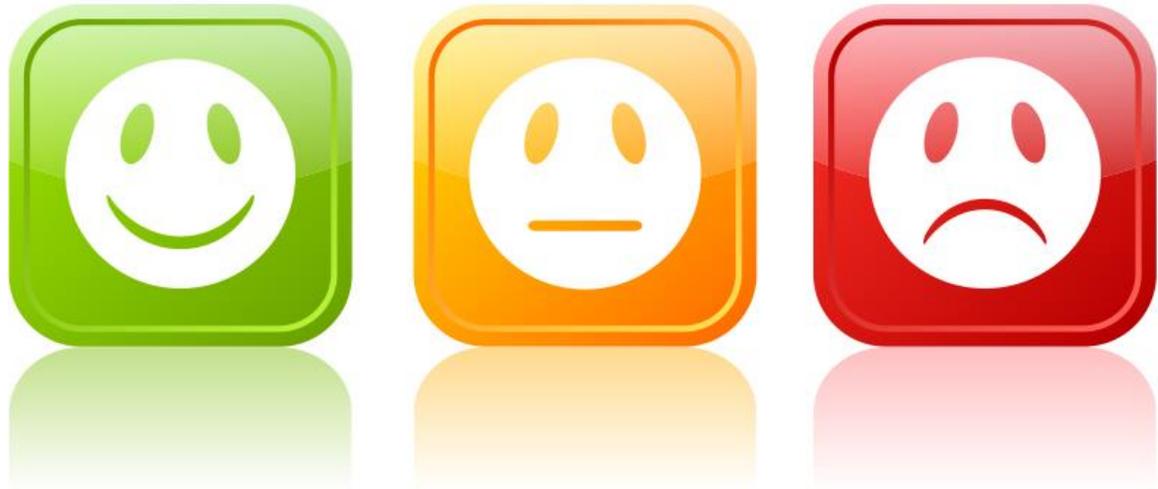


# SURVEY SAYS ...



## Strathcona County Spring 2017 Public Survey Research Results

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## I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In May 2017, Strathcona County conducted a survey of its residents to obtain perceptions on the quality of life of residents living in Sherwood Park and rural areas of Strathcona County. The public survey has been done since 1998 as the annual satisfaction survey. However, this is the first time the survey has been done mid-year. The main purpose of this research is to identify and measure a series of factors (or impact of County services) that contribute to a resident's satisfaction with the quality of life in Strathcona County. The concept of the survey has expanded to include awareness measurement of County programs and services, as well as the usage of selected County services.

Obtaining primary data directly from residents provides Strathcona County departments with information, and enables County officials to make decisions that accurately reflect the perspectives and attitudes of residents. This report provides a comprehensive review of all steps undertaken in the development and implementation of the survey, as well as a detailed summary of the results. An executive summary, highlighting overall findings is available as a separate document.

A review of the methodology associated in the development and implementation of the survey can be found in the next section of this report.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire used in this study was modified from the survey that was previously used in December 2016. A portion of the questions from previous surveys were retained to allow valid comparisons with the previous year. A copy of the questions asked in the current study can be found in Appendix A.

The data collection method used for this survey was an online questionnaire where residents could choose to participate. The only criterion was that respondents had to live in Strathcona County. The online survey ran between May 25 and June 12, 2017 and 1,169 residents took part in the survey. The sample frame for the online survey provided overall results accurate to within  $\pm 2.85\%$ , 19 times out of 20.<sup>1</sup>

The data was analyzed by Strathcona County's Corporate Planning and Intergovernmental Affairs using SPSS for Windows.

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<sup>1</sup> The  $\pm 2.85\%$  is the *margin of error* associated with this study and refers to the potential percentage spread that exists within answers to particular questions. This means that an answer could be up to 2.85% higher or lower than what is reported. The results of this survey exceeds the  $\pm 5\%$ , which is the minimum standard for quantitative research.

### III. RESULTS

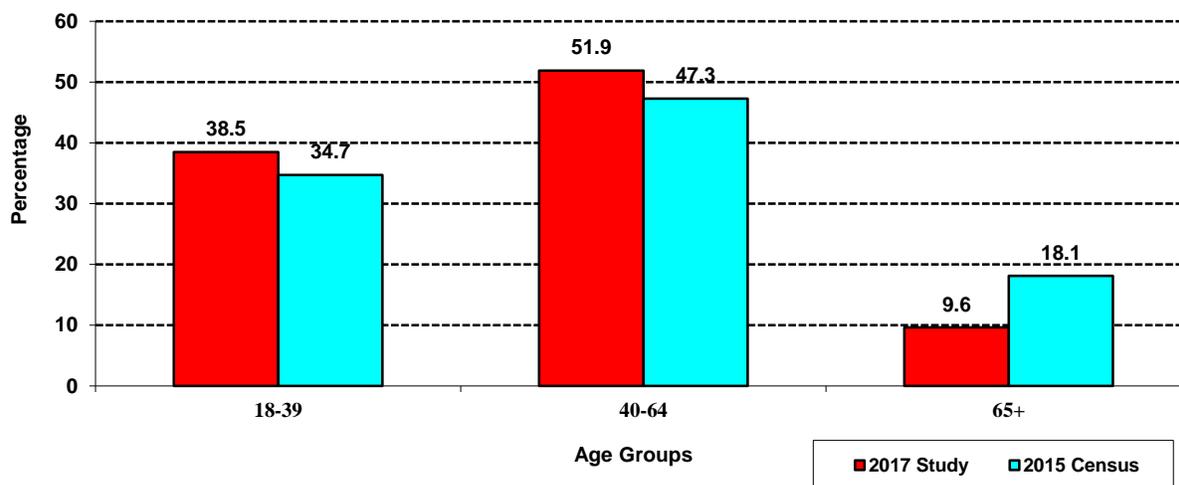
This section of the report presents a summary of the results associated with the perceptions and awareness of residents. Socio-demographic comparisons, where significant, are also highlighted. Comparisons will also be made with data collected from the previous year's survey, when significant differences occur.

#### A. Demographic overview

This section of the report presents an overview of the type of residents who were surveyed in 2016. As indicated in the previous section of this report, part of the sampling criteria from the telephone methodology was to survey County residents. However, with the online method, there was no sampling criteria incorporated into this study. As such, the final urban/rural split skewed toward the urban residents; 82.5% were from Sherwood Park while the remaining 17.5% lived in rural Strathcona County.<sup>2</sup>

A breakdown of the age of the respondents is shown in Figure 1. There was a relatively good representation from most age groups, though in comparison to the 2015 municipal census, the study data for those aged 65 or older were under-represented.<sup>3</sup>

**FIGURE 1**  
**Age of respondents<sup>4</sup>**



<sup>2</sup> In past studies, the sample was usually 70% urban and 30% rural.

<sup>3</sup> Again, this is a trend that has been seen with other online research projects, where participation is skewed toward younger participants.

<sup>4</sup> The 18-39 year age group included a tiny percentage of respondents who were under 18 years of age (0.4%).

## B. Quality of life in Strathcona County

A few questions directed to aspects of life in Strathcona County were asked in the Spring 2017 study. A summary of the overall results to these questions is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Rating aspects of life in Strathcona County**

	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Slightly Satisfied</b>	<b>Slightly Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>
Urban street maintenance this past winter	20.7% (N=239)	54.0% (N=622)	14.6% (N=168)	6.2% (N=60)	3.7% (N=43)	1.7% (N=20)
Rural road maintenance this past winter	11.2% (N=123)	59.1% (N=651)	18.5% (N=204)	5.5% (N=61)	3.7% (N=41)	2.0% (N=22)
Variety of retail stores in Strathcona County	15.8% (N=183)	41.9% (N=487)	24.4% (N=283)	10.7% (N=124)	5.3% (N=62)	1.9% (N=22)
Having opportunities to express opinions about municipal services / issues in Strathcona County	15.1% (N=174)	48.2% (N=557)	22.9% (N=265)	7.1% (N=82)	4.7% (N=54)	2.1% (N=24)

Satisfaction with *road maintenance this past winter (urban & rural)* was strong, with between 69% and 74% being satisfied or very satisfied with the services. The majority of residents were satisfied with the variety of retail stores in the County, as well as having opportunities to express opinions.

### C. Use and Satisfaction with the Strathcona County Website

Three questions were asked about the Strathcona County website. Overall, it was found that 94.5% (1,101 of the 1,169 respondents) of respondents used the website within the past 12 months. There was no difference in usage between urban and rural residents.

The level of satisfaction with information associated with the website and the overall satisfaction is summarized in Table 2. There was no difference in ratings for the website between urban and rural residents.

**Table 2**  
**Rating aspects of the Strathcona County Website**

	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Slightly Satisfied</b>	<b>Slightly Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>
The SC website as a source of information	18.5% (N=203)	61.7% (N=678)	14.6% (N=161)	3.3% (N=36)	1.6% (N=18)	0.3% (N=3)
Overall satisfaction with the Strathcona County website	18.6% (N=204)	60.1% (N=658)	15.8% (N=173)	3.4% (N=37)	1.5% (N=16)	0.5% (N=6)

### D. Awareness and rating of the Strathcona County Living Newsletter

Two questions were asked about the Strathcona County Living newsletter. Overall, it was found that 38.5% (449 of the 1,169 respondents) of respondents recalled receiving a copy of the newsletter.

The level of satisfaction with the content of the newsletter (as reported by the 449 respondents who recalled receiving it) is summarized in Table 3. There was no difference in ratings for the newsletter between urban and rural residents.

**Table 3**  
**Rating the content of the Strathcona County Living newsletter**

	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Slightly Satisfied</b>	<b>Slightly Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>
Overall satisfaction with the Strathcona County website	7.4% (N=33)	57.4% (N=255)	27.7% (N=123)	4.1% (N=18)	2.7% (N=12)	0.7% (N=3)

### **E. Rating the Strathcona County Booths at the 2017 Great Canadian Trade Fair**

A series of questions pertaining to the Strathcona County Booths at the recent trade fair were directed to respondents. Initially, it was found that 14% of respondents (163 of the 1,169 respondents) attended the trade fair. Of the 163 people who did, 109 of them (66.9% of the 163 people) indicated that they visited the Strathcona County Booths over the three-day period.

Of the 109 people who visited the booths:

- 82.4% (89 of the 109 people) found the display interesting; and
- 80.7% (88 of the 109 people) indicated that the information at the Strathcona County booths were useful for them.

### **F. The Upcoming Strathcona County Municipal Election**

Respondents were asked a series of questions pertaining to the upcoming Strathcona County municipal election. Initially, when asked, it was found that 61.4% of the respondents (718 of the 1,169 respondents) were aware of the upcoming election. When the date of the election was revealed to all respondents, almost all of them (93.6% or 1,093 of the 1,169 respondents) indicated that they planned to vote.

The next set of questions was based on whether or not respondents planned to vote in the upcoming election. A series of potential reasons were presented on the survey<sup>5</sup>; the results for both those who were planning to vote and those who were not are shown below.

Of those who intend to vote (1,093 people):

- It's my civic duty and right – 81.1% (886 people)
- My vote counts – 72.6% (794 people)
- I care about the issues – 50.9% (556 people)
- I want to support or oppose a candidate – 34.2% (374 people)
- I want change – 18.9% (207 people)
- Other – 1.8% (20 people). A variety of comments were put forward, which included reactions to past decisions made by the Mayor and Council, wanting the opportunity to vote for the first time and hoping that those who are newly elected would consider focusing on issues that have not been broached by those who had been previously elected.

Of those who did not intend to vote (75 people or 6.4%):

- I don't care – 28% (21 people)
- I am not eligible – 21.3% (16 people)
- Voting is not convenient – 16% (12 people)
- I don't trust decisions made by government – 13.3% (10 people)
- I'll be away from home on that day – 10.7% (8 people)
- I don't like anyone who's running for office – 9.3% (7 people)

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<sup>5</sup> Respondents could choose more than one reason for voting/not voting.

- I'm too busy – 9.3% (7 people)
- My vote won't make a difference – 4% (3 people)
- Other – 12% (9 people). Comments that made up this category included those who were moving from the community or those who were not interested in politics.

### G. Rating the Strathcona County Alert System

Residents were also asked to rate the Strathcona County Alert system (provided that they subscribed to it). Overall, it was found that 52.6% (614 of the 1,169 respondents) of respondents currently receive alerts.

The level of satisfaction with the Strathcona County Alert system (as reported by the 614 respondents who subscribe) is summarized in Table 4. There was no difference in ratings for the Alert System between urban and rural residents.

**Table 4**  
**Rating the information associated with of the Strathcona County Alert System**

	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Slightly Satisfied</b>	<b>Slightly Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>
Overall satisfaction with the information received from the Strathcona County Alert system	32.4% (N=198)	52.5% (N=321)	9.8% (N=60)	3.6% (N=22)	1.1% (N=7)	0.7% (N=4)

**APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS ASKED IN THE PUBLIC SURVEY**

**For each question, please indicate your level of satisfaction you attach to the item. Please read each statement carefully, and fill in *one* circle only, using the satisfaction scale below.**

<b>1</b> <b>very</b> <b>dissatisfied</b>	<b>2</b> <b>dissatisfied</b>	<b>3</b> <b>slightly</b> <b>dissatisfied</b>	<b>4</b> <b>slightly</b> <b>satisfied</b>	<b>5</b> <b>satisfied</b>	<b>6</b> <b>very</b> <b>satisfied</b>
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If the question does not pertain to you, or you do not have an opinion, please check off ***not applicable*** (n/a)

***What is your level of satisfaction with:***

- a) Urban street maintenance this past winter?
- b) Rural road maintenance this past winter?
- c) The information received through the Strathcona County Alert system? – This question is dependent on answering “yes” an earlier question about subscribing to the SC Alert System.
- d) The variety of retail stores in Strathcona County?
- e) Opportunities to express opinions about municipal services or municipal issues in Strathcona County?  
Answering the next two questions is dependent on answering “yes” to visiting the SC website within the past 12 months
- f) The Strathcona County website as a source of information?
- g) Overall satisfaction with the Strathcona County website?
- h) The content in the Strathcona County Living Newsletter – This question is dependent on whether residents recalled receiving a copy of the newsletter

**Questions about the Great Canadian Trade Fair and Sale (which was held at Millennium Place April 7-9, 2017)**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	

- a) Did you attend this event?
- b) Did you visit the Strathcona County booths?
- c) Did you find the display interesting?
- d) Was the information at the Strathcona County booths useful for you?

**Questions about the upcoming municipal election**

<b>1</b> <b>Yes</b>	<b>2</b> <b>No</b>
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- a) Are you aware of a municipal election that will be held this fall?
- b) The official date for the 2017 Municipal Election is Monday October 16. Are you planning to vote?
- c) If you intend to vote (yes picked for b), indicate the reason(s) from the list below
- It's my civic duty and right
  - My vote counts
  - I want to support or oppose a candidate
  - I want change
  - I care about the issues
  - Other reasons: Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_
- d) If you do not intend to vote (no picked for b), indicate the reason(s) from the list below
- I don't care
  - I'm too busy
  - I will be away from home on that day
  - I don't trust decisions made by government
  - My vote won't make a difference
  - I am not eligible
  - Voting is not convenient
  - I don't like anyone who's running for office
  - Other reasons: Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_

Demographics

Where you live (Sherwood Park, Rural Strathcona)  
Age group (Under 18, 18-39, 40-65, 65+)