



**STRATHCONA
COUNTY**

**2020 December SCOOP Mixed Topic Survey:
Future Services from Economic Development
and Tourism & Shopping Locally**



Research Results

Report Prepared by Phil Kreisel, Ph.D.
Communications

February 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	1
II. METHODOLOGY	2
A. The Questionnaire	2
B. Sampling Design and Data Collection Procedure.....	2
III. SURVEY RESULTS	4
APPENDIX A: ORIGINAL COMMENTS MADE BY RESPONDENTS	7

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In December 2020, Strathcona County conducted an online survey as part of its Strathcona County Online Opinion Panel (SCOOP) initiative. This project, entitled *the Mixed Topic Survey*, consisted of different survey areas whereby only a limited number of questions were asked within one or more topic areas and was exclusive to residents who signed up to be part of SCOOP. The December 2020 mix topic survey consisted of questions on the upcoming 2021 municipal election, Emergency Services, how Strathcona County communicates with the public, services offered by Economic Development and Tourism, living in one's neighbourhood, volunteering and shopping locally.

Obtaining primary data from residents directly will provide Strathcona County departments with information and enable County officials to make decisions that accurately reflect the perspectives and attitudes of residents. This report will provide a comprehensive review of all steps undertaken in the development and implementation of the survey, as well as a detailed summary of the results. The results from this study were prepared by Phil Kreisel, Ph.D. (Communications); SPSS was used for the data analysis.

This report covers the question associated with Economic Development and Tourism. A review of the methodology associated in the development and implementation all aspects of the survey can be found in the next section of this report.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study was new, using questions that were submitted by department representatives from Legislative and Legal Services (LLS), Family and Community Services (FCS), Emergency Services, Communications and Economic Development and Tourism (EDT). The survey was then created, reviewed and modified where necessary by members of Survey Central for wording, question ordering and general understanding. This included a final check of the content by FOIP¹ prior to the release of the survey to the public.

B. Sampling Design and Data Collection Procedure

The sample frame used in this study consisted of 631 people who had previously signed up to be part of SCOOP, Strathcona County's online opinion panel. Overall, 68.7% of the participants lived in the urban area, 29.8% came from rural parts of Strathcona County, and the remaining 1.4% worked in Strathcona County but did not live there.

Although poll-based data is derived from people who decide to participate, were not randomly selected and have access to the online poll, the margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is $\pm 3.9\%$, 19 times out of 20.² The data was gathered via the online SCOOP platform in November 2020.

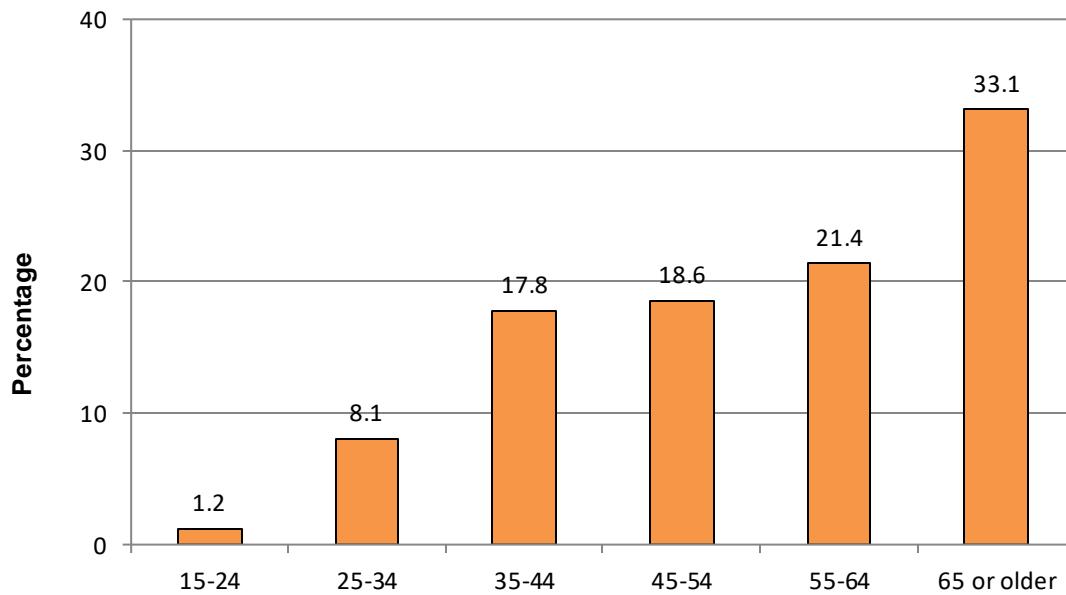
During the fielding of the survey, respondents had the option to skip a section if they felt that the topic had no relevance to them.

¹ FOIP stands for Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy and was reviewed by selected members from Strathcona County's Legislation and Legal Department (LLS).

² The $\pm 3.9\%$ is the *margin of error* associated with this study and refers to the potential percentage spread that exists within answers to questions. This means that an answer could be up to 3.9% higher or lower than what is reported. Please note, however, that the data was gathered through an online survey and no controls were undertaken to make this a random sample.

As seen in Figure 1, most of the respondents who participated in the survey are over the age of 44, with 25.9% of the participants between the age of 25 and 44. Only a very small percentage of participants were under 25. Overall, 57.7% of participants were female while 42.3% were male.

FIGURE 1
Age of Respondents

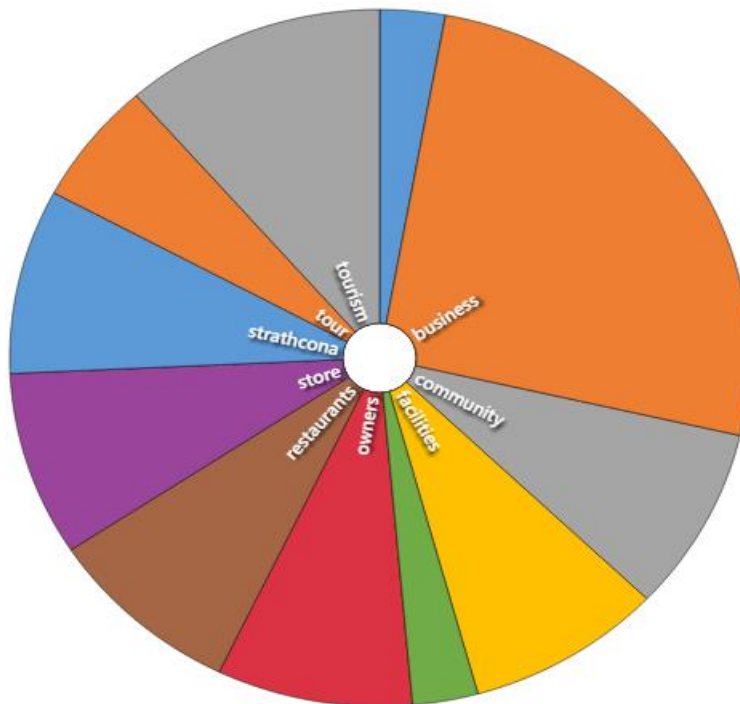


III. SURVEY RESULTS

Respondents were asked if they would like to answer an open-ended question about future services that could be offered by EDT. Overall, 91.3% of the participants opted to answer this question. Respondents were also asked if they would like to answer questions about shopping locally. Overall, 98.5% of the participants opted to answer these questions.

Respondents were given the following information: Strathcona County's Economic Development and Tourism department does business consulting (such as providing business information and demographic info), investment attraction (such as site selection and GIS mapping) and business retention services (such as real estate or marketing assistance) to residents. They were then asked to list any additional services that you would like to receive from Economic Development and Tourism. The NVIVO software program was then used to sort the comments into themes, with the overall results shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Themes emerging from respondent suggestions



Nine themes emerged from 71 individual comments.³ Most of the themes focused on types of opportunities or destinations within Strathcona County rather than services:

- **Tourism:** This theme includes ideas associated with local tourism places and new opportunities.
- **Tours:** Ideas mentioned by respondents included garden tours and bus tours.
- **Strathcona and Community:** These two themes included ideas that should be on the website, plus services associated with the entire county or specific to rural Strathcona.
- **Store:** Groups comments associated with local stores.
- **Restaurants:** Self explanatory
- **Owners:** Includes hobby farms for acreage owners and creating a directory of restaurants in Sherwood Park (including types of food, costs, etc.).
- **Business:** Includes having a link listing new business in the County; local online market of business services for people; business support programs.
- **Facilities:** Including a list of various facilities that exist in the County, especially pertaining to aspects of recreation.

³ These comments are collected in Appendix A at the end of this report.

Two questions were asked about shopping locally. The first question asked respondents to indicate whether the pandemic has affected how people shop locally in Strathcona County. The results are shown in Figure 3. Almost half of the respondents are shopping less often, while almost 23% indicated that they have not changed their local shopping patterns. There were a handful of respondents who had increased their local in-person shopping since the pandemic, while just over 19% indicated that they were doing more online shopping (with local stores).

Almost all the participants (95.6%) indicated that they preferred to shop locally.

FIGURE 3
Shopping locally in Strathcona County



Appendix A: Original Comments made by Respondents

- A municipal campground with a short stay limit for visitors and a municipal owned Sani-dump station
- Additional waste cans in public spaces and along trails.
- Alberta government web sites
- An easy to use online directory featuring local businesses
- Arrange mentorship connections for youth in the community.
- As long as it is posted on the website or appears in the paper, I am happy with that.
- Business support programs to assist with COVID recovery.
- Camping in Sherwood Park, so we can host events and people can stay within the Park
- changes to development to the ENTIRE community
- Continue and expand the excellent mapped info graphics
- Cost of living information, compared to other jurisdictions
- Cross Country Ski Tracks in Golf courses and parks. For the winter months.
- Day trip ideas (post Covid)
- Development of parks, continuing education courses
- Economic development is fine within reason. Tourism is a waste of time and tax money. Nobody is vacationing in Sherwood Park. Not happening.
- Economic forecasting
- Further development of the Ardrossan Rec Center. It is a great facility now, however, further development should be considered to host hockey tournaments. Make it a choice venue by adding a pool. Pools are required in the county and this can fill the void. A pool in this location would service a large portion of rural Strathcona County.
- General Information on what they do and some of their successes
- General statistics on how well the county is using it's facilities including parks, buildings, etc.
- Help get permits through Planning Development faster - way to slow to react to business needs
- Hobby farming for acreage owners
- How about getting an event each year for a week of displaying this event? Food bank donation as entry for e.g. RCMP musical ride is one example. Glass blowing events, Solar information education on setting up, costs, etc..
- I do not receive any of the above by any means!

- I fully support the described activities, I am however surprised we have a tourism division.
- I have enjoyed garden tours and a bus tour put on by the Library and I think many years ago I was on a bus tour around the county put on by Sherwood Park and District Chambers of Commerce. I think they were worth repeating.
- I think it would be great if they could poll residents on what businesses and services we would like to see here
- I think the County should lower taxes and let the business community handle the development of our local economy. We could lower taxes by eliminating this department.
- I wish Eco Dev would do a directory of restaurants in Sherwood Park, listing type of food (Asian, Indian, etc.), the cost (e.g., \$, \$\$, \$\$\$, etc.) address, phone, website, hours of service. So many restaurants open and are soon to open. I have to rely on word of mouth of Sherwood Park Food Reviews on Facebook to find out about them. For some reason many restaurant owners spend countless hours and dollars setting up their business but won't advertise. I have lived in Sherwood Park for 5 years and every couple of weeks I hear about a nice place to eat" that I have never heard of before -- that has been open for years. Several restaurants have closed over the past 6 months and several more are doomed to shut down (even if there was no COVID-19). I predict the following restaurants will close within the next 6 months: Prime Time Donair - off Wye Rd
- I would like to be able to easily find local businesses and not just ones that belong to Chamber of Commerce.
- I'd like to know how to get involved with any committees having to do with the cultural sector, especially museums and heritage, but also including amateur arts (performance, visual art, etc.).
- id you Know" advertisements on the county website sharing what new businesses have come to the county recently."
- Inserts in newspapers would be helpful
- Link local labour to new business or POTENTIAL new business setting - up facilities or operations in the county (professionals, skilled trades, scientists, consultants, experts...)
- List of all Businesses in Sherwood Park
- Local online market for local businesses to sell online in one place.
- marketing of local products and services
- Maybe more marketing of local tourism places of interest and events.
- Maybe something more focused like a quarterly newsletter. Possible business spotlight of new businesses that are open/opening. Possible

- tourist activities e.g. things to do with guests in Strathcona County - including restaurants, breweries, shopping etc.
- More advertisement needed - many in the County have no idea what assets there are
 - More encouragement and promotion for small businesses
 - More information on local shopping
 - More information on what they do.
 - More tourism opportunities
 - New land purchases for Community Development by County, Changes in parks and recreational usage.
 - Not sure this counts but would like to see on Strathcona website is schedule for sporting events
 - I would love to see the county put in some camping facilities. Lots of people come to ball games, etc. in the summer and go some where else to camp.
 - promote new local stores opening in Sherwood Park
 - Promoting historically significant and natural areas in our area
 - promotion of female owned businesses
 - Provide local amateur sports organizations with grant/ assistance so they can host tournaments that include overnight stays.
 - Reaching local buyer's, procurement information
 - Reaching out to small businesses and local small farms
 - Sending emails with large scale economic data charts for analysis.
 - Should offer more advice to businesses wanting to start a business in the County. Too many of the same business. Also, businesses should ensure bike racks and reduce the usage of cars through making it more inviting to pedestrian or bike traffic. We no longer need nail salons, liquor store, Donair or other fast food restaurants.
 - Stop further development
 - Strathcona county needs to do away with the ridiculous mask bylaw.
 - The list above does not do anything for tourism.
 - There should be more advertised about the activities that the County puts on plus advertise all the places that are open (cross-country ski locations) to the public. So many people do not know about all the locations of interesting sites in the towns and countryside.
 - There's no reason to come to Sherwood Park. Lets try something
 - Tourism that relates to Indigenous heritage
 - Tourist attractions. Points of interest.

- Updates on new initiatives within my immediate neighbourhood that could affect my land
- Walking Path Information
- we participate in a local Ukrainian dance school that would benefit from more performance opportunities as well as community branding
- We should have a fair
- What are the plans now we are in fairly severe lockdown?
- Where are the women on the team? it's all older, white men. makes me feel very excluded.
- Where do they do their stuff? I've never seen them
- With this economy - information on starting home-based businesses.
- Work with developers to attract local businesses to our empty store fronts in Centre in the Park
- You are emphasizing business and economic development but little is mentioned about tourism... need to develop a tourism component... what sites in the County are attractive to bring tourists ... what amenities are available at these sites?