



REPORT

2023 Citizen Satisfaction Survey



DATE 2024-02-07



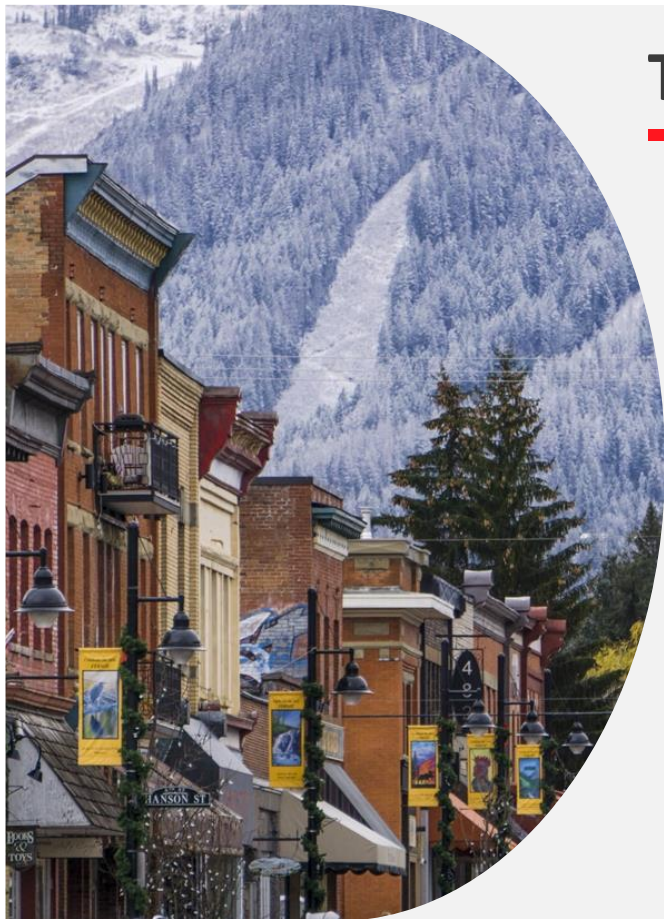


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REPORT

Context & Objectives



Context



The City of Fernie has previously conducted community satisfaction studies. The City, residents, and general attitudes and behaviours continue to change and evolve, making it essential for the City of Fernie to continue this type of research, with the aim to increase resident participation. Citizen perceptions are likely to have changed since 2020 and understanding residents in 2023 will better support decision-making as it relates to operations, services, and budgets.

Objectives



The 2023 Citizen Satisfaction survey aims to understand residents' awareness of and satisfaction with municipal services and programs, and their preferences for engaging with the City. The report includes findings on the topics of:

- City impressions
- Quality of life
- Top issues
- Satisfaction with and perceptions of City programs and services
- Communication and engagement

REPORT

Methodology



Methodology

Mode

Online survey, data collected from November 21 to December 19, 2023

Target Respondents and Recruitment

City of Fernie residents and/or homeowners (adults)

- Mail-to-web survey with PIN: Approximately 3,852 initiation letters with unique 6-digit PINs to access the online survey were dropped off at Fernie residents' mailboxes by Canada Post*. Those who did not receive the mail were advised to contact a Leger representative to get the PIN.

Youth residents aged 13 to 17 years

- Outreach via parents: Mail-to-web survey respondents who reported having children aged 13-17 in their household were asked for permission to allow their children to participate in the survey. Those who gave their consent then provided their children's or their own email address. Their children would take the survey via a unique survey link in the invitation email.
- An open-link survey was available on the City of Fernie posters targeting youth.

Response

A total of 476 residents and/or homeowners aged 18 or above and 38 youth residents aged 13-18 completed the survey online. The response rate of the adult mail-to-web survey is 12.4%*.

Analysis

Adult results were weighted according to **age and gender** in order to ensure a representative sample of the City of Fernie. Due to the small sample size of the youth surveys, the report focuses on the findings from the adult surveys.

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Summary of Findings



Summary of Findings

Overall Impressions and Quality of Life

- Overall impressions of the City of Fernie are largely positive, with more than seven in ten (72%) adult residents reporting a good impression. Commonly cited reasons include beautiful surroundings, a strong sense of community, abundant events, and friendly people.
- Overall quality of life in Fernie is generally high and stable. Almost nine in ten (86%) adult residents believe their quality of life is good, with six in ten (59%) feeling it has remained consistent over the past year.
- One in ten (11%) residents indicate they have experienced an increase in their quality of life, while one quarter (25%) indicate they have experienced a decline in their quality of life. High cost of living, inflation, and a lack of affordable housing are the most commonly cited reasons for worsened quality of life, in line with Fernie residents' top-of-mind issues, namely, housing and unaffordability. Those with improved quality of life most often highlight the increased availability of community events/activities and local services, as well as personal career satisfaction.
 - **CONSIDERATION:** Consider prioritizing supports and programming for low-income and young residents. Communicate relevant info and resources to these groups by mail, City website and FB.

Satisfaction with and Perceptions of City Programs and Services

- Overall satisfaction with the quality of the services and programs provided by the City of Fernie is strong, with a quarter (25%) of adult residents being highly satisfied. The City's core strengths are garbage and recycling; drinking water; emergency management; parks, indoor and outdoor recreation; stormwater management and flood protection; and fire protection, policing and bylaw enforcement –all rated highly satisfactory and deemed important by Fernie residents.
 - **CONSIDERATION:** Leverage the strengths of core services cited by residents to ensure satisfaction with quality of life remains high.

Summary of Findings (cont.)

Satisfaction with and Perceptions of City Programs and Services (cont.)

- Key drivers that contribute to residents' overall satisfaction with programs and services include - roads, sidewalks and pathways; parks and indoor and outdoor recreation; building, development and community planning services and programs. Satisfaction with parks, indoor and outdoor recreation is moderately strong (mean satisfaction score). However, the other two drivers - building, development and community planning services as well as roads, sidewalks and pathways garner lower mean satisfaction scores, presenting key improvement opportunities given their high importance in driving overall satisfaction. This finding aligns with the results of quadrant analysis where the two weaker attributes together with wastewater and sewage management are identified as top areas for improvement.
 - **CONSIDERATION:** Increase public information communication in these key areas, whether through public engagement, information notices/updates, etc.
- Two-thirds (65%) of adults perceive consistent quality in the City's services and programs over the past year. Those noting improvements (10%) cite the enhanced snow removal services, improved recreational offerings, and increased City efforts (in delivery), while those reporting decreased quality (14%) often mention poor municipal leadership and management and inadequate snow removal.
- Almost half (47%) of adults believe the City should only apply an inflationary increase in taxes and maintain the current level of services and programs. Over one-fifth (22%) advocate for tax increases to enhance services, more than double those who favour the opposite (9%).

Summary of Findings (cont.)

Public Engagement

- Public engagement with the City of Fernie is moderately strong, with two-thirds (65%) of adults providing opinions to the City on issues of importance to them. Roughly half agree the City's public engagement opportunities are available (57%), accessible and inclusive (49%), and easy to use (47%). However, there is slightly less acknowledgment of the City's performance in including public feedback in decision-making (43%) and providing follow-up communication about the impact of public input (30%).
- A vast majority (89%) of adult residents have engaged with the City over the past year, primarily through the City's website (82%) and its Facebook page (54%).
- Seven in ten (70%) adult residents have contacted or interacted with City of Fernie staff in the past year and nearly two-thirds (64%) of them are satisfied with their most recent interaction. In-person interactions note higher satisfaction than those by telephone and email.
- One-third (34%) of adult residents have contacted or interacted with City council members in the past year, most often in a community engagement/information session or open house. Satisfaction with interactions with City council members is very strong (70%).

Summary of Findings (cont.)

Information and Communication

- The Skatepark Redevelopment Project (95%) and the Fire Hall Replacement Project (85%) are most well-known among Fernie adult residents, followed by Childcare and Affordable Housing Project (55%) and Annex Park Grand Re-Opening (52%).
- Currently, Fernie residents mainly rely on word of mouth (70%), newspaper/magazine (55%), and the City's website (54%) to receive information about the City. Mail from the City (55%), however, is identified to be the most preferred communication method, followed by the City's website (53%), newspaper/magazine (43%), and the City's Facebook page (42%).
 - **CONSIDERATION:** There is an opportunity to leverage preferred communication challenges when informing and engaging with residents, particularly online due to it's ease of access, lower cost, timeliness and flexibility.

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Detailed Results

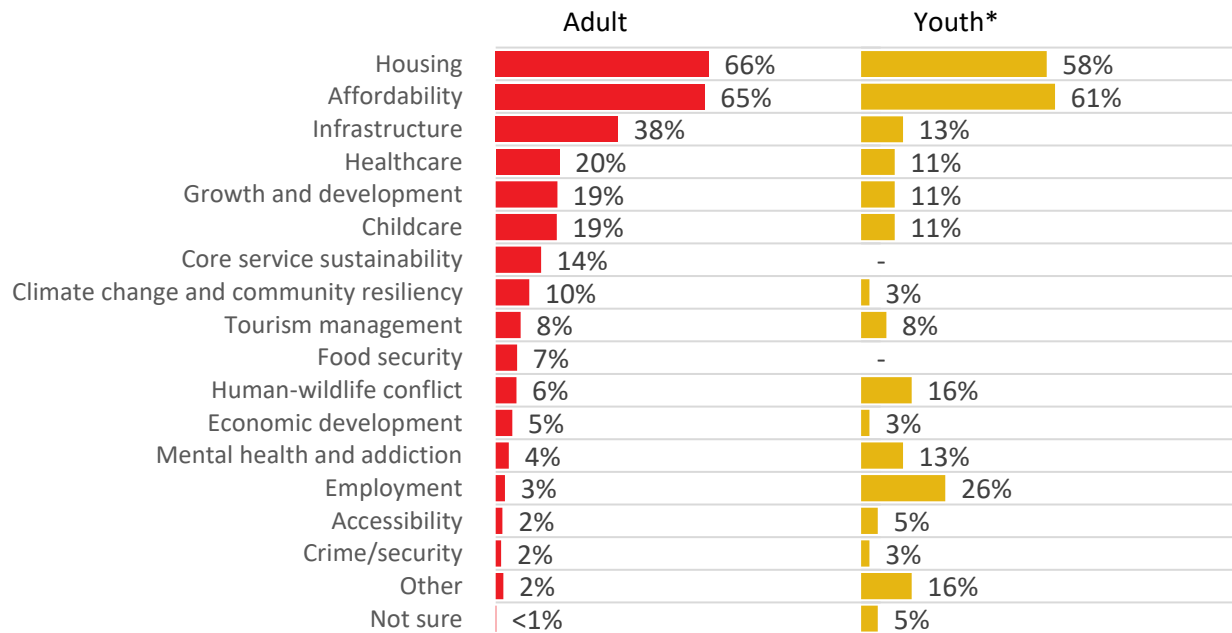


DETAILED RESULTS

Top of Mind Issues

Top of Mind Issues

Housing and affordability issues are at the top of the mind for Fernie residents, including youth. The next top-of-mind issues for adults are infrastructure and healthcare, while youth are more concerned about employment and human-wildlife conflict.





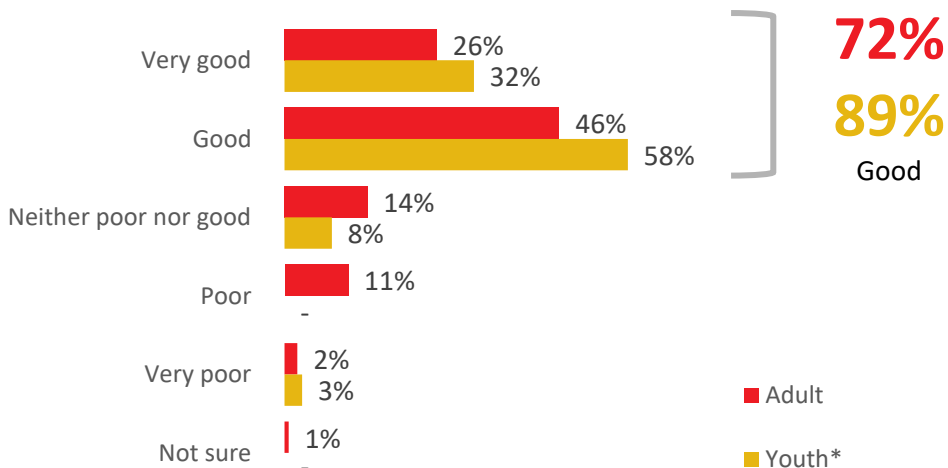
DETAILED RESULTS

Overall Impressions and Quality of Life

Overall Impressions of the City of Fernie

The majority, especially the youth, have positive impressions of the City of Fernie.

Among adults, those without children and those residing in Fernie for less than five years tend to hold more favourable impressions of the city compared to the rest. Relatively lower impressions are observed among residents aged between 35-54 and those living in Fernie for 20 years or longer.



Reasons for Good Impressions



Top 5 Reasons among Youth*

- Ski hill (32%)
- Beautiful surroundings/nice views (29%)
- Community events and activities (26%)
- Great biking access (24%)
- Outdoor activities/parks (21%)

For adult residents, beautiful surroundings/nice views are the top reason for having a good impression of the City of Fernie, followed by a strong sense of community, abundant community events and activities and friendly people. Noteworthy, about one-tenth give credit to adequate City services and facilities as well as strong leadership and management.

For youth, ski hill is the most cited reason for having a positive impression.

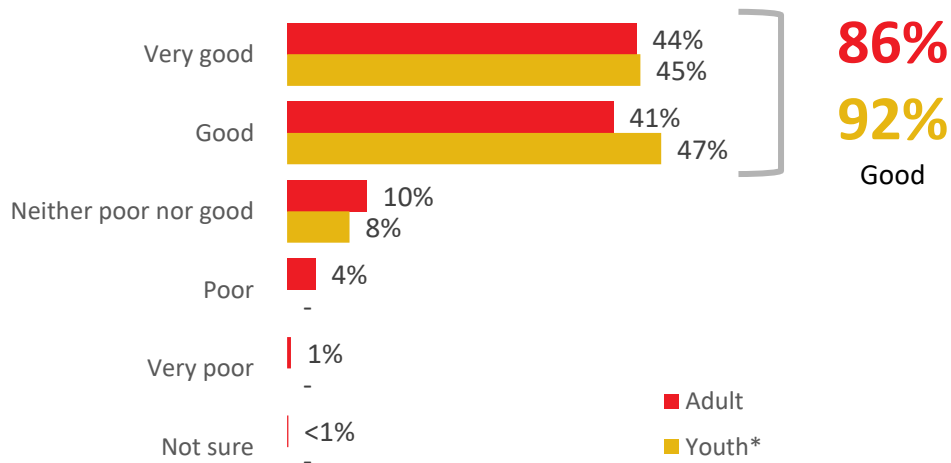
Reasons for Poor Impressions

Those with a poor impression (13% of total respondents) of the City of Fernie most often cite poor leadership and management, a lack of collaboration and consultation, and infrastructure/facility-related issues.



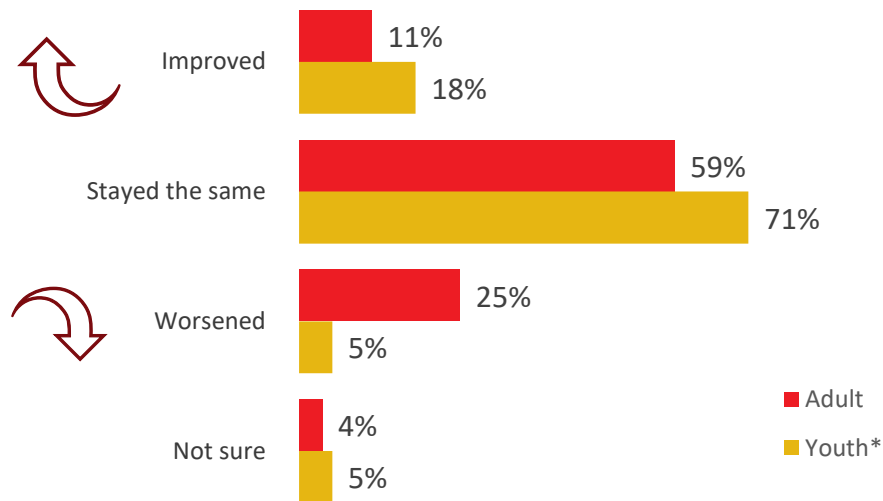
Overall Quality of Life

Positive perceptions of overall quality of life in Fernie is high, with almost nine in ten adult residents believing their quality of life is good. The ratings are particularly high among homeowners and those with household incomes of \$200,000 or more.



Trend in Quality of Life

Most feel their overall quality of life in Fernie in the past year has stayed the same. Among those who experienced a change, more adults report a decline than improvement, whereas youth cite opposite perceptions. Residents aged 18-34 are more likely to experience improved quality of life compared to the older residents.



Reasons for Life Quality Improvement

Increased availability of community events/activities and local services, as well as personal career satisfaction are the most commonly cited reasons for improved overall quality of life (11% of total respondents) in Fernie among adult residents.



Reasons for Life Quality Decrease

Adult residents in Fernie most commonly attribute their worsened quality of life (25% of total respondents) to the high cost of living, inflation, and a lack of affordable housing, in line with Fernie residents' top-of-mind issues.



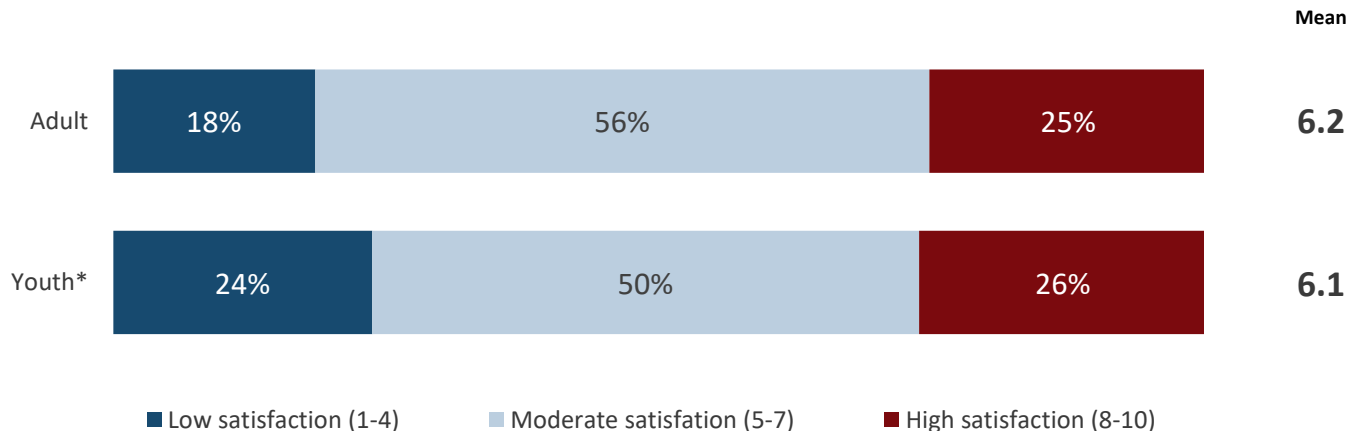
DETAILED RESULTS

Programs and Services

Overall Satisfaction with Programs and Services

Overall satisfaction with the quality of the services and programs provided by the City of Fernie is strong with a quarter being highly satisfied.

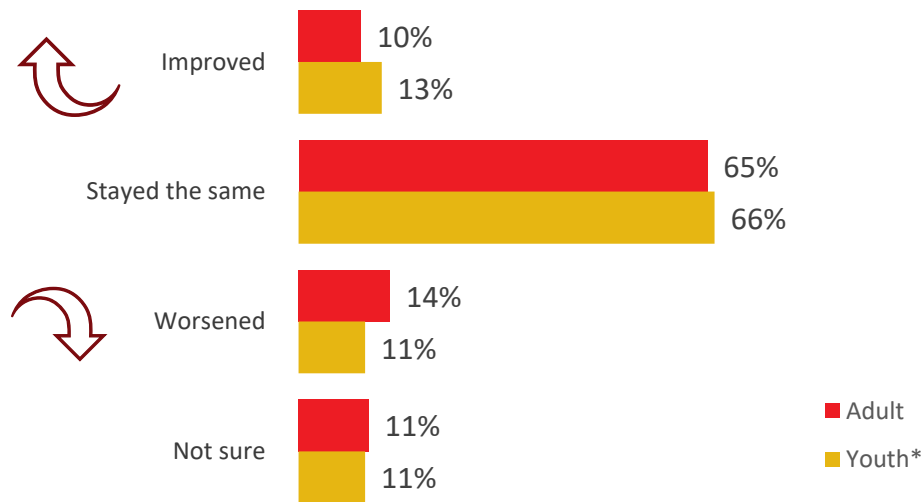
Among adults, those residing in Annex and Ridgmont, those without children in their household, and those living in Fernie for less than five years are more likely to report high satisfaction than the rest.



Trend in Quality of Services and Programs

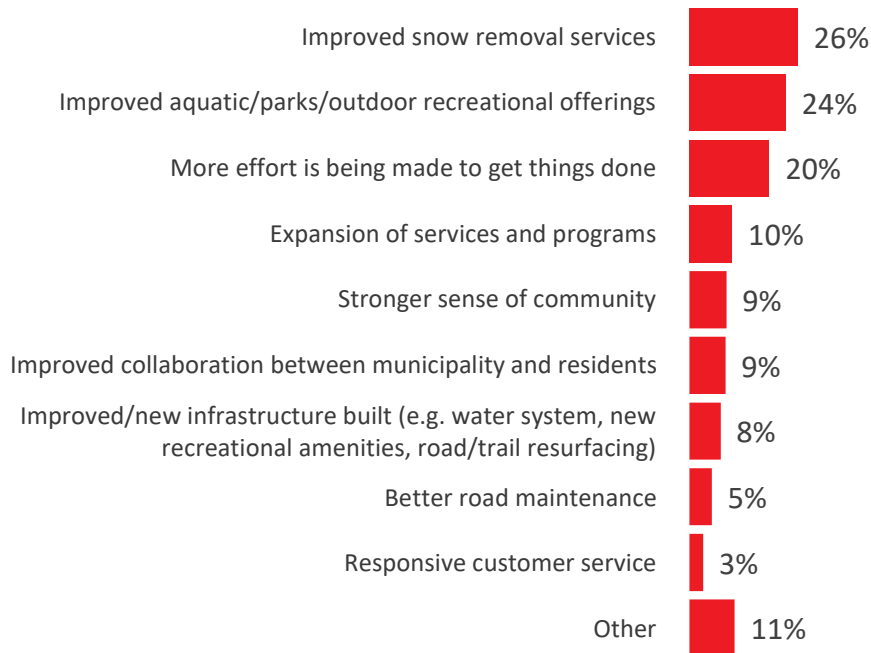
Approximately two-thirds of residents believe the quality of services and programs provided by the City of Fernie has remained consistent in the past year. Slightly more adults report a decline than an improvement.

Those with household incomes of \$90,000 or less are more likely to experience improved quality of services and programs compared to the more affluent groups.



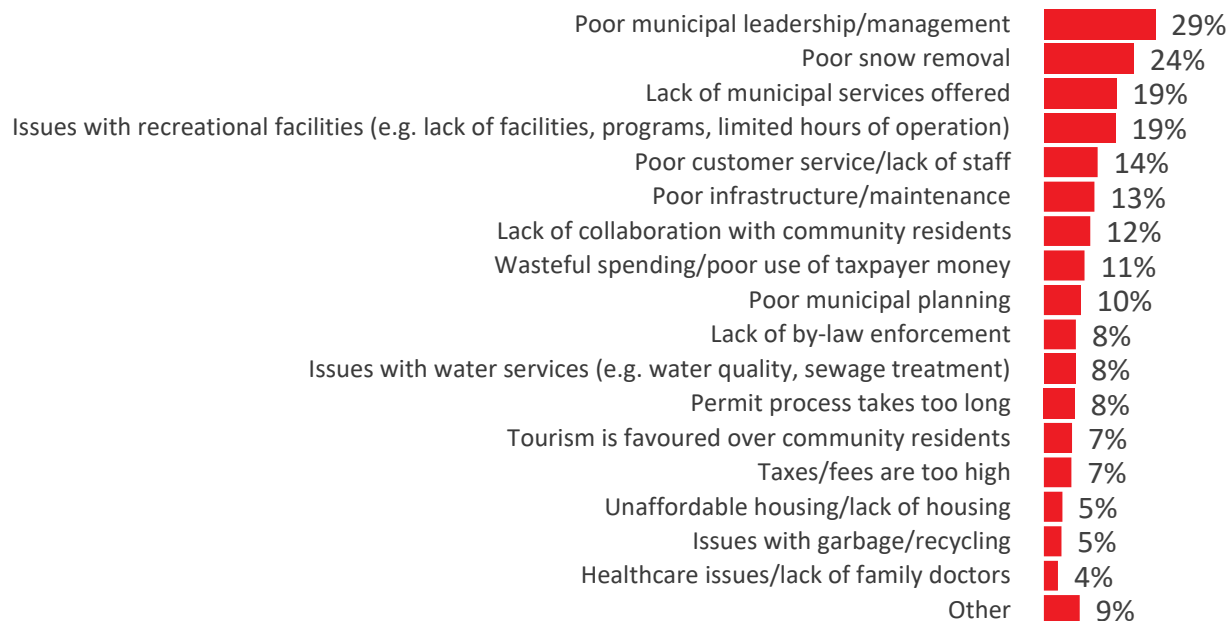
Reasons for Service and Program Quality Improvement

Adult residents perceive improvements (10% of total respondents) in the City's services and programs mainly due to enhanced snow removal services, improved recreational offerings, and increased efforts by the City to get things done.



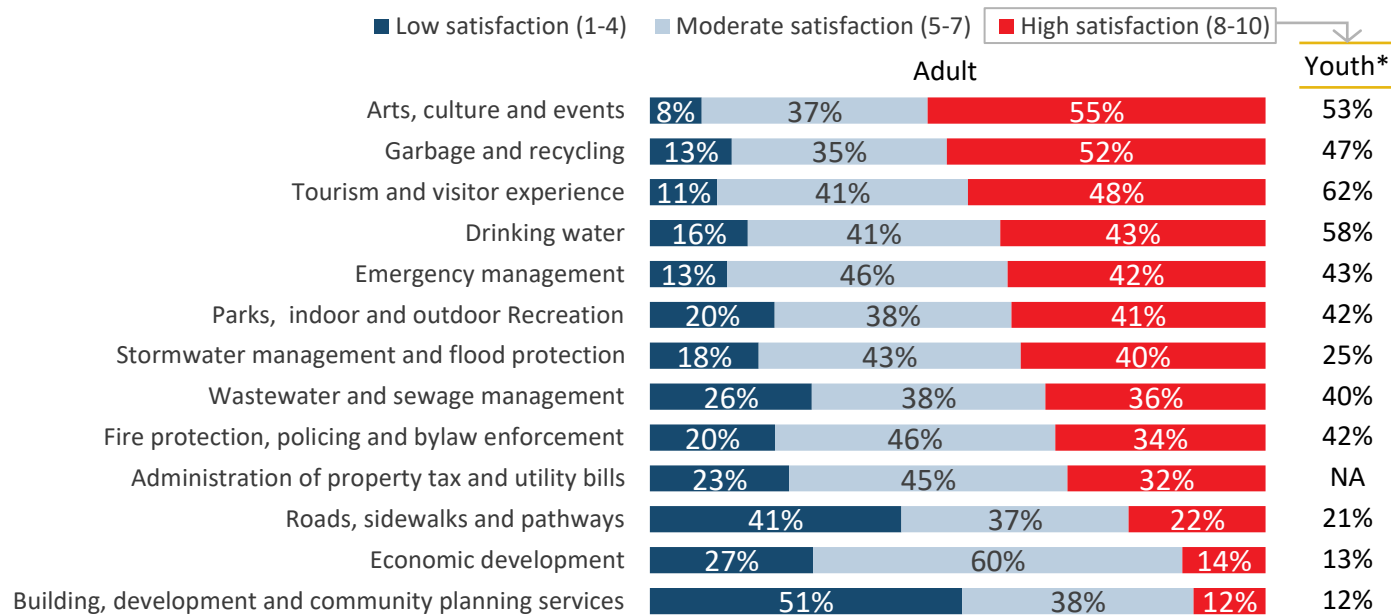
Reasons for Service and Program Quality Decrease

Adult residents who experience decreased quality of the City's services and programs (14% of total respondents) often cite poor municipal leadership and management, inadequate snow removal, a lack of municipal services, and issues with recreation facilities.



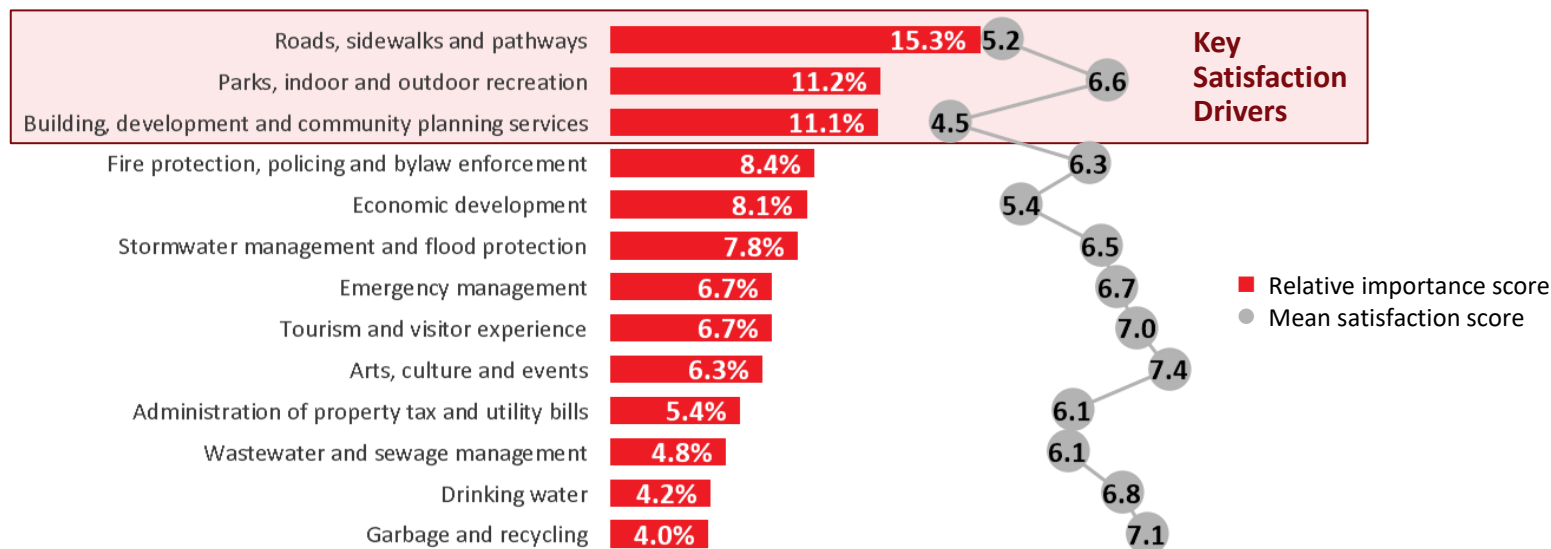
Satisfaction with Services and Programs

Arts, culture and events, garbage and recycling services, and tourism and visitor experience are adult residents' top three programs or services provided by the City of Fernie they are most satisfied with. Building, development and community planning services, economic development, and roads, sidewalks and pathways receive the least satisfaction by both adults and youth, representing the City's key areas for improvement.



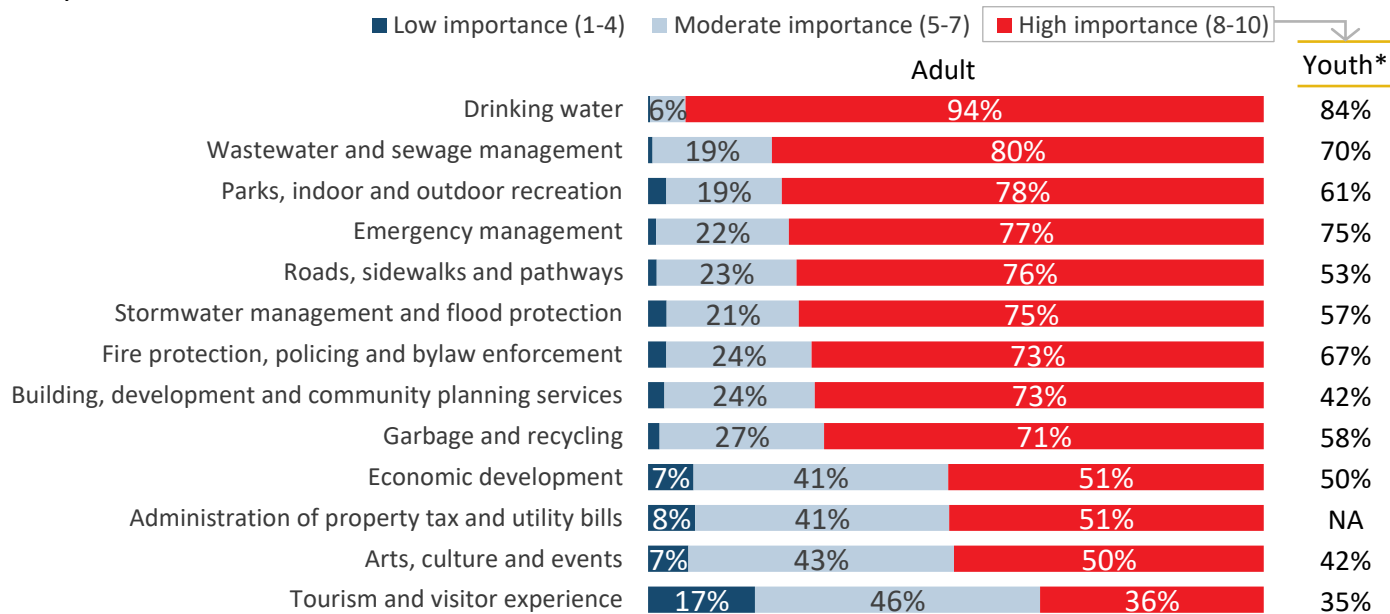
Key Service and Program Satisfaction Drivers (adult only)

Roads, sidewalks and pathways; parks and indoor and outdoor recreation; building, development and community planning services are key service and program satisfaction drivers. It is key to monitor the quality of these services and programs. Efforts to improve resident experience in these areas would contribute to overall satisfaction with the City's services and programs.

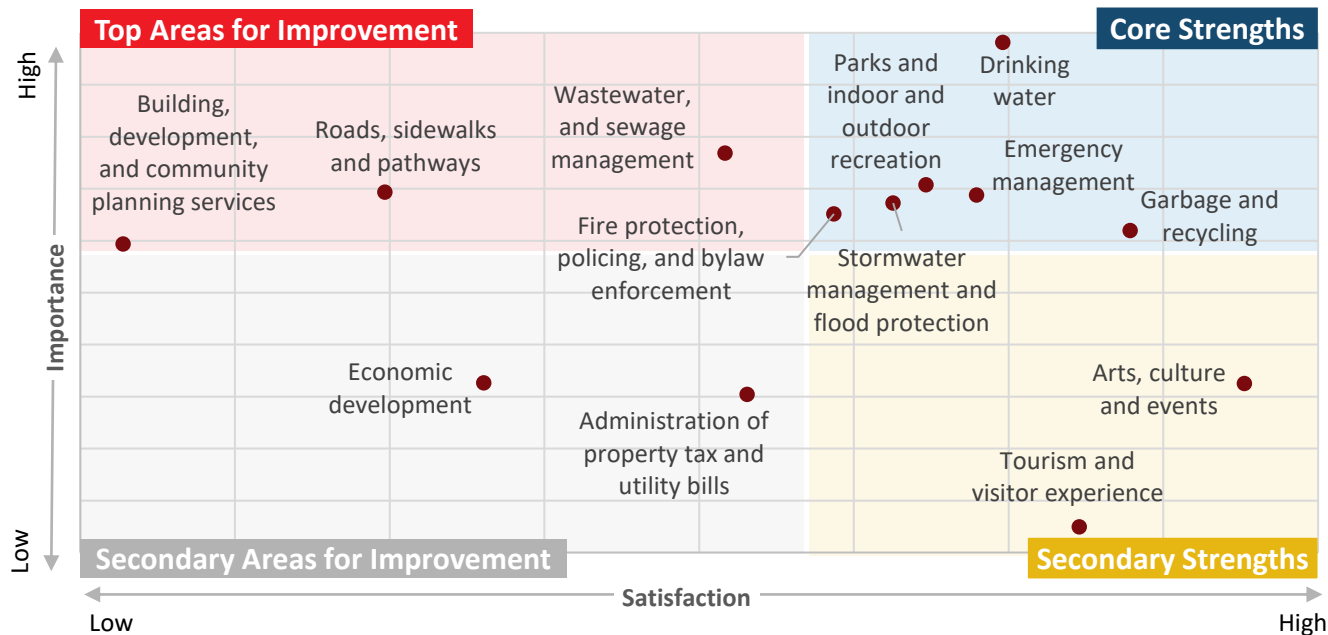


Perceived Importance of Services and Programs

Drinking water is the top priority for Fernie residents. The next most important programs or services provided by the City include wastewater and sewage management; parks, indoor and outdoor recreation; emergency management, as well as roads, sidewalks and pathways. Tourism and visitor experience, one of the most satisfying areas, is considered the least important for both adult and youth residents.



Importance vs. Satisfaction (adult only)

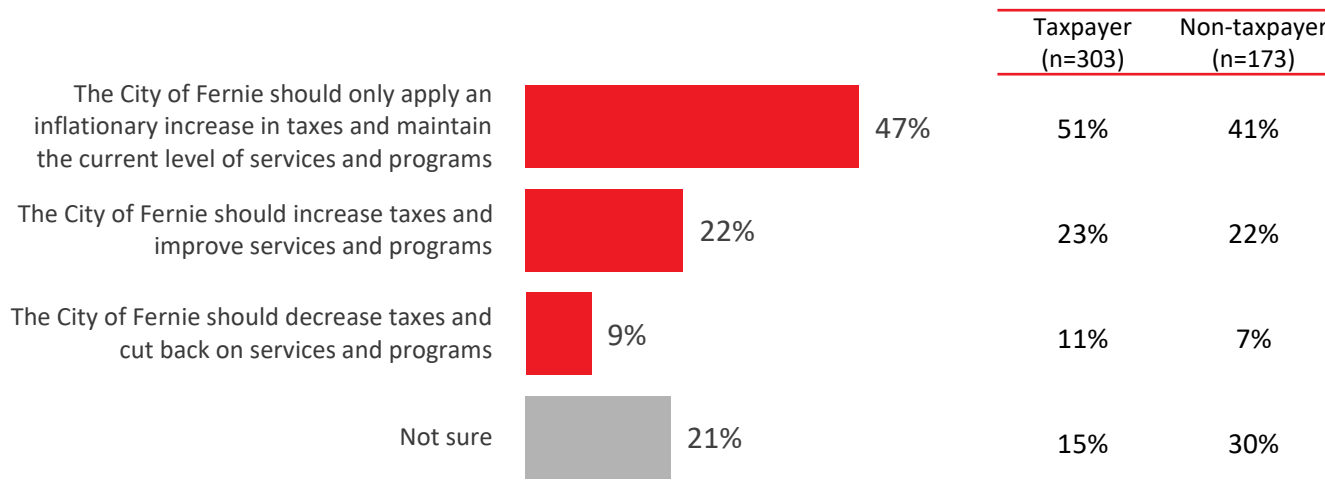


The City of Fernie has core strengths (high importance and high satisfaction) in garbage and recycling; drinking water; emergency management; parks, indoor and outdoor recreation; stormwater management and flood protection; and fire protection, policing and bylaw enforcement.

Building development and community planning services, roads, sidewalks and pathways, and wastewater and sewage management are highly important but garner lower satisfaction. These are the areas the City should focus on moving forward.

Tax and Service Preferences

Overall, nearly half believe the City of Fernie should only apply an inflationary increase in taxes and maintain the current level of services and programs. This opinion is more prominent among residents aged 55 or more. Over one-fifth think the City should increase taxes and improve services and programs, while one-tenth lean towards the opposite.



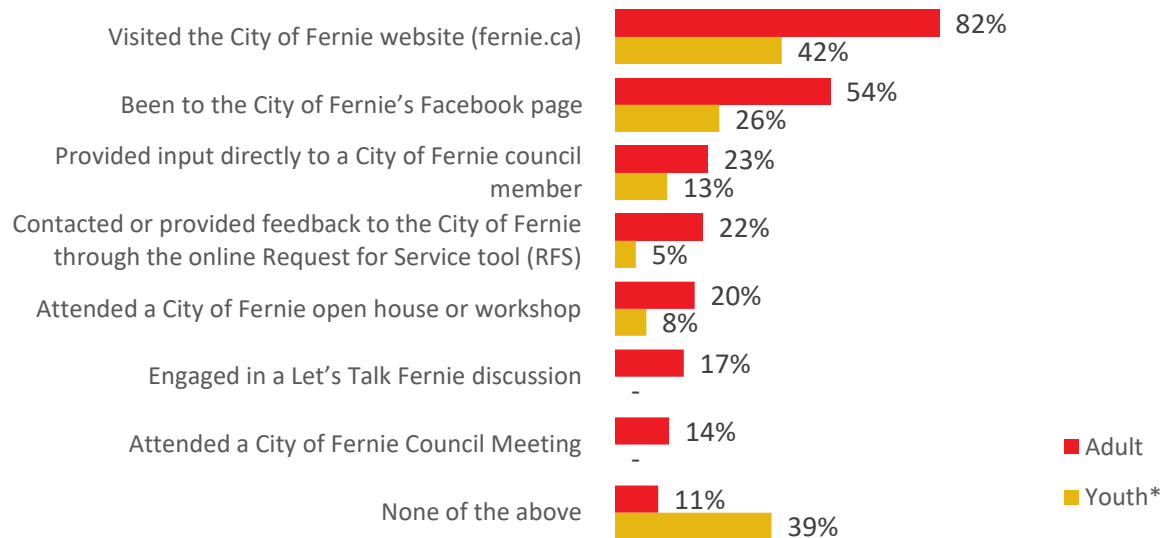
DETAILED RESULTS

Public Engagement

Engagement with the City of Fernie

Nine in ten adult residents have been engaged with the City of Fernie in various ways. The City's website and its Facebook page are the primary methods of engagement for both adults and youth.

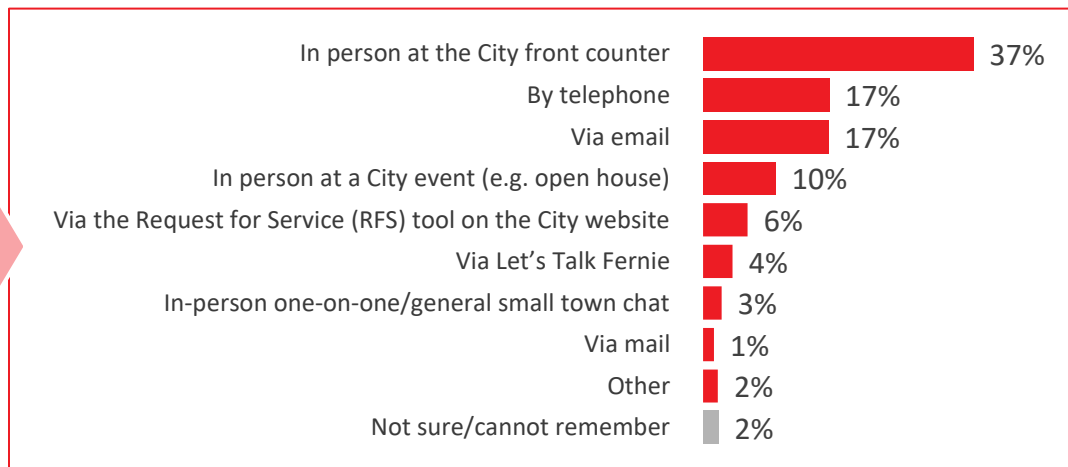
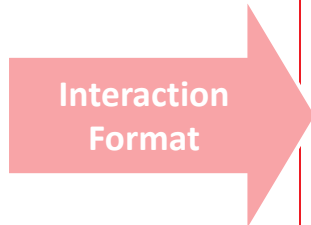
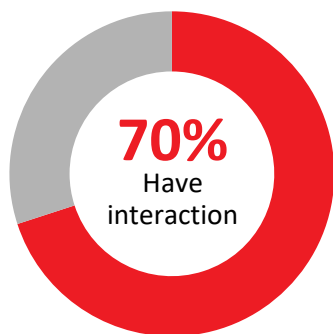
Residents aged 55 or above are less likely to visit the City's website and its Facebook page, but are more engaged in the City's open houses or workshops compared to the younger residents.



Interaction with City Staff

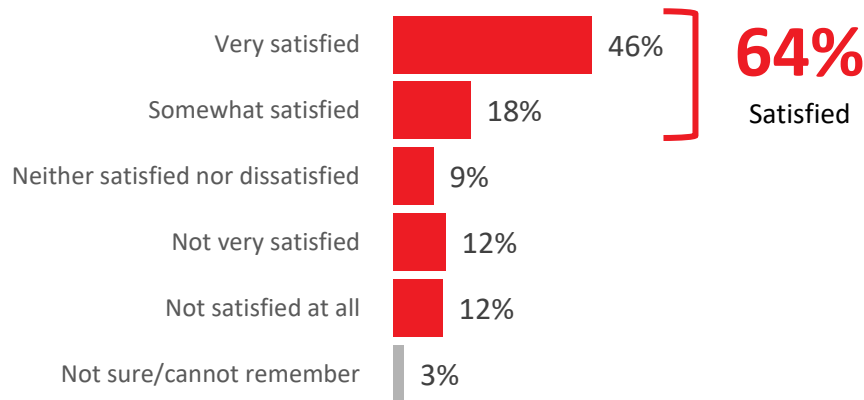
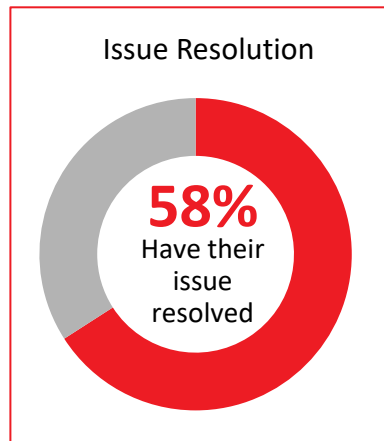
Seven in ten adult residents have contacted or interacted with City of Fernie staff in the past year. In-person interaction at the City front counter is the most common form of interaction, followed by telephone and email.

Males, residents aged 35-54 years, homeowners, those living in Castle Mountain and Mountview, and those with children in their household are more likely to have interacted with City staff.



Issue Resolution and Satisfaction with Interaction with City Staff

Nearly six in ten of those who interacted with the City within the past year indicate their issue was resolved during their most recent interaction. Nearly two-thirds of these residents were satisfied with the interaction, and nine in ten were satisfied with the resolution. In-person interactions note higher satisfaction than those by telephone and email.



% very/somewhat satisfied
By resolution



89%

Issue resolved



21%

Issue unresolved

By interaction method



84%

In person at the
City front counter



76%

In person at a
City event*



54%

By telephone

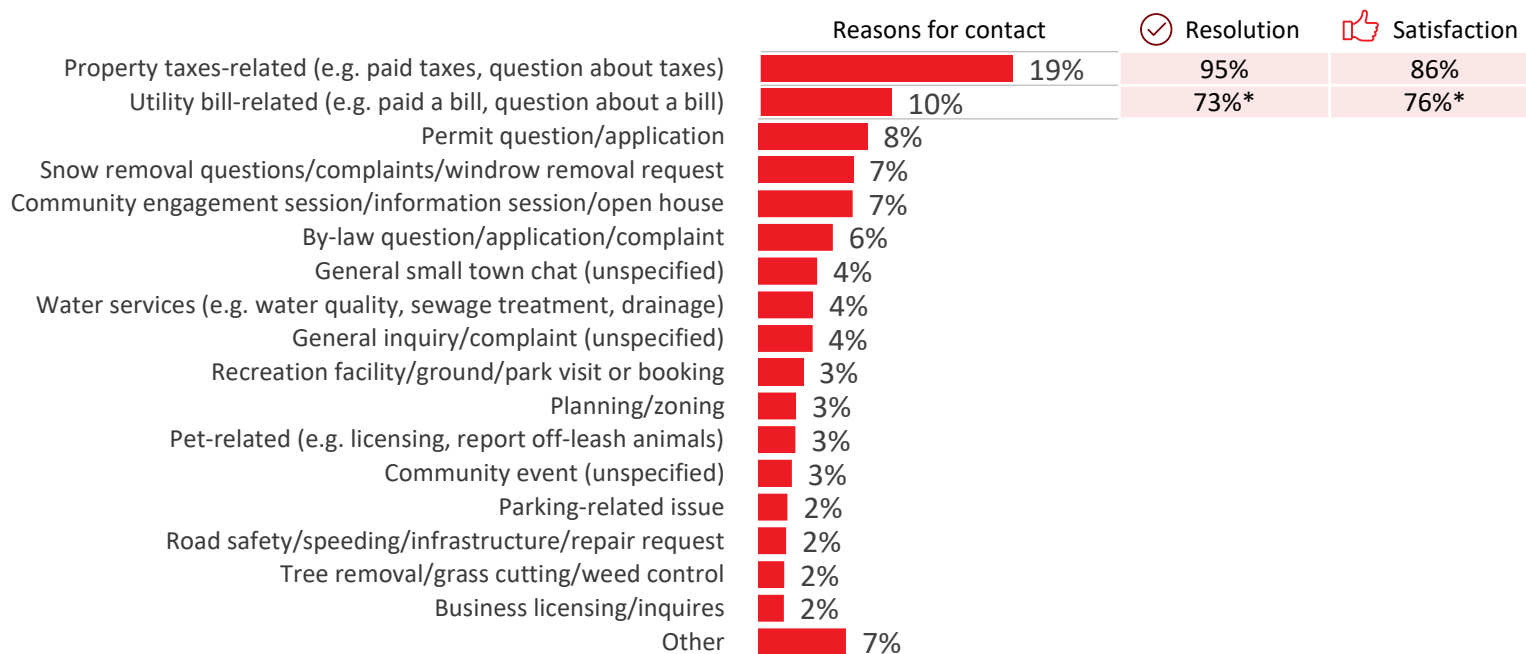


43%

By email

Reasons for Contacting City Staff

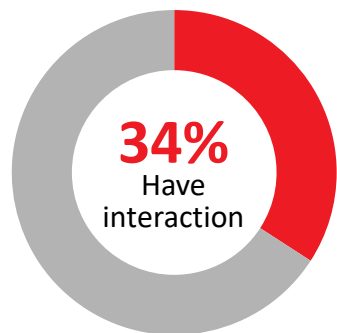
Residents most often contact City staff regarding property taxes and utility bills. Resolution and satisfaction are very high for the inquiries regarding property taxes and moderately strong for those regarding utility bills.



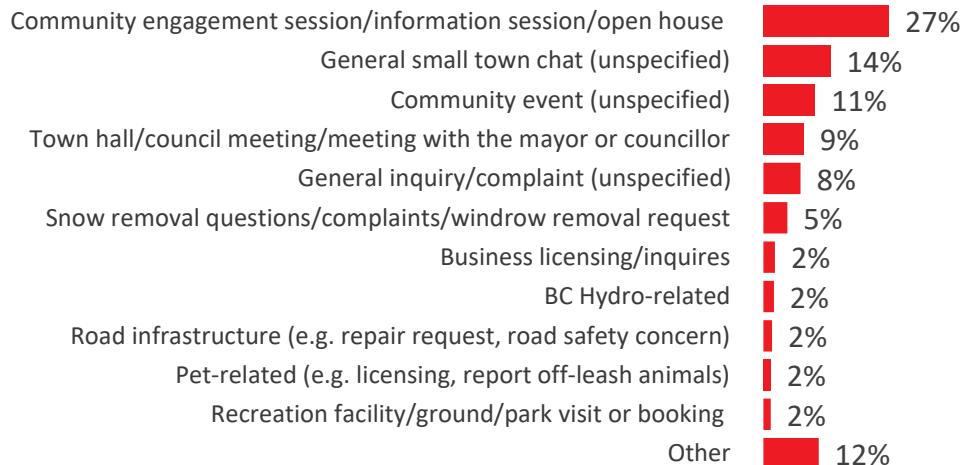
Q15. What was the reason for your most recent contact or interaction with City of Fernie staff? Q17. Was your issue, inquiry or complaint solved in your most recent interaction with City of Fernie staff? Base: All adult respondents who have contacted or interacted with City of Fernie staff in the past year (n=337). Youth respondents did not get the questions. % "Don't know" not shown. *Small sample size caution: n<50.

Interaction with City Council Member

One-third of adult residents have contacted or interacted with City of Fernie council members in the past year, most often in a community engagement/information session or open house.

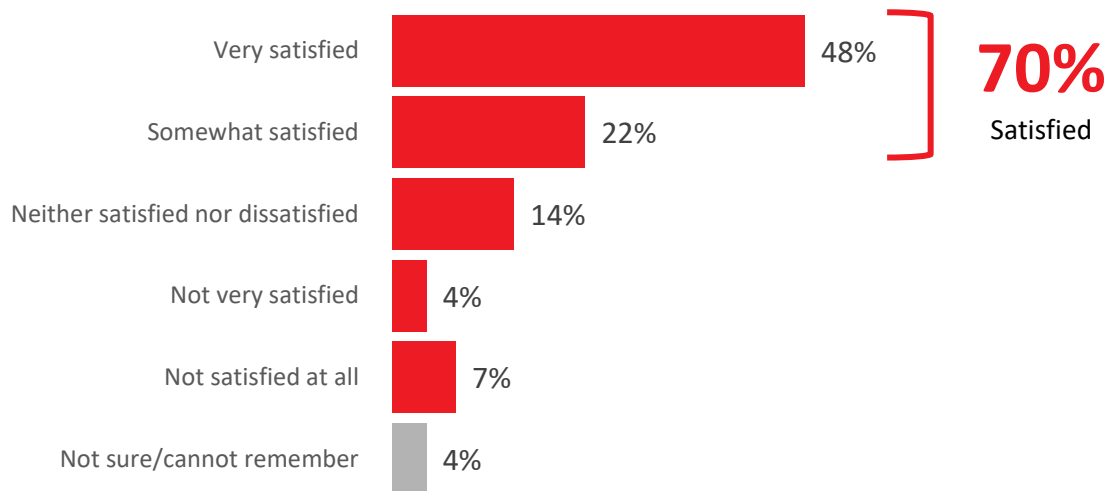


Reason for Interaction



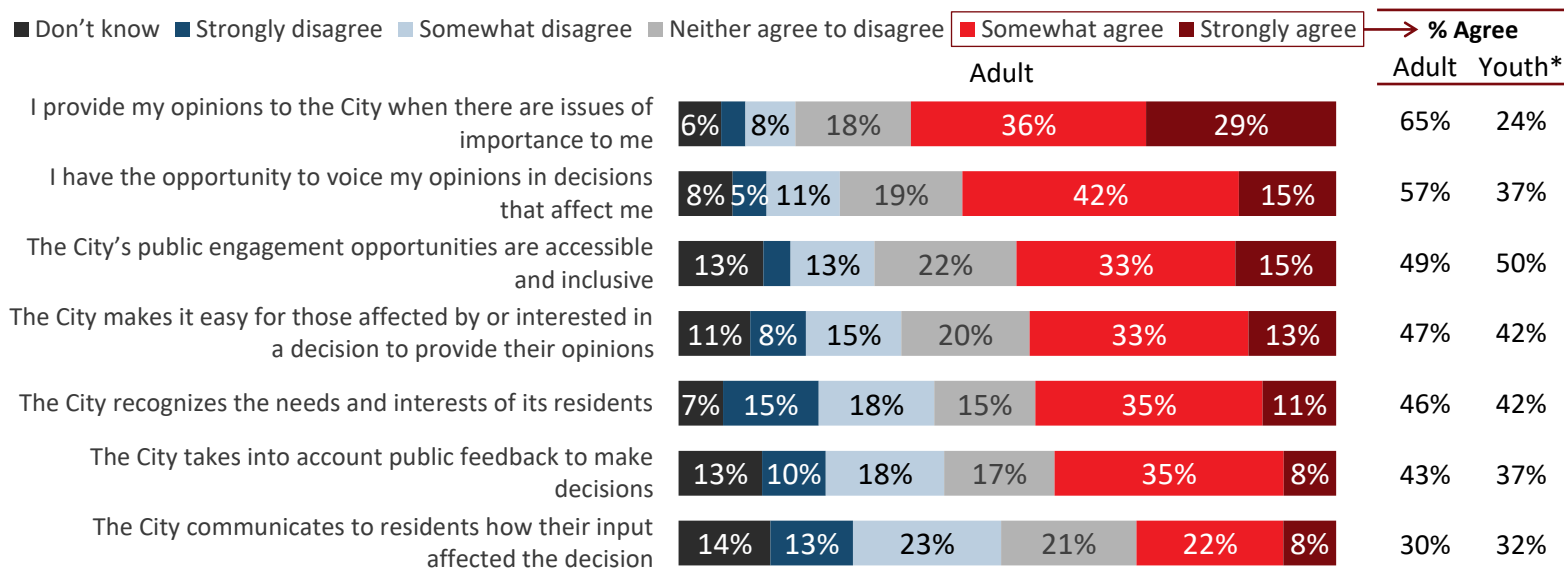
Satisfaction with Interaction with City Council Member

Satisfaction with interactions with City of Fernie Council members is strong, with seven in ten reporting being satisfied overall, including nearly half being very satisfied.



Perceptions about Engagement with the City of Fernie

Residents' level of engagement with the City of Fernie is moderately strong, with two-thirds of adults providing opinions to the City on issues of importance to them. Roughly half of adult residents agree the City's public engagement opportunities are available, accessible, inclusive and easy to use. However, the City's performance in including public feedback in decision-making and follow-up communication about the impact of public input is less acknowledged.

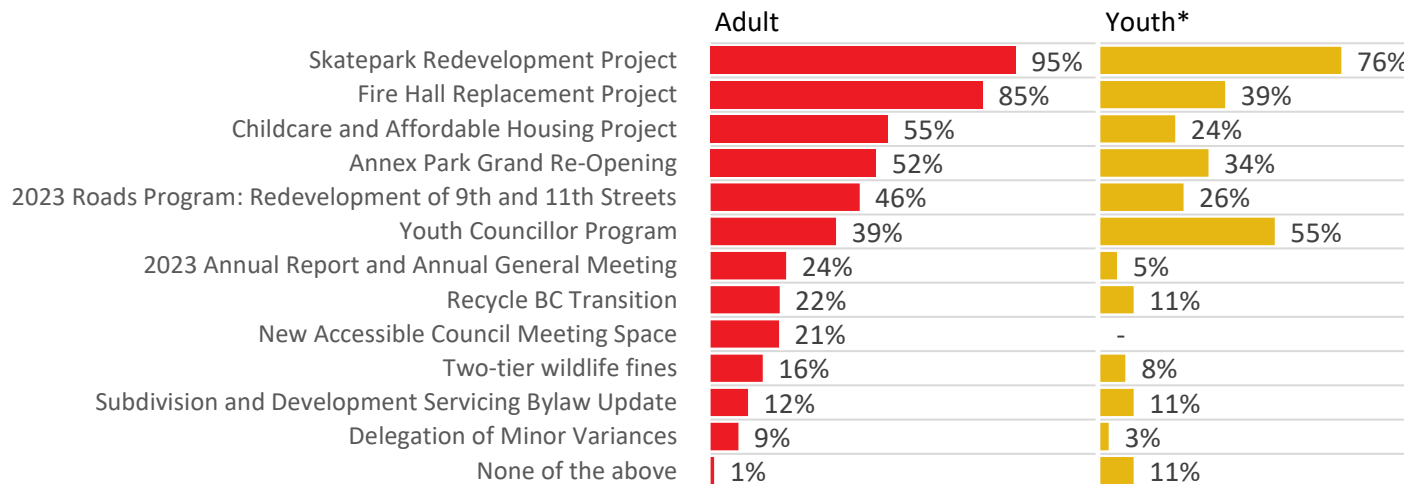


DETAILED RESULTS

Information and Communication Preference

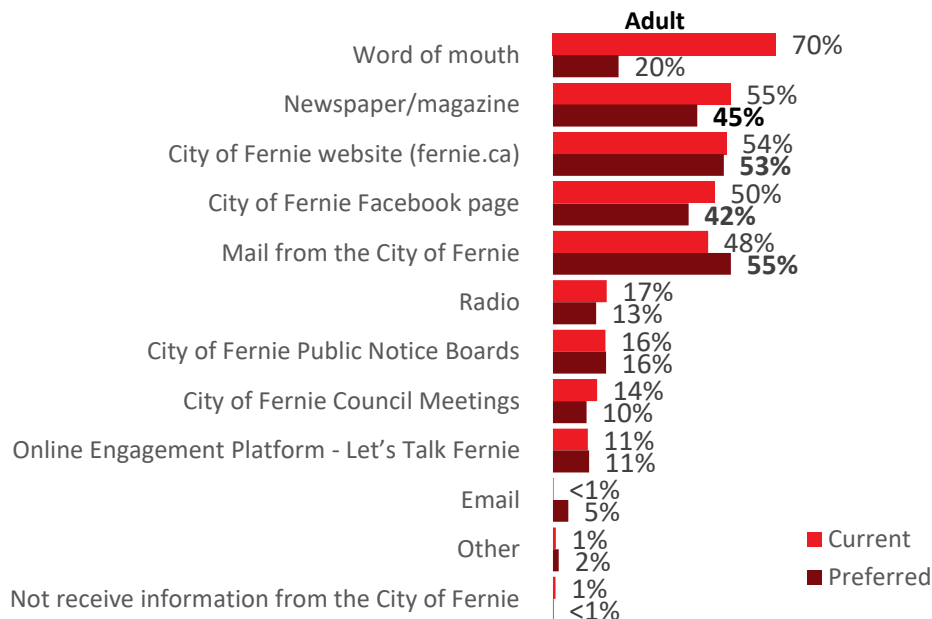
Awareness of City Programs and Initiatives

The vast majority of adult residents are aware of the Skatepark Redevelopment Project and the Fire Hall Replacement Project. Roughly half know about the Childcare and Affordable Housing Project, Annex Park Grand Re-Opening and the 2023 Roads Programs. One in ten are aware of the Delegation of Minor Variances, Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw Update. The Skatepark Redevelopment Project and Youth Councillor Program garner highest awareness among youth.



Current and Preferred Communication Methods

While Fernie residents most often rely on word of mouth to receive information about the City, they prefer more official and accessible communication channels, i.e., mail from the City, the City's website, newspaper/magazine, and the City's Facebook page, over word of mouth. Newspapers/magazines are most popular among those aged 55 and above, while the City's Facebook page is used more and preferred by those between 18-34 compared to older age groups.



Top Communication Methods among Youth*

	Current	Preferred
Word of mouth	66% (#1)	37% (#2)
Newspaper/magazine	47% (#2)	45% (#1)
City of Fernie website	32% (#3)	34% (#3)

REPORT

Respondent Profile



Respondent Profile

Percent of Respondents (%)	Mail to Web (adult only) n=476	Youth Outreach n=38*
Gender		
Male	48%	58%
Female	50%	42%
Self-described	1%	-
Age		
13 to 15	-	8%
16 to 17	-	92%
18 to 34	30%	-
35 to 54	38%	-
55+	32%	-
Length of Residency		
Less than 5 years	30%	32%
Less than 1 year	5%	-
1 to just below 3 years	14%	10%
3 to just below 5 years	11%	23%
5 to just below 10 years	22%	35%
10 to just below 20 years	18%	32%
20 years or longer	30%	-

*Caution: small sample size

Respondent Profile (cont.)

Percent of Respondents (%)	Mail to Web (adult only) n=476	Youth Outreach n=38*
Region		
Alpine Parkland	7%	11%
Annex	12%	11%
Castle Mountain	7%	8%
Cedar Valley	<1%	3%
Ghostrider	1%	-
Maintown	21%	21%
Mountview	7%	11%
Northlands	<1%	-
Ridgemont	7%	8%
Riverside	1%	-
West Fernie	4%	5%
Other area	1%	-
Outside Fernie (homeowner)	31%	24%

*Caution: small sample size

Respondent Profile (cont.)

Percent of Respondents (%)	Mail to Web (adult only) n=476	Youth Outreach n=38*
Number of People in Household		
1	12%	-
2	45%	-
3-4	32%	63%
5+	6%	32%
Prefer not to answer	4%	5%
Education		
High School or less	6%	95%
Elementary	-	61%
High school, general or vocational	6%	34%
College (pre-university, technical training, certificate, accreditation or advanced diploma)	26%	-
University certificates/diplomas or higher	66%	-
I prefer not to answer	2%	5%

*Caution: small sample size

Respondent Profile (adult only questions, cont.)

Percent of Respondents (%)	Mail to Web (adult only) n=476
Children in Household	
Yes	29%
under 13 years	24%
13 to 17 years	7%
No	69%
Prefer not to answer	2%
Identity	
Homeowner	77%
Ordinary resident	71%
Taxpayer	62%
Business owner	15%
Renter	14%
Seasonal resident (e.g., winter/summer)	2%
I prefer not to answer	1%

Respondent Profile (adult only questions, cont.)

Percent of Respondents (%)	Mail to Web (adult only) n=476
Income	
Less than \$90,000	26%
Less than \$30,000	3%
\$30,000 to just under \$60,000	10%
\$60,000 to just under \$90,000	13%
\$90,000 to just under \$150,000	22%
\$90,000 to just under \$120,000	12%
\$120,000 to just under \$150,000	10%
\$150,000 or more	39%
\$150,000 to just under \$200,000	19%
\$200,000 and over	20%
I prefer not to answer	13%

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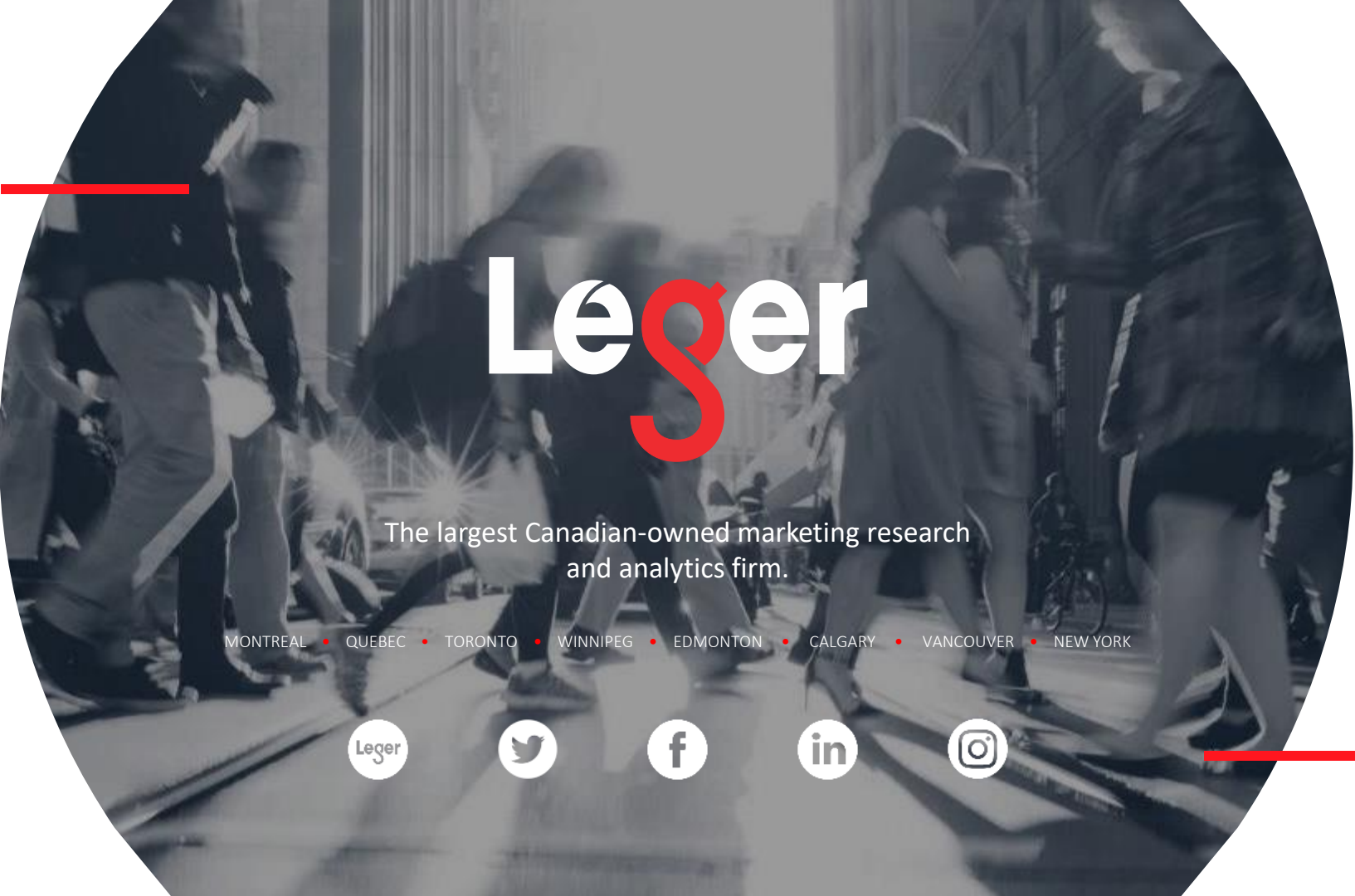


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