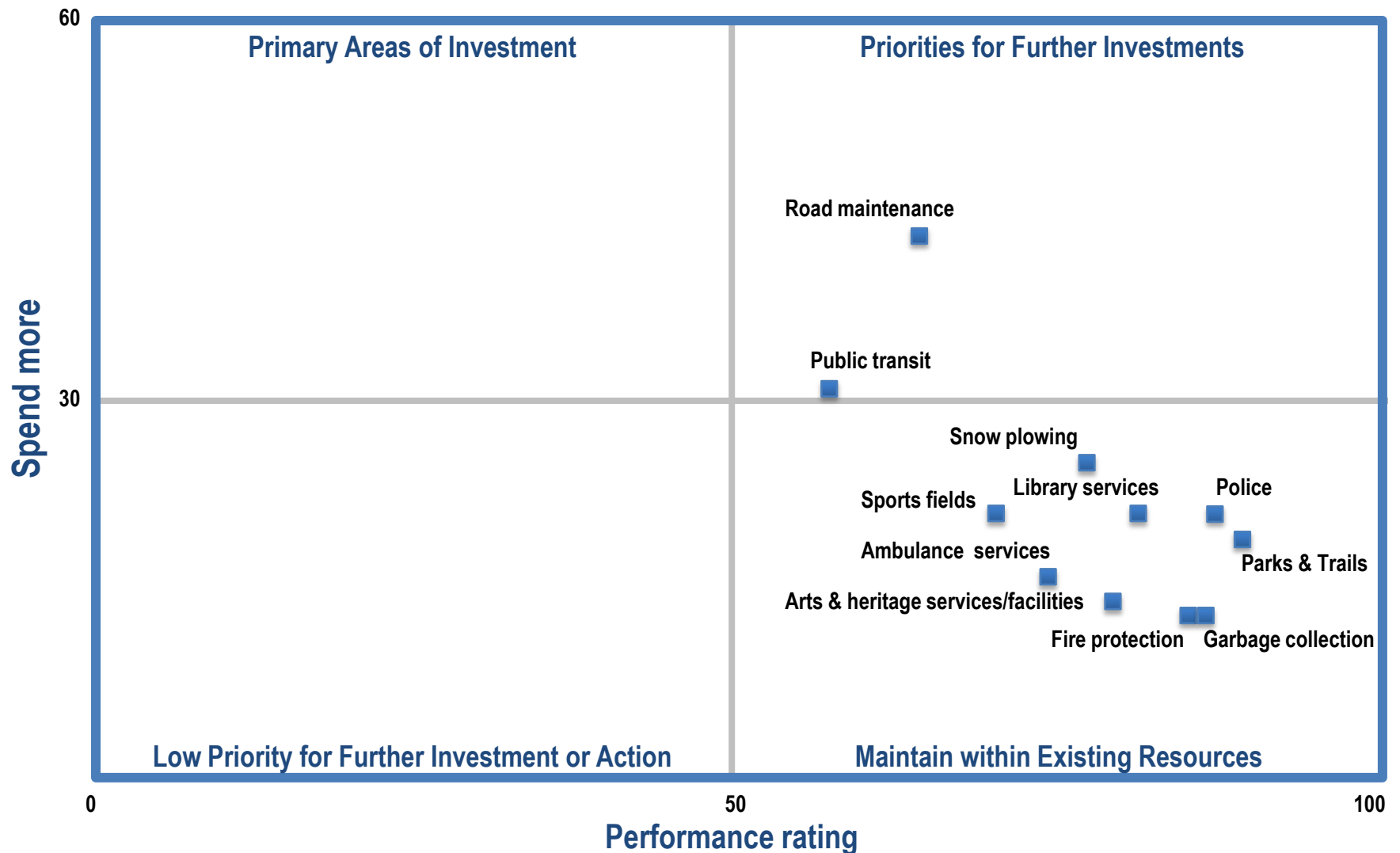
Preferred spending on City of Guelph services

- When it comes to spending on the same services, road maintenance is at the top of the list, with more than four in ten calling for more spending on this service, followed by three in ten wanting increased spending on public transit.
- At the bottom of the list of spending preferences are arts and heritage services, garbage collection and fire protection, with just over one in ten residents wanting increased spending on these services.



- Those aged 18 to 29 are more likely than average to want more spending on public transit and snow plowing.
- Renters are more likely than homeowners to want increased spending on road maintenance, public transit, snow plowing, parks and trails, arts and heritage services/facilities and garbage collection.
- Those residing in ward 5 are more likely than average to want increased spending on library services, while those living in ward 3 express a higher than average preference for more spending on arts and heritage services/facilities.
- Those who think the biggest challenge facing Guelph is inadequate services are more likely than those who think it is high taxes and fees to prefer increased spending on most services tested (except police, sports fields, ambulance services and fire protection).

Spend more vs. satisfaction with services



Quadrant analysis – interpretation

Spend more

Primary Areas of Investment

(Lower satisfaction, higher spending support.)

Priorities for Further Investments

(Higher satisfaction, higher spending support.)

- Road maintenance
- Public Transit

Higher desire to spend more and higher satisfaction are perceived as municipal strengths in which residents support higher spending.

Low Priority for Further Investment or Action

(Lower satisfaction, lower spending support.)

Maintain within Existing Resources

(Higher satisfaction, lower spending support.)

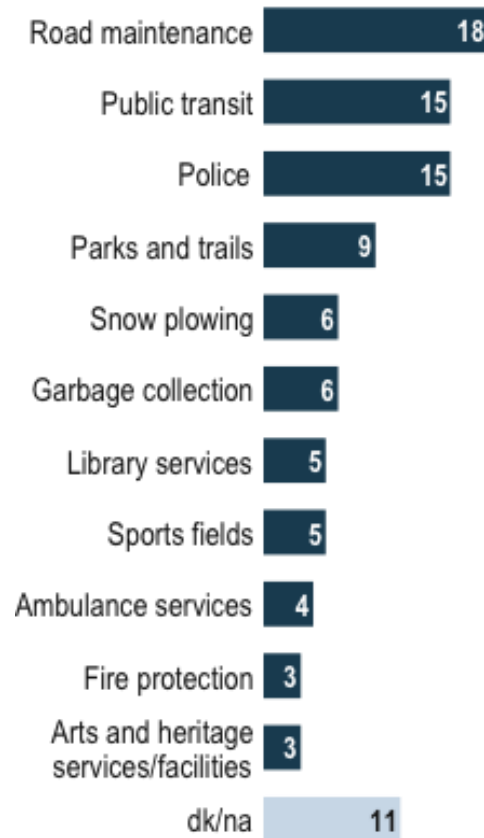
- Snow plowing
- Police
- Sports fields
- Library services
- Parks and trails
- Ambulance services
- Arts & heritage services/facilities
- Garbage collection
- Fire protection

Lower than average desire to spend more and higher satisfaction are viewed as municipal strengths, but residents are less inclined to have the City allocate more resources to these services.

Performance rating

Preferred core service to be significantly improved

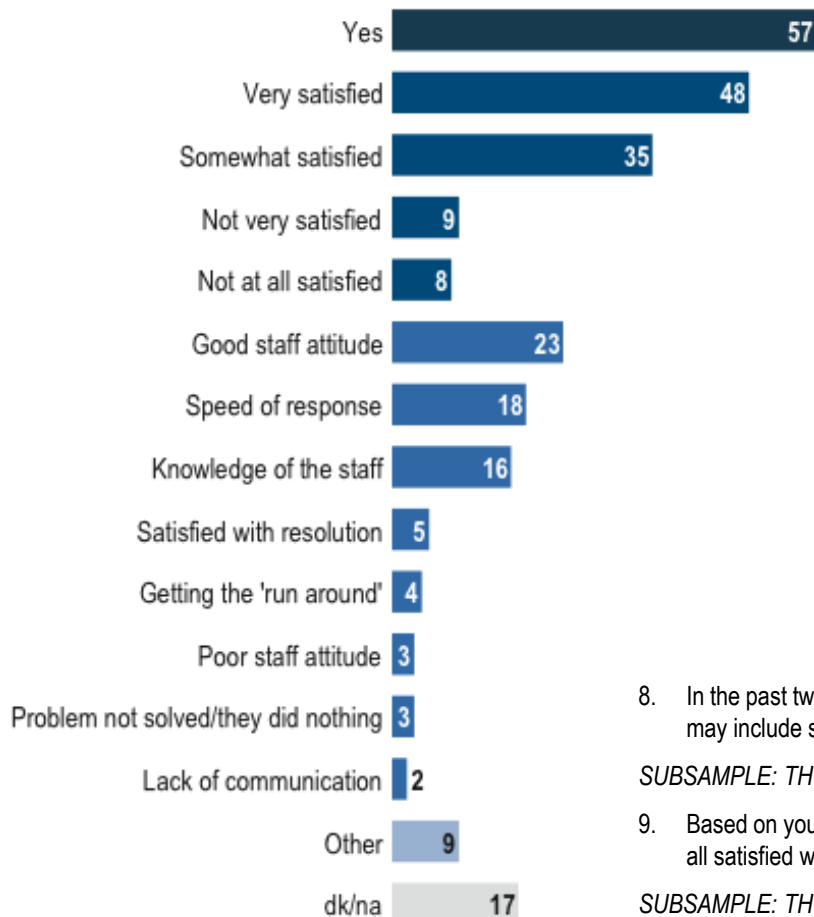
- When residents are asked if it was possible to significantly improve one of the core services tested within the existing budget, which one would they pick, road maintenance, public transit and the police are at the top of the list.
- Ambulance services, fire protection and arts and heritage services/facilities are the least likely to be chosen, with fewer than five percent of residents choosing any of these services.



- Those aged 18 to 29 years are more likely than average to choose public transit and snow plowing.
- Those with children under 18 living in the household are more inclined than those without to pick library services.
- Homeowners are more inclined than renters to choose police, library services, sports fields and fire protection, while renters are more likely than homeowners to pick public transit and parks and trails.
- Those who think the biggest challenge facing Guelph is inadequate services are more likely than those who think it is high taxes and fees to pick public transit and library services, and less likely to say the police.

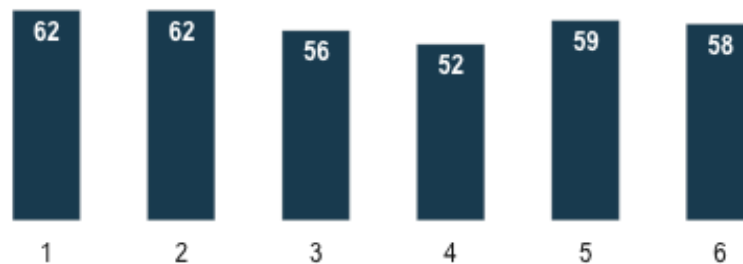
Contact with City of Guelph and evaluation of service

- About six in ten Guelph residents (57%) have contacted or dealt with the City of Guelph or one of its employees in the past 12 months.
- Among these, eight in ten (83%) say they were satisfied with the service they received; about two in ten (17%) were not satisfied. Moreover, the proportion who were very satisfied (48%) is six times higher than the number who were not at all satisfied (8%).
- The most common reasons for positive assessments of the service they received are good staff attitude, speed of response and knowledge of the staff.
- The most common reasons for negative assessments are speed of response, poor staff attitude, problem was not solved and lack of communication.



- Contact with the City of Guelph is higher than average among those aged 30 to 44, those with children under 18 living in the household and those with a university education.
- Contact is higher among homeowners than among renters (61% vs. 42%).
- There are no significant differences across wards.

**Contact with City in the past 12 months
% of residents by ward**



8. In the past twelve months, have you contacted or dealt with the City of Guelph or one of its employees? This may include staff at City Hall, recreation facilities, libraries or fire service, etc.

SUBSAMPLE: THOSE WHO HAVE CONTACTED/DEALT WITH CITY OF GUELPH (N=342)

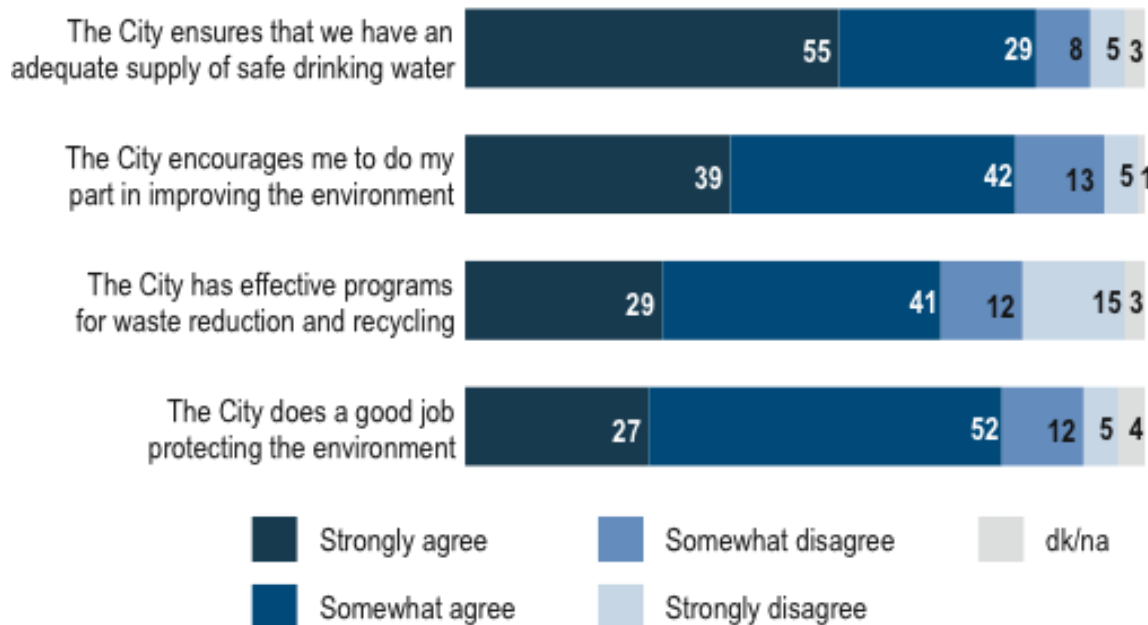
9. Based on your contact with the City, were you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the service you received?

SUBSAMPLE: THOSE WHO HAVE CONTACTED/DEALT WITH CITY OF GUELPH (N=342)

10. What aspect of the service was most responsible for your feeling that way?

Perceptions of the City re. environmental issues

- Large majorities of seven in ten or more have positive perceptions of the City regarding environmental issues.
- The strongest positive perception is found for the statement that the City ensures that they have an adequate supply of safe drinking water: More than half “strongly agree” (55%).
- Four in ten strongly agree that the City encourages them to do their part in improving the environment.
- About three in ten strongly agree that the City has effective programs for waste reduction and recycling and that the City does a good job protecting the environment.

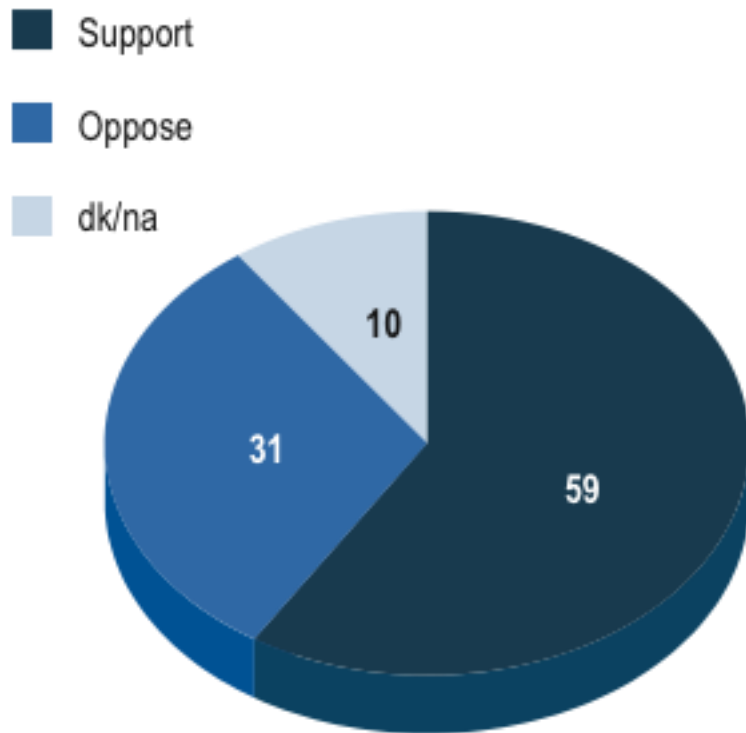


- Those aged 18 to 29 are more likely than average to strongly agree that the City ensures that they have an adequate supply of safe drinking water.
- Those aged 60 and older are more inclined to strongly agree that the City encourages them to do their part in improving the environment.
- Those who agree that the services provided to them are good value for their City tax dollar are more likely than others to strongly agree with nearly all of these statements (except with the statement the City does a good job protecting the environment).

13. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following: a) The City has effective programs for waste reduction and recycling...b)The City encourages me to do my part in improving the environment...c) The City does a good job protecting the environment...d)The City ensures that we have an adequate supply of safe drinking water.

Moving some University of Guelph operations downtown to support economic development

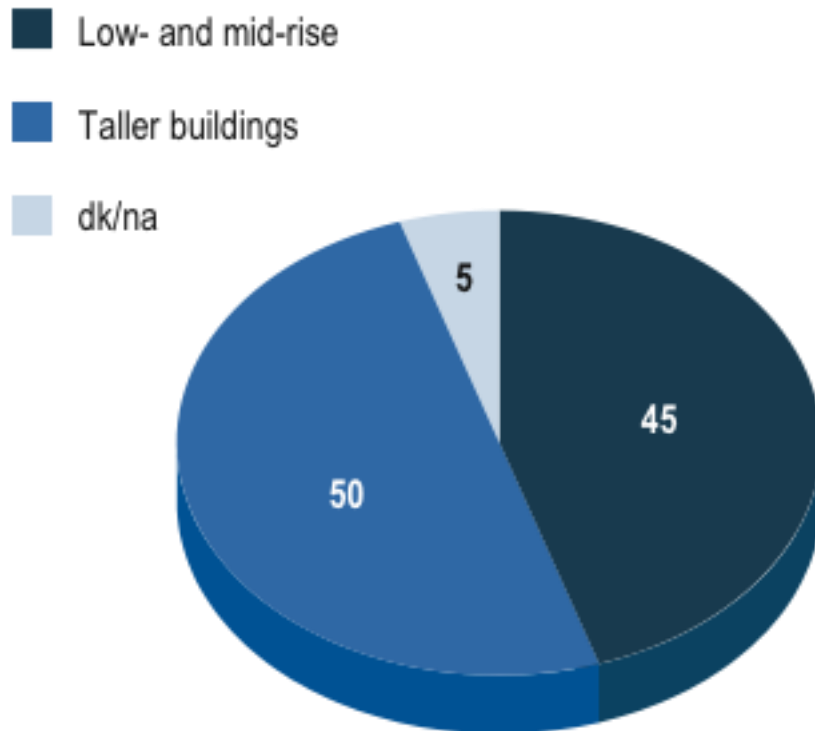
- Six in ten residents (59%) support the idea of the University of Guelph moving some of its operations downtown to support economic development in the City.
- This suggests that City investment in further discussion around post-secondary presence in the downtown is warranted.
- Three in ten (31%) are opposed.



- Majorities across most demographic and regional subgroups support this idea.
- Support is higher than average among those aged 18 to 29.
- Support for this idea is also higher among those who think the services provided to them are good value for their City tax dollar than among those who do not.
- In contrast, opposition is higher among those who do not think the services provided to them are good value for their tax dollar than among those who do.

Future growth – low/mid rise vs. taller buildings

- Residents were told that as the City continues to grow choices have to be made about the buildings allowed. They were then presented with two views.
- When asked which of these views is closest to their own, opinion is divided between: should only have low and mid rise buildings (1-6 stories) even though they would cover more of a lot's ground area (45%) and taller buildings (7-18 stories) that allow more green space are better (50%).



- Views on this question vary with age. A majority of those aged 60 and older prefer low and mid rise buildings, those aged 45 to 59 are divided between these two views, and majorities of those under the age of 45 prefer taller buildings.
- Homeowners are more inclined than renters to prefer low and mid rise buildings, while renters are more likely than homeowners to prefer taller buildings.



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