



ATTITUDES AND CONCERNS
AMONG CITIZENS OF OAKVILLE
TOWARD KEY MUNICIPAL ISSUES

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for
the Town of Oakville

Prepared by
Environics Research Group

January 2008

pn6126

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
THE LEADING TOP-OF-MIND ISSUES	6
ASSESSMENT OF OAKVILLE AS A LIVABLE TOWN.....	7
Features and challenges	7
Comparative rating	8
Specific quality of life measures – gap analysis of importance and satisfaction	9
SATISFACTION WITH TOWN OF OAKVILLE GOVERNMENT	11
Overall satisfaction	11
Perceptions of the Town of Oakville government	12
Satisfaction with specific Oakville services – satisfaction and spending	13
Rating customer service at Town of Oakville.....	15
Preferred sources of information	16
PREFERRED APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT OF SERVICES	17
TRANSIT USE.....	19
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	20
APPENDICES	
Methodology	
Questionnaire	
Public Consultation Findings	

INTRODUCTION

The survey was conducted by telephone among a representative sample of 805 residents of the Town of Oakville between October 25 and November 8, 2007. The questionnaire was designed in consultation with the Town of Oakville, and updates results of surveys conducted by Environics Research Group in 2001 and 2004.

The telephone survey was preceded by two public consultations that were held on August 27 at the Oakville Town Hall and September 6 at the Oakville Central Library. The purpose of the sessions was to elicit feedback from Oakville residents on aspects of the Strategic Plan and on the goal of making Oakville the most livable town in Canada. The findings of these public consultations are appended to this Report.

The survey was designed to update the findings of the 2001 and 2004 surveys in the following areas:

- most important issue facing Oakville;
- residents' attitudes and opinions toward quality of life issues;
- current levels of satisfaction with municipal services;
- current preferences regarding spending priorities; and
- residents' perceptions and expectations vis-à-vis specific municipal planning priorities.

The survey also includes some new areas:

- assessments of liveability;
- assessments of municipal government services; and
- use of public transit.

The margin of error for a sample of 805 is 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The reader is cautioned that margins of error for smaller subsamples are larger.

THE LEADING TOP-OF-MIND ISSUES

Residents of Oakville were asked to name, top-of-mind, the single most important issue facing their community today. The largest proportion continue to identify issues related to development/over-development; this proportion has declined noticeably since 2004, but is still higher than in 2001.

There has been essentially no change in the proportion who cite the often-related issue of traffic congestion. There have also been no statistically significant changes in the proportions who mention taxes, public transit, roads, population increase/overpopulation, environmental pollution, education issues, affordable housing, maintaining infrastructure and health issues/health care. Two percent or fewer (each) mention a number of other issues and 16 percent offer no opinion on the question.

Most important issue facing Oakville 2001 - 2007

	2001	2004	2007
Urban sprawl/rapid development	23	39	30
Traffic/congestion	19	8	12
Taxes	6	7	5
Public transit	1	2	5
Population increase/overpopulation	4	4	4
Roads	5	3	4
Maintaining infrastructure	–	–	3
Pollution/environment	7	5	3
Education issues	5	3	3
Health issues/health care	2	1	3
Affordable housing	–	–	3
Improved city services	2	3	–
Other	14	13	8
dk/na	13	11	16

Q.1

In your opinion, what is the single most important issue facing Oakville today?

ASSESSMENT OF OAKVILLE AS A LIVABLE TOWN

Features and challenges

In the current survey, residents of Oakville were asked about the livability of the Town. The small-town, community- and family-oriented nature was the most commonly mentioned feature of what makes Oakville livable, while growth and development is seen as the greatest challenge to Oakville becoming the most livable Town in the country.

When residents are asked to identify qualities or features of the Town of Oakville that make it livable, the largest proportion mention small-town atmosphere, strong community spirit or family-oriented. Significant proportions also mention flowers, gardens or landscaping; parks, recreation or sports teams; good stores or restaurants available nearby; nice downtown core or historic preservation; safe, low crime or good police; clean or visually attractive; location or proximity of Town to country and city; and quiet, peaceful or nice place to live.

Also mentioned are friendly people; the waterfront; successful development, growth, community layout, zoning or not overcrowded; schools; good municipal government, services or facilities; and good roads, parking, access to highways or no congestion. Three percent or fewer mention other characteristics and nine percent offer no opinion.

Qualities of Oakville that make it livable 2007

Small-town atmosphere/strong community spirit/family-oriented	25
Flowers/gardens/landscaping	16
Parks/recreation/sports/teams	15
Good stores/restaurants/etc. available nearby	14
Nice downtown core/historic preservation	13
Safe/low crime/good police	12
Clean/visually attractive	12
Location/proximity to country/city	12
Quiet/peaceful/nice place to live	11
Friendly people	9
The waterfront	9
Successful development/growth/community layout/zoning/not overcrowded	9
Schools	7
Good municipal government/services and facilities	5
Good roads/parking/access to highways/no congestion	5
Good transit system	3
Cultural events/entertainment	3
Other	6
dk/na	9

Q.2

What are the qualities or features of the Town of Oakville that make it livable?

When residents are asked to name the greatest challenge that prevents the Town of Oakville from being the most livable Town in Canada, the largest proportion cite issues related to development, such as city expansion or development and overcrowded or overdevelopment. Smaller proportions mention traffic; more housing or affordable housing costs; public transportation or parking; high cost of living; and infrastructure, roads or highways. Three percent or fewer mention other challenges and 24 percent offer no opinion.

Greatest challenge preventing Oakville from being the most livable town in Canada 2007

Development issues ^t	16
Traffic	8
More housing/affordable housing costs	7
Public transportation/parking	6
High cost of living	5
Infrastructure/roads/highways	4
Population issues	3
High taxes	3
Environment/pollution	3
Lack of land/green space/waterfront area	2
Poor planning/vision	2
Other	13
None/nothing	4
dk/na	24

^t Combination of City expansion/development and Overcrowded/overdevelopment

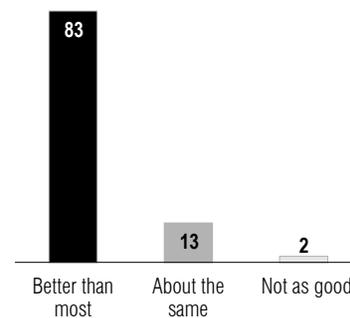
Q.3

What is the greatest challenge that prevents the Town of Oakville from being the most livable town in Canada?

Comparative rating

Oakville residents have a very positive perception of the liveability of their Town. A large majority, 83 percent, say that the degree of liveability in Oakville is generally better than most areas of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Thirteen percent say it is about the same as other areas and just two percent think the Town compares unfavourably with other areas of the GTA.

Oakville compared to other GTA areas 2007



Q.4

Thinking about Oakville as a place in which to live, would you say that the degree of liveability in Oakville is generally ... Better than most areas of the Greater Toronto Area ... Not as good as most areas of the Greater Toronto Area ... About the same as most areas of the Greater Toronto Area?

Specific quality of life measures – gap analysis of importance and satisfaction

The survey continues to find confirmation of the generally high levels of satisfaction reported by Oakville residents in the combined results of two questions designed to explore residents' perceptions regarding 12 specific quality of life measures¹ and how the Town of Oakville rates along these same dimensions. In all cases, majorities of residents give the Town a positive assessment on its efforts to deliver on the quality of life measures that are important to them. Moreover, on seven of the measures, seven in ten or more give the

Town passing grades. However, there have been some small declines in the Town's rating for two measures – feeling of belong and being safe and education and training opportunities.

There are large gaps between perceived importance and the Town's performance in the areas of environmental protection, the Town's living environment, and provision of help for the needy.

Quality of life measures – gap analysis 2001 - 2007

	VERY IMPORTANT			RATING EXCELLENT/GOOD		
	2001	2004	2007	2001	2004	2007
Environment for living	95	92	94	72	73	74
Feeling of belonging/being safe in neighbourhood	92	94	91	91	90	85
Amount of green space available for use of residents	83	82	85	80	71	73
Town efforts to protect environment	82	82	80	56	55	59
Education/training opportunities	77	75	73	72	76	71
Opportunities for recreation/sports/leisure	–	–	73	–	–	80
Finding help for needy	74	70	71	55	55	51
Quality/appearance of buildings/community	65	63	64	86	83	82
Business/jobs opportunities for residents	–	–	63	–	–	53
Efforts to protect heritage	–	–	52	–	–	73
Opportunities/venues for cultural activities	–	–	44	–	–	66
Civic involvement opportunities	38	45	37	59	66	62

Q.5

Now I would like to ask you a two-part question. First, in general, how important are each of the following factors in making any community a good place in which to live and work. Second, how would you rate The Town of Oakville on each of these factors ... The amount of green space that's available for the use of residents ... The kinds of business and job opportunities available for residents of Oakville ... The opportunities for recreation, sports and leisure ... The environment in which people live, for example, clean water and air and adequate shelter ... The quality of buildings and overall appearance of the community ... The opportunities people have for education and development of new skills ... A feeling of belonging and being safe in one's neighbourhood ... The efforts that the Town of Oakville government makes to protect the environment ... Opportunities to get involved with organizations and local government ... How good the community is at finding help for people in need ... The opportunities and venues for cultural activities ... The effort the Town makes to protect the heritage of the community?

¹ Eight measures were tracked in 2001 and 2004, for two other measures, the wording was changed in the current survey, and two measures are being tested for the first time.

Smaller gaps occur in the areas of the amount of green space and business and job opportunities for residents.

Residents were first asked to rate the importance of 12 factors in making any community a good place in which to live and work, and then to rate The Town of Oakville on each of these factors. From the graphic (p.9), it is clear that residents attach the greatest importance to the environment in which people live (e.g., clean water and air and adequate shelter), and to having a feeling of belonging and being safe in one's neighbourhood. On the next tier of importance are the amount of green space that's available for the use of residents, the efforts that the Town government makes to protect the environment, the opportunities people have for education and development of new skills, the opportunities for recreation, sports, and leisure, the community's ability to find help for people in need, the quality of buildings and overall appearance of the community, and the kinds of business and job opportunities that are available for residents. On a third tier of importance are the efforts that the Town makes to protect the heritage of the community. Of least importance are the opportunities and venues for cultural activities, and opportunities residents have to get involved with organizations and local government. These findings are largely unchanged from 2004, although there has been a decline in the perceived importance of opportunities residents have to get involved with organizations and local government.

When residents are asked to rate the performance of the Town of Oakville on each of these measures, the Town gets its highest marks in the areas of providing a feeling of belonging and being safe, the quality of buildings and overall appearance of the community, opportunities for recreation, sports, and leisure activities, the environment for living, the amount of green space, efforts to protect the heritage of the community, and education and training opportunities. The Town gets somewhat lower marks on the other dimensions, but, it should be noted, there is no area for which fewer than 51 percent give a rating of "good" or "excellent." Since 2004, there have been slight declines in the proportions who are satisfied in the areas of providing a feeling of belonging and being safe, and education and training opportunities.

There are six areas for which there are statistically significant gaps between the proportions who rate the dimension as "very important" and the proportions who give it a rating of "good" or "excellent." The largest gaps are found on the measures of Town government efforts to protect the environment, the environment in which people live (e.g., clean water and air and adequate shelter), and the community's ability to find help for people in need. Somewhat smaller gaps are found on the measures, such as the amount of green space, business and job opportunities, and a feeling of belonging and being safe. On the other six areas, the results suggest the Town is meeting or exceeding citizens' expectations.

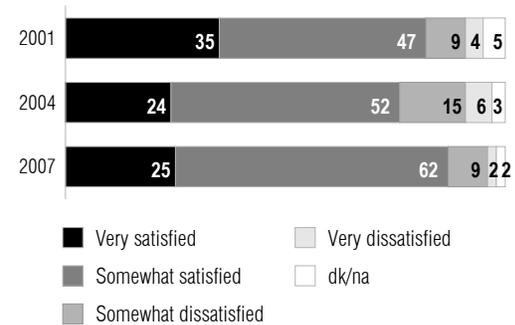
SATISFACTION WITH TOWN OF OAKVILLE GOVERNMENT

Overall satisfaction

Residents continue to express high levels of satisfaction with the Town of Oakville government, and this view has increased since 2004, but nearly all of this increase comes among those who are only “somewhat” satisfied.

An overwhelming majority of 87 percent express overall satisfaction with the Town of Oakville government; this figure is up 11 points from 2004. However, the proportion who say they are very satisfied has remained essentially unchanged, while there has been a 10-point increase in the number who are only somewhat satisfied. Eleven percent express dissatisfaction with the Town government; this figure has declined 10 points.

Town of Oakville government 2001 - 2007



Q.6

Would you say that you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the Town of Oakville government?

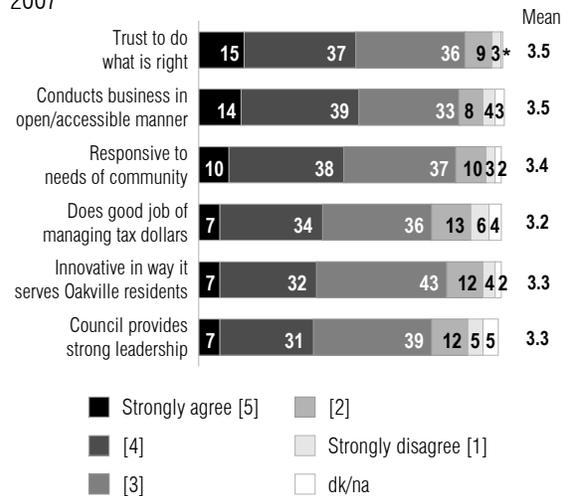
Perceptions of the Town of Oakville government

Residents were asked to rate municipal services by indicating their level of agreement with specific statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree.

Looking at the proportion who offer ratings of 4 or 5, residents express stronger agreement with the statements the Town of Oakville conducts its business in an open and accessible manner, they trust the Town to do what is right, and the Town is responsive to the needs of the community. They express slightly lower levels of agreement with the statements the Town of Oakville does a good job of managing tax dollars, the Town is innovative in the way it serves Oakville residents, and Town Council provides strong leadership to the Town of Oakville. Even on the lower rated areas, fewer than two in ten express disagreement. Between one-third and four in ten express neutral ratings of 3 for all these services.

Opinions on Town of Oakville municipal government services

2007



* Less than one percent

Q.7

The following question is about your opinions of municipal government services. By municipal services, we mean all the services delivered to Oakville citizens by the Town of Oakville through various departments. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree ... I trust the Town of Oakville to do what is right ... The Town of Oakville is innovative in the way it serves Oakville residents ... The Town of Oakville conducts its business in an open and accessible manner ... The Town of Oakville does a good job of managing tax dollars ... The Town of Oakville is responsive to the needs of the community ... Town Council provides strong leadership to the Town of Oakville.

Satisfaction with specific Oakville services – satisfaction and spending

Majorities report being satisfied with the Town's delivery of all of the services included in the survey and majorities are satisfied with current levels of spending for most of these services. There is very little support for spending cuts in any of the areas included in the survey. Since 2004, there have been increases in the proportions who call for more spending on eight areas.

Between three-quarters and nine in ten express satisfaction with fire fighting services, parks, libraries, cultural venues, the number of woodlots and trails, harbours and waterfront areas, road and sidewalk maintenance during the spring, summer and fall, recreational programs, leaf collection at curbside, outdoor sports fields, litter pick-up in parks and on boulevards, fire education services, indoor recreation facilities (other than arenas), and maintenance of boulevards and curbside grass. Between six and seven in ten express satisfaction with all the other services included in the survey, with the exception of public transit, which gets a passing grade from five in ten residents.

For several service areas for which there is comparative data, the Town of Oakville is on par with or scores higher than other municipalities in the GTA. The Town scores higher than other municipalities on parks, cultural venues, outdoor sports fields and winter sidewalk maintenance. The Town is on par with some municipalities or scores higher in the following areas: fire fighting services, public library services, road and sidewalk maintenance, recreational programs, maintenance of boulevards and curbside grass, and public transit. The Town scores lower than most other GTA municipalities in the areas of fire education services and indoor recreational facilities.

Since 2004, there have been increases in satisfaction for cemeteries, litter pick-up in parks and on boulevards, and winter road maintenance. The only area for which there has been a slight decline in satisfaction is leaf collection at curbside.²

Approximately three in ten say each they are dissatisfied with the Town's performance in the areas of the network of roads, environmental protection, winter road maintenance, public transit and winter sidewalk maintenance, but in each of these cases, satisfaction outweighs dissatisfaction by a wide margin. About two in ten each say they are dissatisfied with maintenance of boulevards and curbside grass, by-law enforcement, litter pick-up in parks and on boulevards, and indoor recreational facilities (other than arenas). Again, however, it should be noted that satisfaction far outweighs dissatisfaction. Significant proportions of two to three in ten offer no opinion regarding cemeteries, seniors' services, arenas, fire education services, forestry services and public transit.

Majorities express satisfaction with current spending levels for most services included in the survey. The exceptions are: services for seniors, public transit and environmental protection. Since 2004, there have been declines in satisfaction with current spending in seven areas: leaf collection at curbside, indoor recreational facilities (other than arenas), public transit, arenas, recreational programs, the network of roads and services for seniors.

Four in ten residents or more would like to see increased spending on environmental protection, Oakville's network of roads and public transit. One-third favour increased spending on services for seniors. About a quarter want more spending on indoor recreational facilities (other than arenas), winter sidewalk maintenance, libraries, number of woodlots and trails, litter pick-up in parks and on boulevards, harbours and waterfront areas, recreational programs, and maintenance of boulevards and curbside grass. About two in ten favour increased spending on road and sidewalk maintenance outside the winter season, cultural venues, outdoor sports fields, arenas, by-law enforcement, parks, fire education services, fire fighting services and forestry services. Between one and two in ten offer no opinion on spending levels on fire education services, forestry services, arenas, cemeteries, services for seniors and public transit.

2 Prior to 2007, this included bush collection.

Satisfaction and spending – Town services 2001 - 2007

Service	S A T I S F I E D			S P E N D M O R E		
	2001	2004	2007	2001	2004	2007
Fire fighting services	88	90	92	17	16	18
Parks	89	89	92	21	21	20
Public library services	86	92	88	24	23	26
Cultural venues such as the Oakville Museum, galleries and the Performing Arts Centre	86	88	86	17	16	21
Number of woodlots and trails in the Town	84	84	85	25	23	26
Harbours, waterfront areas	–	–	85	–	–	23
Road and sidewalk maintenance during the spring, summer and fall	78	81	84	24	21	22
Recreational programs	80	83	83	18	18	23
Leaf collection at curbside ^t	77	87	82	14	7	10
Outdoor sports fields	79	78	80	16	16	21
Litter pick-up in parks and on boulevards	73	72	78	25	29	25
Fire education services	71	77	77	21	16	19
Indoor recreational facilities, other than arenas	76	79	77	22	18	27
Maintenance of boulevards and curbside grass	77	71	75	21	27	23
Forestry services	–	–	73	–	–	18
Arenas	70	70	71	12	14	21
Winter road maintenance such as sanding and snow clearing	63	65	71	40	34	31
By-law enforcement	–	–	70	–	–	21
Winter sidewalk maintenance	65	69	69	31	26	26
Cemeteries	58	61	69	5	3	5
The network of roads in Oakville	63	67	65	46	39	44
Services for seniors	54	61	63	30	27	34
Environmental protection	–	–	63	–	–	46
Public transit	50	53	52	28	32	39

^t Prior to 2007, Bush and leaf collection at curbside

Q.8

Now I would like to ask you another two-part question about specific services.

First, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following services as it is currently delivered by the Town of Oakville? Second, keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think the Town of Oakville should be spending more, spending less or spending the same on each of the following services ...?

Rating customer service at Town of Oakville

A large majority of 67 percent of residents report some kind of experience with the Town; 33 percent report no such experience. Since 2004, there has been an increase of nine points in the proportion who report some kind of experience with the Town. However, this increase may be due to a slight change in wording that now includes accessing the Town through on-line services.

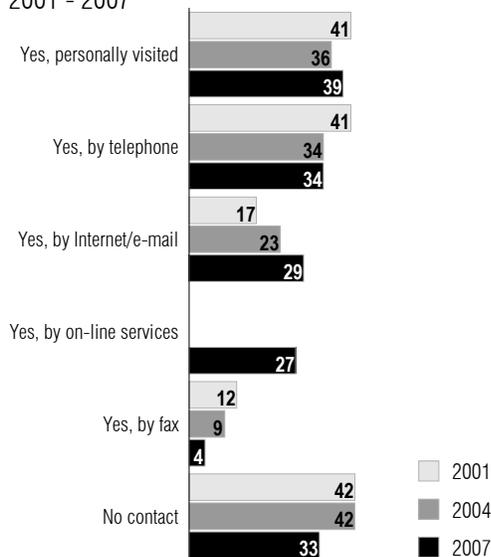
About four in ten say they have personally visited an Oakville municipal office, community centre or library within the past year in order to conduct business or obtain municipal services. One-third report such contact by telephone, while about three in ten each report making such contacts by e-mail or on-line services. Few report faxing a municipal office. Tracking data from 2004 indicate that contact via Internet or e-mail has increased, while contact by fax has declined.

Approximately nine in ten residents agree that “Town employees are respectful,” and that “services are de-

pendable and accurate.” More than eight in ten agree that “Town employees are knowledgeable,” and that “service was provided in a timely manner.” Three-quarters agree that “you can easily find the right staff to deal with their question or problem.” In all these cases, agreement tends to be slightly higher among those who report having contacted a municipal office or facility within the past year; those who report no such contact are more likely to simply not express an opinion on the question. There have been slight increases in the proportions who offer positive assessments in the areas of knowledgeable staff, and dependability or accuracy of services.

The Town of Oakville is on par with or scores higher than other GTA municipalities in all areas of experience with Town staff. They score higher than other municipalities in the area of services provided in a timely manner.

Contact with municipal office, community centre or library 2001 - 2007

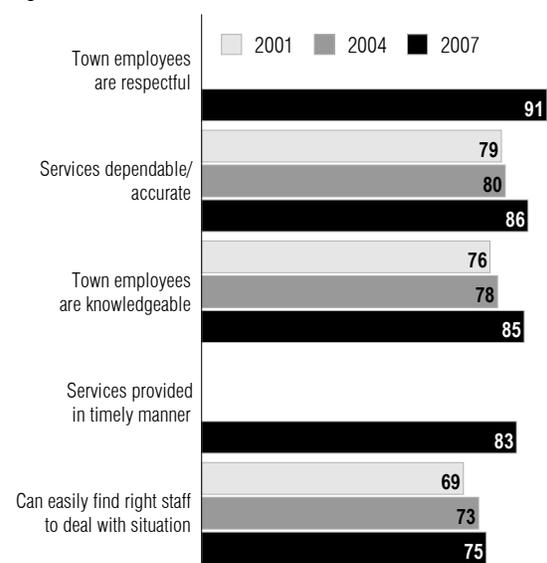


Q.10a

Within the past year, have you visited, telephoned, faxed, e-mailed or accessed through on-line services any Oakville municipal office, a community centre or a library in order to conduct business or obtain municipal services?

Experience with Town staff

Agree 2001 - 2007



Q.11

Based on your recent contact with the Town or on what you have read or heard, would you agree or disagree with the following statements ... Town employees are respectful ... Town employees are knowledgeable ... You can easily find the right staff to deal with your question/problem ... Service was provided in a timely manner ... Service provided was dependable/accurate?

Preferred sources of information

The survey results suggest that residents are most likely to use the local newspaper, the phone or the Town's website when looking for information from the Town of Oakville government; preference for the telephone has declined noticeably from 2004.

When residents are asked how they might look for or get information from the municipal government of the Town of Oakville, large majorities say that they would check the local newspaper, phone or use the Town's website. A smaller majority would use e-mail. Since 2004, there has been a noticeable decline in the use of the phone to access this information. Four in ten say they would check on-line newsletters (first time asked), one-third would likely check councillors' ward newsletters, and about two in ten say they would go to a Town hall meeting; all of these findings are essentially unchanged from 2004.

In another question, residents were informed that the Town of Oakville is considering announcing Public Meetings through the Town's website and electronic notices rather than paid advertisements in the local paper.

Although majorities think this change is a good idea and will not affect them, sizeable minorities think it is not a good idea and will affect them.

A majority of 55 percent of residents think this change is a good idea, but a significant minority of 42 percent do not.

A majority of 57 percent of residents say this change will *not* affect them, but a significant minority of 42 percent think it will affect them.

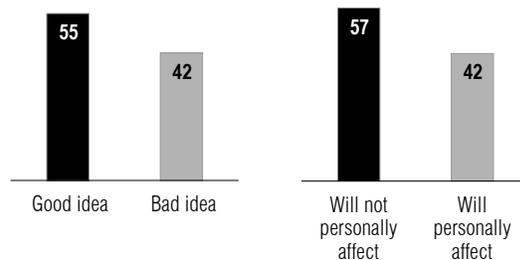
Likely ways to access information from Town of Oakville government 2001 - 2007

	2001	2004	2007
Local newspaper	74	71	74
Telephone	84	78	71
Town's website	58	70	71
E-mail	58	65	62
On-line newsletters	–	–	42
Councillors' newsletters	41	32	35
Town hall meetings	30	23	23

Q.12

Thinking about the ways that you might look for or get information from the municipal government of The Town of Oakville, would you likely, or not likely, use each of the following ...?

Proposal to announce public meetings through Town's website and electronic notices rather than ads in local paper 2007



Q.13

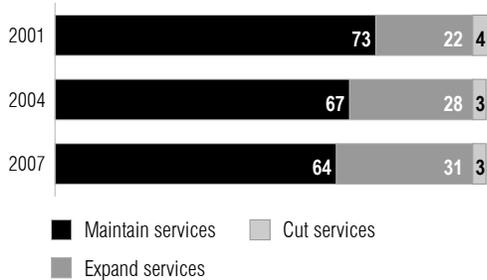
The Town of Oakville is considering announcing Public Meetings through the Town's website and electronic notices rather than paid advertisements in the local paper. Do you think this change ...?

PREFERRED APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT OF SERVICES

A large majority of residents want the Town government to maintain existing levels of services, even if this means increasing taxes or higher user fees. At the same time, there is a consensus that any expansion of services should be paid for by user fees. There is virtually no support for service cuts.

When residents are asked to choose among three overall strategies for managing Town services, a majority of 64 percent say the Town should maintain existing levels of services, while 31 percent think it should expand services. Only three percent support cuts to services. These findings are essentially unchanged from 2004.

Strategies for managing Town services
2001 - 2007

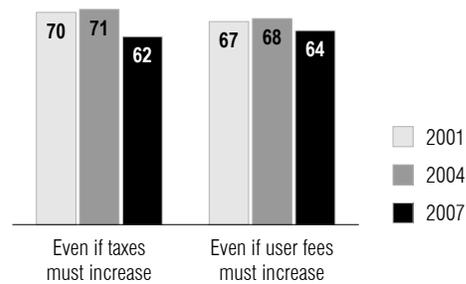


Q.9a

Thinking about overall strategies by which the Town should manage its services, which of the following would be your first choice? Do you think the Town of Oakville should ...?

Among those who favour maintaining current service levels, a majority of 62 percent say they favour maintenance of current service levels even if it means higher taxes; this figure is down noticeably from 2004. A similar proportion, 64 percent, say they favour maintenance of current service levels even if it means higher user fees; this figure is essentially unchanged from 2004.

Maintain services
2001 - 2007



Q.9d

Do you think the Town of Oakville should maintain services even if it means taxes are increased?

Subsample: Those who think the Town should maintain existing services

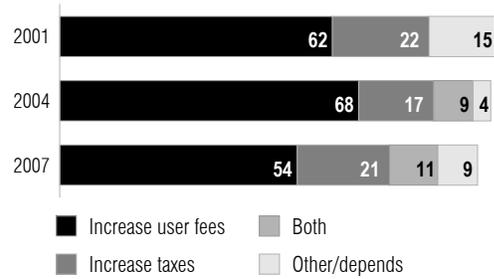
Q.9e

Do you think the Town of Oakville should maintain services even if it means user fees are increased?

Subsample: Those who think the Town should maintain existing services

Among the minority of Oakville residents who favour an expansion of services, 54 percent say this should be financed by increasing user fees rather than taxes; this proportion has declined considerably from 2004. Just 21 percent say taxes should be raised to pay for the expanded services; this figure is essentially unchanged. Among the three percent of Oakville residents who favour service cuts, seven in ten think this should lead to property tax cuts.

Strategies for expanding Town services 2001 - 2007

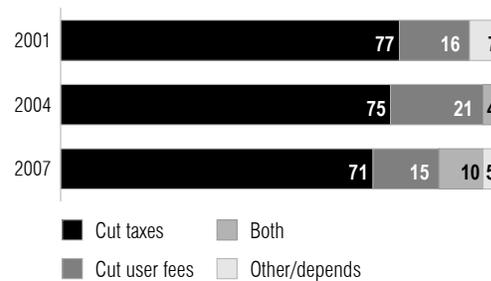


Q.9b

And how do you think the Town should do this? Do you think the Town of Oakville should ...?

Subsample: Those who think the Town should expand existing services

Preferences if Town services are cut 2001 - 2007



Q.9c

And if the Town cuts services, which one of the following do you prefer ...?

Subsample: Those who think the Town should cut existing services

TRANSIT USE

About three-quarters of Oakville residents report using public transit, but most of these have last used it six months ago or longer. (This would cover GO Transit.) Other qualitative data (focus groups) conducted in Halton Region) indicate that residents are more inclined to use GO, rather than local, transit.

Public transit use breaks down as follows: within the last month (22%), within the last three months (8%), within the last six months (6%), within the last year (7%), and over a year ago (31%). One-quarter say they have never used public transit.

Last time used public transit 2007

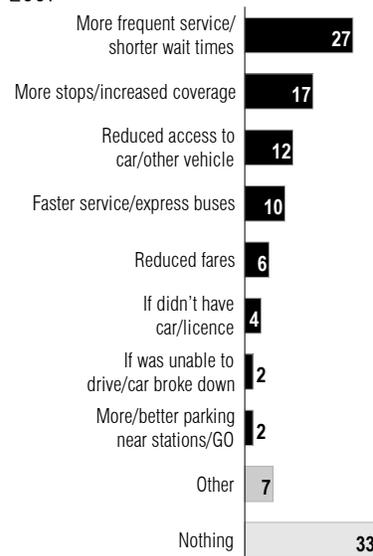


Q.14

When was the last time you used public transit?

When asked what would make them use public transit services more often than they do now, the most commonly mentioned response is having more frequent service or shorter wait times. Smaller proportions mention more stops or increased coverage, reduced access to car or other vehicle, faster service or express buses, reduced fares, and if the person didn't have a car or licence. Two percent or fewer each mention other ways to increase their use of public transit. One-third offer no opinion on this question.

Increasing use of public transit 2007



Q.15

What would make you use public transit services more often than you do now?

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Oakville residents perceive their Town very positively as to liveability – there is an overwhelming consensus that it outranks all other areas of the Greater Toronto Area on the aspect of liveability.

When residents are asked the features or characteristics that make Oakville livable, they are most likely to relate liveability to the small-town, community- and family-oriented nature of the Town. Hence, the greatest challenge to liveability is perceived to be issues related to development, such as expansion, overcrowdedness or overdevelopment.

Overall, Oakville residents continue to be very positive in their assessments of the overall management of the Town, and this view has increased dramatically since 2004. An overwhelming majority of just under nine in ten say they are satisfied with the Town of Oakville government. In addition, most residents offer very positive assessments of Town employees, and these assessments tend to be higher than average among those who have actually had recent contact with these people.

When asked their perceptions of the Town of Oakville on specific aspects, residents are more likely to agree that the Town is open and accessible, will do what is right and is responsive, and slightly less likely to agree that the Town does a good job in managing the tax dollar and is innovative, and that Town Council provides strong leadership. However, even on the lesser rated aspects, fewer than two in ten disagree, and are more likely to offer neutral assessments.

A deeper analysis of attitudes reveals that, when residents were asked to rate the importance of 12 factors in making any community a good place in which to

live and work, and then to rate the Town of Oakville on each of these factors, majorities – often large majorities – believe that the Town is doing a good job of delivering on the quality of life measures that are important to them. At the same time, there continue to be huge gaps between perceived importance and the Town's performance in the areas of environmental protection, living environment, and provision of social services; noticeable gaps also exist in the areas of the perceived amount of green space available to Town residents and business and job opportunities for residents.

Majorities report being satisfied with 24 specific services that are delivered by the Town. Moreover, three-quarters or more are satisfied with 14 out of 24 services. Majorities are also satisfied with current levels of Town spending on most of these services (the exceptions being services for seniors, public transit and environmental protection). However, it should be noted that there is significant minority support for spending more on most of these areas. In two areas – environmental protection and Oakville's network of roads – more than four in ten favour increased spending. In the area of public transit, four in ten want more spending. One-third favour increased spending on services for seniors. About one-quarter favour more spending in eight areas: indoor recreational facilities (other than arenas), winter sidewalk maintenance, libraries, number of woodlots and trails, litter pick-up in parks and on boulevards, harbours and waterfront areas, recreational programs, and maintenance of boulevards and curbside grass. About two in ten want more spending in nine areas: road and sidewalk maintenance outside the winter season, cultural venues, outdoor sports fields, arenas, by-law enforcement, parks, fire education services, fire fighting services and forestry services.

The survey finds very little support for spending cuts – only about one in ten or fewer say there should be lower levels of spending on any of the specific services included in the survey. Moreover, when residents are asked to choose among three overall strategies for managing Town services, two-thirds say the Town should maintain existing levels of services – even if it means higher taxes – and three in ten favour an expansion of services; virtually no one chooses the option of cutting services. At the same time, there is a declining consensus that any expansion of services should be financed through user fees, not higher property taxes.

When residents are asked about sources of information from the Town of Oakville government, most say they are likely to use the local newspaper, telephone or the Town’s website, but the proportion who use the telephone is down noticeably from 2004.

When the survey asked further about public transit, it found that three-quarters of Oakville residents report having used public transit (This would include GO Transit.), but most of these last used it six months ago or longer. More frequent service or shorter wait times is most commonly mentioned as the factor that would get residents to use public transit services more often.

METHODOLOGY

The results of the survey are based on questions asked to 805 residents of Oakville, Ontario 18 years of age and older. The survey was conducted by telephone from October 25 to November 8, 2007.

Sample selection

The sampling method was designed to complete approximately 800 interviews within in the Oakville area. In order to target residents of Oakville, the postal code areas lying within boundaries of the Town of Oakville were identified, and only households situated within these postal code areas were dialled. Random digit dialling (RDD) sampling was utilised. The initial sample for this study consisted of approximately 11,000 phone numbers from five postal code areas. The proportion of numbers within the sample from each postal code area was proportionate to the population of each area. A total of 5,567 telephone numbers were drawn from this initial sample during dialling.

The final sample was distributed among the six wards as follows.

	UNWEIGHTED N	MARGIN OF ERROR
Ward 1	120	8.9
Ward 2	112	9.3
Ward 3	126	8.7
Ward 4	172	7.5
Ward 5	180	7.3
Ward 6	95	10.1
Town of Oakville	805	3.5

From within each household contacted, respondents 18 years of age and older were screened for random selection using the “most recent birthday” method. The use of this technique produces results that are as valid and effective as enumerating all persons within a household and selecting one randomly.

In the data analysis, the results of the survey were weighted by gender.

Telephone interviewing

Interviewing was conducted at Environics’ central facilities in Toronto. Field supervisors were present at all times to ensure accurate interviewing and recording of responses. During fieldwork, 10 percent of each interviewer’s work was unobtrusively monitored for quality control in accordance with the standards set out by the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association. A minimum of five calls were made to a household before classifying it as a “no answer.” The mean time per completed interview was 25.2 minutes.

Completion results

The sample for this survey consisted of 805 interviews. The margin of error for a sample of 805 is +/- 3.5 percentage points, 19 times in 20. The margin of error is greater for results pertaining to regional or socio-demographic subgroups of the total sample.

The effective response rate for the survey is 16 percent.¹ This is calculated as the number of responding participants (completed interviews, disqualifications and over-quota participants – 811), divided by unresolved numbers (busy, no answer – 1,331) plus non-responding households or individuals (refusals, language barrier, missed callbacks – 2,826) plus responding participants (811) $[R/(U+IS+R)]$. The disposition of all dialled sample is presented in the following table.

1 This response rate calculation is based on a new formula recently developed by MRIA in consultation with the Government of Canada (Public Works and Government Services).

Completion results

Total sample dialled	5,567
UNRESOLVED NUMBERS (U)	1,331
Busy	14
No answer	521
Answering machine	796
RESOLVED NUMBERS	
(Total minus Unresolved)	4,236
OUT OF SCOPE (Invalid/non-eligible)	599
Non-residential	80
Not-in-service	447
Fax/modem	72
IN SCOPE NON-RESPONDING (IS)	2,826
Refusals – household	1,532
Refusals – respondent	480
Language barrier	135
Callback missed/respondent not available	633
Break-offs (interview not completed)	46
IN SCOPE RESPONDING (R)	811
Disqualified	0
Quota filled	6
Completed	805
RESPONSE RATE {R / (U + IS + R)}	16%

QUESTIONNAIRE

Telephone Survey for The Town of Oakville
Final
800 Residents
PN6126

October 22, 2007

Hello. This is _____ from Environics Research Group Limited. We are conducting a survey on behalf of the Town of Oakville on issues of importance to residents of The Town.

Please be assured that we are not selling anything and that your answers will be kept confidential.

Could we speak to the person in the household, 18 years of age or older, who has had the most recent birthday?

1t In your opinion, what is the single most important issue facing Oakville today?

01 - SPECIFY _____
99 - DK/NA

2rt What are the qualities or features of the Town of Oakville that make it liveable? **ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES**

01 - SPECIFY _____
99 - DK/NA

3rt What is the greatest challenge that prevents the Town of Oakville from being the most liveable Town in Canada? **CODE ONE RESPONSE ONLY**

01 - SPECIFY _____
99 - DK/NA

4rt Thinking about Oakville as a place in which to live, would you say that the degree of liveability in Oakville is generally ...

READ AND ROTATE 1 and 2

01 - better than most areas of the Greater Toronto Area
02 - not as good as most areas of the Greater Toronto Area
03 - about the same as most areas of the Greater Toronto Area
VOLUNTEERED
04 - Better than some, worse than others
05 - Other/depends
99 - DK/NA

5t Now I would like to ask you a two-part question. **READ BOTH (i) AND (ii) TOGETHER.**

i) First, in general, how important are each of the following factors in making any community a good place in which to live and work?

ii) Second, how would you rate The Town of Oakville on each of these factors?

READ AND RANDOMIZE

a) the amount of green space that's available for the use of residents

- | | |
|---|---|
| i) 01 - Very important
02 - Somewhat important
03 - Not very important
04 - Not at all important
99 – DK/NA | ii) 01 – Excellent
02 – Good
03 – Fair
04 – Poor
99 – DK/NA |
|---|---|

- b) the kinds of business and job opportunities available for residents of Oakville
- c) the opportunities for recreation, sports, and leisure
- d) the environment in which people live, for example, clean water and air and adequate shelter
- e) the quality of buildings and overall appearance of the community
- f) the opportunities people have for education and development of new skills
- g) a feeling of belonging and being safe in one's neighbourhood
- h) the efforts that the Town of Oakville government makes to protect the environment
- i) opportunities to get involved with organizations and local government
- j) how good the community is at finding help for people in need
- k) the opportunities and venues for cultural activities
- l) the effort the town makes to protect the heritage of the community

6t Would you say that you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the Town of Oakville government?

- 01 - Very satisfied
- 02 - Somewhat satisfied
- 03 - Somewhat dissatisfied
- 04 -Very dissatisfied
- 99 – DK/NA

7 The following question is about your opinions of municipal government services. By municipal services, we mean all the services delivered to Oakville citizens by the Town of Oakville. through various departments.

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
a) I trust the Town of Oakville to do what is right	1	2	3	4	5	DK/NA	
b) The Town of Oakville is innovative in the way it serves Oakville residents.	1	2	3	4	5	DK/NA	
c) The Town of Oakville conducts its business in an open and accessible manner.	1	2	3	4	5	DK/NA	
d) The Town of Oakville does a good job of managing tax dollars.	1	2	3	4	5	DK/NA	
e) The Town of Oakville is responsive to the needs of the community.	1	2	3	4	5	DK/NA	
f) Town Council provides strong leadership to the Town of Oakville.	1	2	3	4	5	DK/NA	

8t Now I would like to ask you another two-part question about specific services.

(i) First, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following services as it is currently delivered by the Town of Oakville?

(ii) Second, keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think the Town of Oakville should be spending more, spending less, or spending the same on each of the following services?

READ AND RANDOMIZE – ALWAYS KEEP b) AND c) TOGETHER, WITH b) GOING FIRST, AND KEEP q) AND r) TOGETHER

a) parks

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|-----|---------------------|
| i) | 01 - Satisfied | ii) | 01 – Spend more |
| | 02 - Dissatisfied | | 02 – Spend less |
| | (VOLUNTEERED) | | 03 – Spend the same |
| | 03 – Do not use service | | |
| | 99 – DK/NA | | 99 – DK/NA |

b) arenas

c) other indoor recreational facilities, such as gyms and swimming pools

d) outdoor sports fields

e) recreational programs

f) public library services

g) cemeteries

h) maintenance of boulevards and curbside grass

i) public transit

j) the network of roads in Oakville

k) leaf collection at curbside

l) road and sidewalk maintenance during the spring, summer and fall

m) winter road maintenance, that is, sanding and snow clearing

n) number of woodlots and trails in the Town

o) cultural venues such as the Oakville Museum, galleries and the Performing Arts Centre

p) services for seniors

q) fire fighting services

r) fire education services

s) litter pickup in parks and on boulevards

t) winter sidewalk maintenance

u) harbours and waterfront areas

v) forestry services

w) by-law enforcement

x) environmental protection

9t a) Thinking about overall strategies by which the Town should manage its services, which of the following would be your first choice? Do you think the Town of Oakville should...

READ AND ROTATE

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 01 – expand existing services | GO TO b) |
| 02 – cut existing services | GO TO c) |
| 03 – maintain existing services | GO TO d) and then e) |
| VOLUNTEERED | |
| 04 – Other/depends | GO TO 10t |
| 99 – DK/NA | |

IF EXPAND SERVICES IN a)

b) And how do you think the Town should do this? Do you think the Town of Oakville should...

READ AND ROTATE

- 01 – increase taxes
- 02 – increase user fees
- VOLUNTEERED
- 03 – both
- 04 – Other/depends
- 99 – DK/NA

IF CUT SERVICES IN a)

c) And if the Town cuts services, which ONE of the following do you prefer ...

READ AND ROTATE

- 01 – that it cut taxes
- 02 – that it cut user fees
- VOLUNTEERED
- 03 – both
- 04 - Other/depends
- 99 – DK/NA

IF MAINTAIN SERVICES IN a)

d) Do you think the Town of Oakville should maintain services even if it means taxes are increased?

- 01 - Yes
- 02 - No
- VOLUNTEERED
- 03 - Other/depends
- 99 – DK/NA

IF MAINTAIN SERVICES IN a)

e) Do you think the Town of Oakville should maintain services even if it means user fees are increased?

- 01 - Yes
- 02 - No
- VOLUNTEERED
- 03 - Other/depends
- 99 – DK/NA

10t a) Within the past year, have you visited, telephoned, faxed, e-mailed or accessed through online services any Oakville municipal office, a community centre or a library in order to conduct business or obtain municipal services? [**PROBE IF NECESSARY**]

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 01 – yes, have personally visited
- 02 – yes, by telephone
- 03 – yes, by fax
- 04 – yes, by internet e-mail
- 05 – yes, through online services
- 06 – no experience with Town employees
- 07 – other type of experience
- 99 – DK/NA

11t Based on your recent contact with the Town or on what you have read or heard, would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

READ AND RANDOMIZE a) TO e)

a) Town employees are respectful.

- 01 - agree
- 02 - disagree
- 99 - DK/NA

- b) Town employees are knowledgeable.
- c) You can easily find the right staff to deal with your question/problem.
- d) Service was provided in a timely manner.
- e) Service provided was dependable/accurate

12t Thinking about the ways that you might look for or get information from the municipal government of The Town of Oakville, would you likely, or not likely, use each of the following ...

READ AND RANDOMIZE

a) telephone

- 01 - Likely
- 02 - Not likely
- 99 - DK/NA

- b) e-mail
- c) town hall meetings
- d) the local newspaper
- e) the Town's website
- f) Councilors' ward newsletters
- g) online newsletters

13t The Town of Oakville is considering announcing Public Meetings through the Town's website and electronic notices rather than paid advertisements in the local paper. Do you think this change:

READ AND ROTATE

a) Is a good idea?

- 01 - Yes
- 02 - No
- 99 - DK/NA

b) Will personally affect you?

14 When was the last time you used public transit?

READ IF NECESSARY - PROBE

- 01 - Within the last month
- 02 - Within the last three months
- 03 - Within the last six months
- 04 - Within the last year
- 05 - Over a year ago
- 06 - Never
- 99 - DK/NA

15 What would make you use public transit services more often than you do now?

DO NOT READ – CODE ALL APPLY

- 01 – More frequent service/shorter wait times
- 02 – Reduced access to a car or other vehicle
- 03 – More stops/increased coverage
- 04 – Faster service/express buses
- 05 – Reduced fares
- 06 – Nothing
- 98 – Other SPECIFY _____
- 99 – DK/NA

16 Have you taken a taxi in the Town of Oakville within the past year?

- 01 - Yes
- 02 - No
- 99 – DK/NA

IF YES IN Q16

17 How would you rate the taxi service on ...? Would you rate it as excellent, good, fair or poor?

READ AND ROTATE

a) Timeliness

- 01 – Excellent
- 02 – Good
- 03 – Fair
- 04 – Poor
- 99 – DK/NA

- b) driver conduct
- c) vehicle condition
- d) telephone customer service

And now, I'd like to ask you some questions about you and your household. Please be assured that all your responses will be kept entirely anonymous and absolutely confidential.

D1 Do you (or does a member of your household) own or rent your accommodation?

CODE ONE ONLY

- 01 - Own
- 02 - Rent
- VOLUNTEERED
- 03 – Other
- 99 – DK/NA

D2 So that we may categorize you by ward, could you please give me your complete postal code?

- 01 – SPECIFY _____
- Note ward _____

D3 Do you have children under the age of 18 living in your household?

- 01 - Yes
- 02 - No

D4 Which of the following best describes your own present employment status?

READ - CODE ONE ONLY

- 01 - Working full-time
- 02 - Working part-time
- 03 - Going to school and working
- 04 - Going to school and not working
- 05 - Unemployed or laid off
- 06 - Stay at home full-time
- 07 - Retired
- VOLUNTEERED**
- 08 - Disability pension
- 99 - DK/NA

D5 Do you personally use the Internet ...

a) at home?

- 01 - Yes
- 02 - No

IF OPTION 1-3 IN D4

b) at work?

ASK ALL

c) at some other place, such as a school or a library?

ASK ALL

D6 What is the highest level of education that you have reached?

DO NOT READ - CIRCLE ONE ONLY

- 01 - Some elementary (Grades 1-7)
- 02 - Completed elementary (Grade 8)
- 03 - Some high school (Grades 9-11)
- 04 - Completed high school (Grades 12 or 13)
- 05 - Community college, vocational, trade school
- 06 - Some university
- 07 - Complete university (Bachelor's Degree)
- 08 - Post graduate/professional school (Master's Degree or Ph.D.)
- 09 - No schooling
- 99 - DK/NA

D7 Are you ...

READ - CODE ONE ONLY

- 01 - Single, never married
- 02 - Married or living together as a couple
- 03 - Widowed
- 04 - Separated
- 05 - Divorced
- 99 - DK/NA

D8 In what year were you born?

01- SPECIFY _____

ASK ALL

D9 Do you consider yourself to be a member of a visible minority group? (**READ: Visible minorities are those who are a visible minority in Canada because of their race or colour**)

- 01 – Yes
- 02 – No
- 99 – DK/NA

D10 For statistical purposes only, we need information about your income. All individual responses will be kept confidential. Please tell me which category applies to your total household income before taxes for 2006.

READ - CIRCLE ONE ONLY

- 01 - Under \$10,000
- 02 - \$10,001 to \$20,000
- 03 - \$20,001 to \$30,000
- 04 - \$30,001 to \$40,000
- 05 - \$40,001 to \$50,000
- 06 - \$50,001 to \$60,000
- 07 - \$60,001 to \$70,000
- 08 - \$70,001 to \$80,000
- 09 - \$80,001 to \$90,000
- 10 - \$90,001 to \$100,000
- 11 - \$100,000 and over
- 99 – DK/NA

D11 **NOTE SEX. DO NOT ASK.**

- 01 - Male
- 02 - Female

PUBLIC CONSULTATION FINDINGS

PROJECT
SUMMARY

Summary of the Citizens' Public Consultations
in the Town of Oakville

Prepared for:
Town of Oakville

September 13, 2007

PN6126



33 Bloor St East
Suite 900
Toronto, ON M4W 3H1

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Oakville invited its citizens to attend one of the two public consultation sessions hosted by the town. The purpose of these sessions was to elicit feedback from the residents on aspects of the Strategic Plan and on the goal of making Oakville the most livable town in Canada.

The consultations aimed to stimulate debate in the following five areas, all related to the Strategic Plan:

- What could make Oakville the most livable town in Canada
- Accountability
- Ways to enhance the natural environment
- How to continuously improve programs and services
- How to make these programs and services fiscally sustainable

These sessions were hosted on August 27 at the Oakville Town Hall and September 6 at the Oakville Central Library. A total of 18 residents (divided into two tables) attended the first session and 30 (divided into five tables) attended the second. Volunteer facilitators led the discussion at each table, using an agenda of discussion points (attached to this report). One participant from each table reported back to the full meeting at the end of the discussion, summarizing the discussion at each table. Each session lasted approximately two hours.

The following is a brief summary of the feedback provided by the participants on each discussion topic.

SUMMARY

How to make Oakville the most livable town in Canada

The groups generally spent the most time discussing this topic and most had several ideas to offer when asked what could make their town the most livable for them.

Development was the most commonly mentioned issue among participants regarding livability in Oakville. Most agreed that high-rises were not a positive development, and that care has to be taken with new development to accommodate the rapidly increasing population. Mixed - and affordable - housing was mentioned often, while also taking care to maintain green space. Also noted was the need to find “innovative” alternatives to traffic to decrease pollution (one group mentioned implementing a commuter tax while improving transit options), as nobody wanted to see roads widened or traffic increased, and all wanted pollution diminished. Participants hoped for better infrastructure and for the development to be “unique,” not cookie cutter houses surrounded by box stores.

A few participants mentioned putting caps on the level of development until the needs of the current residents were addressed. To make Oakville the most livable town, participants felt the need to ensure there are enough schools, that there is adequate and green transportation, and that wildlife and green space are not threatened by development. Many felt that these existing problems that are being worsened by the type of development allowed and the rate at which it is happening. The Netherlands was mentioned as a role model to use while developing their town instead of “reinventing the wheel.” Participants felt it was possible to have a livable city while accommodating new growth, but that expanded roads, cookie cutter houses and box stores were not the way to do it.

Other commonly mentioned ideas were increasing educational and business opportunities, keeping citizens engaged in the community, ensuring cleanliness and making public safety a priority.

Prioritization of goals

Participants were asked to prioritize four goals: the natural environment, fiscal sustainability, continuous improvement and accountability.

The natural environment was mentioned as the top priority in four of the seven groups. As one person said during a discussion, if you can't breathe the air and be healthy, little else should be a priority.

Accountability was the top priority for the other three groups, one of them commenting that you cannot ensure anything else if you do not have an accountable government. One group said accountability was the lowest priority, as it is easy to elect a new government if you are not happy with what they are doing, so it is a waste of time to worry about whether or not they are being accountable. Instead, they said, focus on growing and strengthening the town.

A few were unable to identify one particular area as least important, although two groups did say that continuous improvement was their lowest priority, one said fiscal sustainability and one said accountability. The other three could not say which was least important.

Accountability

When asked what they look for in terms of accountability, participants said they want to be kept more in the loop of the town's decisions. The town council needs to keep its promises, be consistent and engage its citizens through being transparent, having open dialogue and making financial reports and long-term plans accessible. As mentioned, development is a major concern, and it is one area in which residents want to be aware of what is happening and to have a say in how it is done. Some said they have a right to know what developers are funding.

Keeping city hall open later was mentioned by several people, to give more residents the chance to get there after work. An organizational chart of staff at City Hall would also be helpful.

Personal accountability was mentioned as a high priority by one group, and many others seemed to agree – recycling, driving less, not littering, etc. However, as some said, that starts with educating the public and creating a desire in the community for these things to be a reality. Enforcement should come after education, since people rebel against enforcement if they do not understand its purpose. Education is crucial in teaching them how these actions will benefit *them*. At that point, they will become more accountable, especially once certain actions are seen as the norm in the town and the expectation of their fellow citizens.

Ways to enhance the natural environment

Enhancing and protecting the natural environment was the top concern among the plurality of the groups. General feedback was that people do not think about garbage or waste, although they do care about a clean environment and a green town; therefore, it is the town's responsibility to educate its citizens on the connection between the two and then to enforce restrictions on waste. Oakville should be a leader in minimal waste production and maximum recycling, waste reduction and composting. As several people said, use education, initiatives and legislation to get the town as clean and green as everyone wants it. The top priority, however, is to educate and then enforce regulations, as was done with the non-smoking ban. As many agreed, the community must first understand what is happening and why it is happening, and then be given the chance to offer input.

Specific suggestions included: fees for idling, elevators and plastic bags; banning drive thrus; using bio-bags for dog waste; always cleaning up graffiti; putting a cap on the size of houses and the space they can consume, while also possibly basing property taxes on the amount of space lived on. Most seemed to agree that the town needs to make progress with what has been started and then think about becoming leaders in new areas.

How to continuously improve programs and services

Several participants said that seeking approval from residents and soliciting public input was the most important step to ensure continuous improvement of programs and services. They felt that the focus needs to be on running programs efficiently and cost effectively with ongoing input from residents. Town-sponsored seminars to teach about current issues and general by-laws were mentioned as something that would be beneficial to keep residents informed.

Commonly mentioned areas of focus for continuous improvement were services for seniors, fire and EMS services, bike paths, transit systems, development of the waterfront, road repairs and accessibility of buildings. Affordable post-secondary education and support was considered important. Services for autistic children were mentioned by one person, as well as supporting local artists by showing them in local galleries.

Reviewing and assessing the need for services should be done on a regular basis so the town does not continue to fund programs simply because they did in the past. One group said that new

programs were not necessarily needed, only accountability and sustainability for existing ones.

How to make programs and services fiscally sustainable

Several ideas were presented as ways to make programs and services fiscally sustainable. The area mentioned most often was finding a balance between taxes and user fees. Many people preferred user fees over increased taxes; however, these participants also said it was important to ensure that fees are realistic and do not eliminate people's ability to participate. Several also mentioned that the cost of development should be paid by developers and not through the taxes of citizens.

Some mentioned introducing a process to assess the government on a more regular basis than exists in order to see if the money is being used effectively and is reflective of the community's needs. Other areas mentioned were zoning regulations, cost benefit analysis and having town councillors cut back on spending.

One group mentioned that Oakville cannot continue to lose programs and services in old areas to pay for those in the new ones. Another group commented that empowering citizens to volunteer more to keep certain services running would be something worth considering.