



THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF SAANICH

770 Vernon Avenue, Victoria, British Columbia V8X 2W7
Phone (250) 475-1775 Internet www.gov.saanich.bc.ca

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mayor Frank Leonard
Phone: (250) 475-5510
Fax: (250) 475-5440
E-mail: mayor@gov.saanich.bc.ca
Website: www.gov.saanich.bc.ca/government/citizensurvey.htm

Saanich Council Surveys Residents and Businesses

Citizen input provides feedback to improve municipal services

Saanich, BC, May 20, 2003 – Today, Saanich Council released the results of a comprehensive survey of citizens' ideas and opinions of Saanich as a community.

The eight page long 2003 Saanich Survey was mailed to a random selection of almost 1200 residents and 250 businesses on March 10. The survey asked respondents to share their perceptions on the quality of municipal service delivery, to indicate their preferences on the allocation of municipal resources, and to tell Council what direction the municipality should head in the future. A total of 514 surveys were received – an excellent response rate of 43%.

The University of Victoria's School of Public Administration provided technical resources to the survey development process, and they offered independent review and confirmation of survey results.

Survey results show that 87% of respondents rate the overall quality of life in Saanich as "good" or "very good". When asked why they like Saanich, respondents most often touted the municipality's central location, its quiet, safe, friendly neighbourhoods, and its wonderful parks and trails system.

However, overwhelmingly, residents voiced concern over the region's growing transportation problems – congestion, sprawl and pollution – as detrimental to their quality of life.

When asked to rate 59 different local government services, Saanich residents rated 73% of them as meeting or exceeding their expectations. Residents give particularly high praise to Saanich's fire fighting, parks, trails, recreation facilities and programs, and landscaping of public property.

Conversely, residents consider key challenges to include sewage treatment, the management of growth, protection of agricultural lands and sidewalk availability and repair.

Not surprisingly, residents voiced a strong preference for low property taxes and limited or no increases in services, preferring instead that a greater percentage of revenue be raised through user fees. When asked to spend an imaginary \$100 on a selection of municipal projects, residents allotted the largest portion to roads and traffic control, following closely by the municipal water system and then the municipal sewer and drains system.

When asked to give overall ratings of the performance and direction of the District of Saanich, residents were generally pleased, with fewer than 6% of the population voicing their displeasure.

Mayor Frank Leonard said the public opinion survey results are an important part of the Municipality's corporate plan. "Council and staff will use this public feedback to guide corporate decision-making and the financial plan process."

The complete report on the Saanich 2003 Citizen Survey is available for download from the Saanich website at www.gov.saanich.bc.ca/government/citizensurvey.htm, or by contacting municipal staff at (250) 475-1775.

Background information: "Highlights of the 2003 Saanich Citizen Survey" (attached)

-end-