



Angus Reid Group Inc.

Port Alberni: Service Review Study

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Port Alberni commissioned the Angus Reid Group to undertake a public opinion poll of its residents in order to gain an understanding of citizenry's current thinking as to where and how the City should allocate the municipality's resources and taxdollars. A total of 400 telephone interviews were conducted with a randomly selected sample of Port Alberni residents between May 5th and June 12th, 1998. Overall results are accurate to ± 4.9 percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty. Following is an executive summary of the major findings of the research. Overall results and the methodological approach follow in the detailed report.

MAIN ISSUES FACING PORT ALBERNI

- Jobs and the economy are clearly the main concerns of the Port Alberni community: jobs and unemployment (26% total mentions), creating jobs within the municipality (17%), economy/job opportunities (10%), and the economy in general (9%).
- One in five identify taxes as an area that require attention from Port Alberni's City council: taxation and municipal government spending (8%), government overspending in general (7%), and high property taxes (5%).
- Outside of economic related concerns, "hospitals" or more specifically "the need for a new hospital" emerge as one of the most important local issue with 17 percent mentions. Thirteen percent believe the City should focus its efforts in "attracting new business," while a "new arena" (7%) and the "condition of the streets" (6%) are of concern to fewer individuals.

PERCEPTIONS OF CITY SERVICES

Generally speaking, Port Alberni residents are pleased with the services the City provides. They have a high degree of satisfaction, and tend to lean towards the belief that the quality of services has improved in the past few years. Furthermore, a significant majority of taxpayers also feel they are getting good service value for their tax dollars, which incidentally, the majority feel they pay just the "right amount" of taxes.

- Four in five residents (83%) are either "very satisfied" (22%) or "somewhat satisfied" (61%) with the overall quality of City services they receive. On the down side, 15 percent are dissatisfied.
- One-half of the residents (48%) indicate that, overall, the services provided by the City have improved, while the other half (42%) believe they have

gotten worse. It is important to highlight, however, that the majority of individuals take the "middle-of-the-road" position – that is, 44 percent believe City services are "somewhat better" than previous years, while 33 percent feel they are "somewhat worse."

- A significant majority of taxpayers (79%) indicate they receive good value for their tax dollars. The programs and services provided by the City are not meeting the expectations of one in five homeowners (21%).
- The majority of homeowners in Port Alberni appreciate the services and programs they receive for their tax dollars. Fully 60 percent believe the taxes they pay are "about right." A significant number, however, close to two in five, feel their taxes are "much too high" (9%) or "somewhat too high" (29%).

SERVICE PRIORITIES: CHOOSING AREAS FOR SERVICE CUTS

MOST IMPORTANT CITY SERVICES

- The top seven services the City should "fully maintain" obtained top ratings from over nine in ten residents: fire protection (96% "fully maintain"), maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems (96%), maintenance and repair of water system and water quality (93%), policing (93%), garbage collection (93%), maintenance, cleaning and upgrading of streets and sidewalks (89%), and library (86%).
- The second cluster of services comprises a set of service areas which are of value to about three-quarters of the residents of Port Alberni. Five of the seven services directly touch the more recreational interests of people living in the City including: recycling and composting (78%), setting and enforcing Bylaw regulations (75%), maintenance and development of passive parks (75%), maintenance and development of recreational facilities (75%), maintenance and development of playing fields (74%), promoting the tourism industry (73%), and support given to recreational programs (71%).
- Around two-thirds would like City council to "fully maintain" the bus service (68%) and the regulation of development (66%), while only 48 percent want the City to "fully maintain" its level of support given to cultural and heritage facilities and programs.

RELATIVE VALUE ATTRIBUTED TO LOW PRIORITY SERVICES

- On average, the people of Port Alberni are prepared to cut \$24.90 from each of the 17 services tested. Residents would be prepared to see the deepest cuts made in the support given to cultural and heritage facilities and programs (\$39.00), though not far behind is the development of Bylaw regulations (\$30.00), promotions for the tourism industry (\$29.60), bus service (\$27.00), recycling and composting (\$25.40), and regulation of development (\$23.20).
- Slightly less dramatic cuts would be made to the maintenance and development of passive parks (\$20.30), maintenance and development of playing fields (\$20.00), policing (\$19.60), the support given to recreational programs (\$19.00), maintenance and development of recreational facilities (\$18.90), and maintenance and repair of water system and water quality (\$17.90).
- Residents are not as prepared to cut money from the following services: fire protection (\$15.10), library (\$14.60), garbage collection (\$14.10), maintenance, cleaning, and upgrading of streets and sidewalks (\$13.50), and maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems (\$11.00). Incidentally, these five areas are ranked in the top seven most important services to the people of Port Alberni.

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES

- Of the 17 services examined, the Port Alberni community are most satisfied with the City's services when it comes to garbage collection (72% rate it a 8, 9, 10) and fire protection (72%). Fewer, albeit still a majority, are satisfied with their efforts in terms of the maintenance and development of playing fields (61%), policing (56%), library (55%), and maintenance and repair of water system and water quality (52%).
- Just under one-half are satisfied with the City's provision of services in terms of the support given for recreational programs (49%), maintenance and development of passive parks (49%), maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems (48%), and maintenance and development of recreational facilities (45%).
- And finally, one-third or less of Port Alberni residents are satisfied with the way the City provides service in the following areas: the bus service (34%), maintenance, cleaning and upgrading of streets and sidewalks (32%), support given to cultural and heritage facilities and programs (28%), promotions for the tourism industry (28%), setting and enforcing Bylaw regulations (22%), regulation of development (21%), and recycling and composting (19%).

REACTIONS TO FISCAL OPTIONS FOR MANAGING CITY SERVICES

Generally speaking, Port Alberni residents appear more likely to support the idea of service cuts and user fees than they are to give a green light to raising property taxes. However, much stronger support surfaces for cuts in selected service areas rather than implementing an across the board policy. Meanwhile, Port Alberni residents are somewhat divided when it comes using a mix of service cuts and property tax increases to maintain the same level of services.

- More than two-thirds (65%) surveyed say they would support City council cutting services, but only in some areas; the remaining one-third (31%) oppose the idea.
- Sixty percent support the idea of increasing user fees or charging new user fees for some City services in order to maintain current levels of service. The rest – 35 percent – oppose this idea.
- Fully two-thirds **oppose** the idea of raising property taxes to the extent of inflation to maintain the same level of city services they now receive; just under one-third (31%) support a tax increase.
- Fifty four percent support using a mix of service cuts and property tax increases, while 48 percent oppose it.
- Close to three-quarters of residents (73%) surveyed oppose service cuts which would be implemented proportionately in all service areas; 25 percent support this option.

PREFERRED FISCAL MANAGEMENT OPTION

- Forty percent would rather see user fees implemented or increased, while 39 percent would like to see a mixture of some service cuts and an increase in property taxes.

MIXING SERVICE CUTS AND PROPERTY TAX INCREASES

- When considering the possible mix between cuts and tax increases, City of Port Alberni residents who favour a mix of service cuts and property tax increase tend to lean more towards raising money from service cuts (\$53.50) than from property tax increases (\$46.10).
- Fully 68 percent of residents wants council to make higher cuts in *some* service areas, and leave other services alone, while 26 percent think it better for council to make cuts in services proportionately across the board.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS USER FEES

- Port Alberni residents are somewhat supportive of charging higher fees towards City services like permits and licenses, recreation programs, garbage collection fees and using the "extra" money raised to help pay for other City services, an idea supported by 57 percent of residents and opposed by 42 percent.
- When asked to choose between "charging user fees on some City services and cutting services" and "charging user fees on some City services and raising property taxes," the Port Alberni community who support the concept of user fees tend to favour the first option. That is, 58 percent would rather have council charge user fees and cut service, while slightly fewer – 39 percent – would rather see a combination of user fees and an increase in property taxes.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The City of Port Alberni commissioned the Angus Reid Group to undertake a public opinion poll of its residents in order to gain an understanding of citizenry's current thinking as to where and how the City should allocate the municipality's resources and taxdollars. A total of 400 telephone interviews were conducted with Port Alberni residents between May 5th and June 12th.

Key issues addressed in the telephone survey included:

- ☐ Main concerns of Port Alberni residents
- ☐ Service priorities
- ☐ Perceptions of City of Port Alberni services
- ☐ Reactions to fiscal options for managing City services

Following is a report of the findings from the survey. Results are displayed graphically, and an explanation of demographic characteristics are detailed. A copy of the survey questionnaire and a full set of data tables are provided in the Appendix of this report.

METHODOLOGY

The Angus Reid Group conducted a total of 400 telephone interviews with a randomly selected representative sample of Port Alberni residents between May 5th and June 12th, 1998. Overall results are accurate to ± 4.9 percentage points. With this sample size, we can be 95 percent confident that the results fall within ± 4.9 percentage points of what they would be if we were to poll all households in the City of Port Alberni.

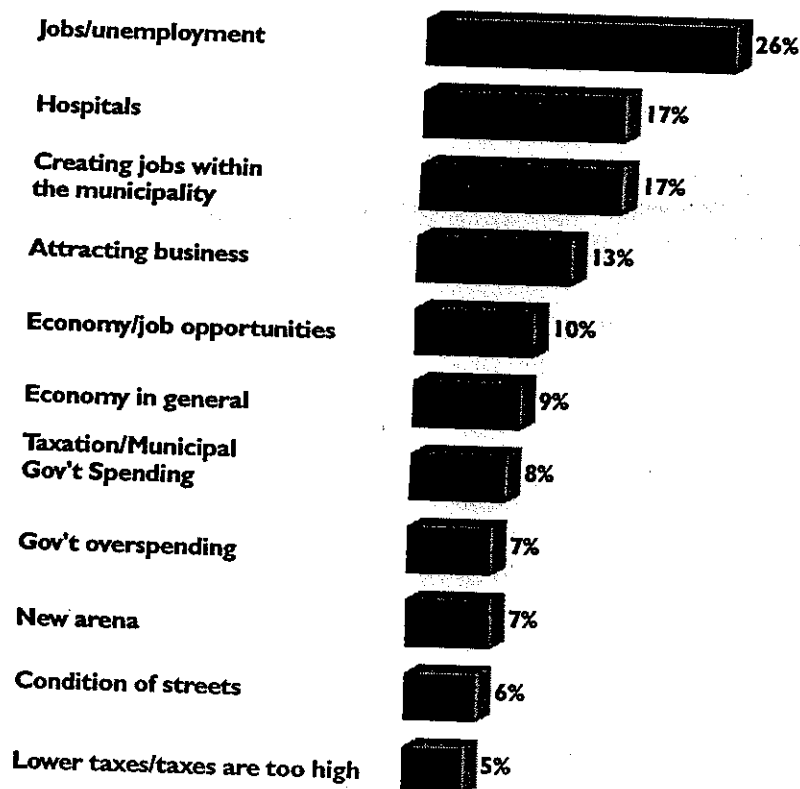
The questionnaire, developed in full consultation with Port Alberni's City Council, was pre-tested prior to fielding to ensure that all questions were clear and easily understood. Minor modifications were made to the questionnaire on the basis of the pre-test results. A copy of the final questionnaire is appended to this report.

1.0 MAIN ISSUES FACING PORT ALBERNI

1.1 TOP-OF-MIND ISSUES

Jobs and the economy are clearly the main concerns of the Port Alberni community. When asked what is *the most important* local issue facing their City, we note that more than one-quarter (26% of total mentions) choose "jobs and unemployment" and 17 percent mention "creating jobs within the municipality" specifically. One in five are primarily concerned with the "economy/job opportunities" in Port Alberni (10%) or "the economy in general" (9%).

**Main Concerns Facing
Port Alberni Residents**
(% Total Mentions)



Twenty percent of Port Alberni residents identify taxes as an area that should receive greatest attention from Port Alberni's City council. Local tax issues mentioned include "taxation and municipal government spending" (8%), "government overspending in general" (7%), and "high property taxes" (5%).

Outside of economic related concerns, "hospitals" or more specifically "the need for a new hospital" emerge as one of the most important local issue. Fully 17 percent of Port Alberni residents feel City officials should place hospital at the top of the public agenda. Another 13 percent believe the City should focus its efforts in "attracting new business," while a "new arena" (7%) and the "condition of the streets" (6%) are of concern to fewer individuals.

Demographic Trends

Following is a list of those demographic subgroups which are slightly more likely than others to mention each top-of-mind issue. It is important to note that, due to the fact that a limited number of people mentioned each of the issues listed, these results should be interpreted as directional trends only and not statistically reliable.

Jobs/Unemployment (26% total mentions)

- ☐ Women (30% vs 22% of men)
- ☐ Individuals 35+ (27% vs 19% of 18-34 year olds)
- ☐ Lower to middle income households (29% vs 23% of upper income households - \$60,000+)

Hospitals (17% total mentions)

- ☐ Women (24% vs 11% of men)
- ☐ Older residents - 55+ (21% vs 16% of 18 to 54 year olds)
- ☐ Homeowners (18% vs 11% of renters)

Creating jobs within the municipality (17 % total mentions)

- ☐ 18 to 54 year olds (18% vs 12% of men)

Attracting business (13% of total mentions)

- ☐ Men (16% vs 10% of women)
- ☐ 35+ (15% vs 7% of 18 to 34 year olds)
- ☐ Homeowners (14% vs 6% of renters)
- ☐ Middle to upper income households - \$30,000+ (17% vs 5% of lower income households - less than \$30,000)

2.0 PERCEPTIONS OF CITY SERVICES

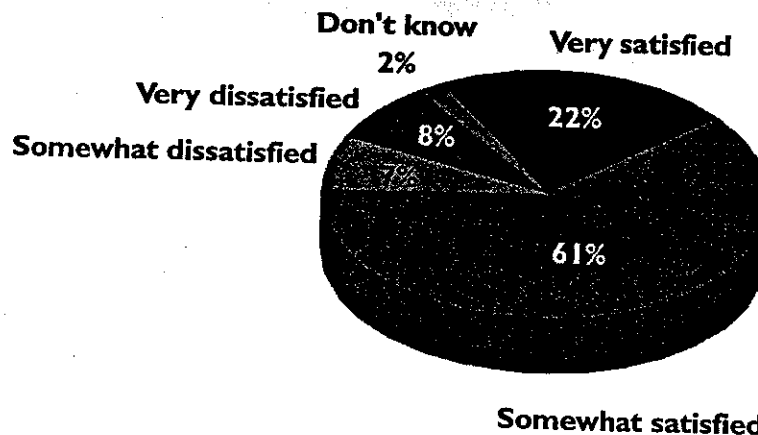
OVERVIEW

Generally speaking, Port Alberni residents are pleased with the services the City provides. They have a high degree of satisfaction, and tend to lean towards the belief that the quality of services has improved in the past few years. Furthermore, a significant majority of taxpayers also feel they are getting good service value for their tax dollars, which incidentally, the majority feel they pay just the "right amount" of taxes.

2.1 LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES

Residents of Port Alberni are overwhelmingly satisfied with the services provided to them by the City. A full 83 percent of residents comment that they are either "very satisfied" (22%) or "somewhat satisfied" (61%) with the overall quality of City services they receive. On the down side, 15 percent are dissatisfied. Among the disgruntled, 7 percent are "somewhat dissatisfied" and 8 percent are "very dissatisfied."

Level of Satisfaction with City Services

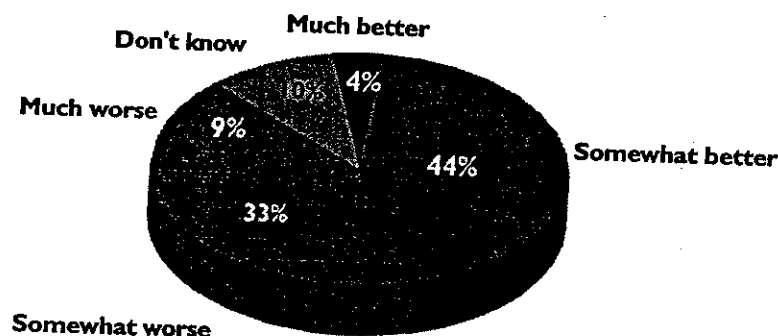


Level of satisfaction with services provided by the City remains consistent across the demographic subgroups.

2.2 PERPCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN THE QUALITY OF CITY SERVICES OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS

When respondents were asked to evaluate changes in the quality of City services over the past few years, one-half of the residents (48%) indicate that, overall, the services provided by the City have improved, while the other half (42%) believe they have gotten worse. It is important to highlight however, that, the majority of individuals take the "middle-of-the-road" position – that is, 44 percent believe City services are "somewhat better" than previous years, while 33 percent feel they are "somewhat worse." Only a small handful feel services provided by the City have gotten "much better" (4%) or conversely, "much worse" (9%). One in ten (11%) do not offer an opinion either way.

Views on Change in Quality of City Services Over the Past Few Years



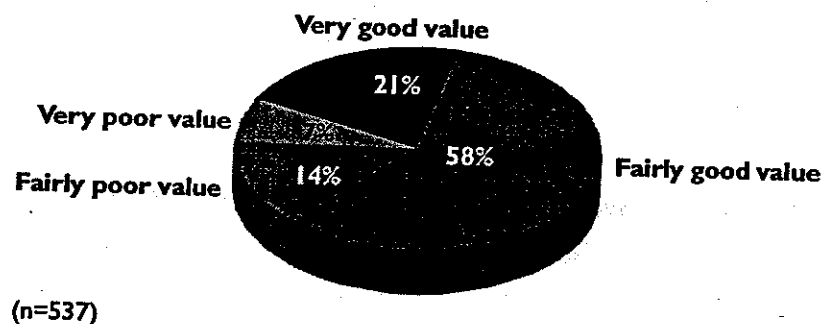
There are no significant variations within population groups in attitudes towards changes in the quality of City services.

2.3 PERCEIVED VALUE OF CITY SERVICES

Those who directly pay property taxes – homeowners – were asked if they feel they are getting good value for the tax dollars they pay. A significant majority of taxpayers (79%) indicate they receive good value for their tax dollars, including 21 percent who feel they get “very good value” and 58 percent who feel they get “fairly good value.”

The programs and services provided by the City are not meeting the expectations of one in five homeowners: 14 percent feel they are receiving “fairly poor value” and 7 percent say they receive “very poor value” for their tax dollars.

Perceived Value of City Services - Property Tax Payers Only -



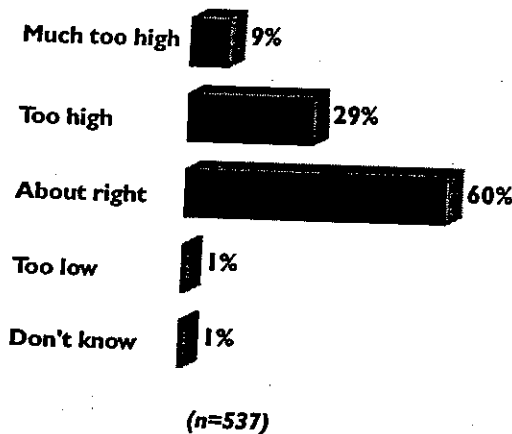
Homeowners who feel they are getting good value in terms of programs and services for their tax dollars tend to be:

- Women (83% vs 75% of men)
- Older residents – 55+ (90% vs 74% of 18-54 year olds)

2.3 | ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT LEVEL OF TAXES PAID

The majority of homeowners in Port Alberni appreciate the services and programs they receive for their tax dollars. Fully 60 percent believe the taxes they pay are "about right." A significant number, however, close to two in five, feel their taxes are "much too high" (9%) or "somewhat too high" (29%).

Assessment of Current Amount Paid in Property Taxes - Property Tax Payers Only -



Perceptions that property taxes are too high tend to dominate among the following demographic subgroups:

- Men (42% vs 34% of women)
- Homeowners between 18 and 34 (45% and less so among 35 to 54 year olds - 38% and 55+ - 33%)
- Households with children (43% vs 34% of households without children)
- Households with children under 19 years old (44% vs 29% of households with children 19+)

3.0 SERVICE PRIORITIES: CHOOSING AREAS FOR SERVICE CUTS

OVERVIEW

At first glance, it appears as if residents of Port Alberni want the City to "fully maintain" current levels of service being provided in the 17 areas examined. A closer examination, however, shows that residents are prepared to see the City take deeper cuts in some areas over others. They generally tend to place greater value on services which touch aspects of security in the city (fire protection, sewage and drainage), personal safety (policing), the quality of city life (garbage collection, streets and sidewalk maintenance and cleaning). By comparison, Port Alberni residents tend to place less value which are more social and recreational in nature, including: cultural and heritage facilities and programs and recreational programs.

Importantly, the Port Alberni community show themselves to be quite consistent with their views when it comes to the value they place on the different types of programs and services provided by their municipal government. Across all measures we employed to gauge the value they placed on specific program and service areas, services viewed as being of lesser importance, such as support given to cultural and heritage facilities and programs, promotions for the tourism industry, and bus service, tend to be targets for the deepest cuts in funding.

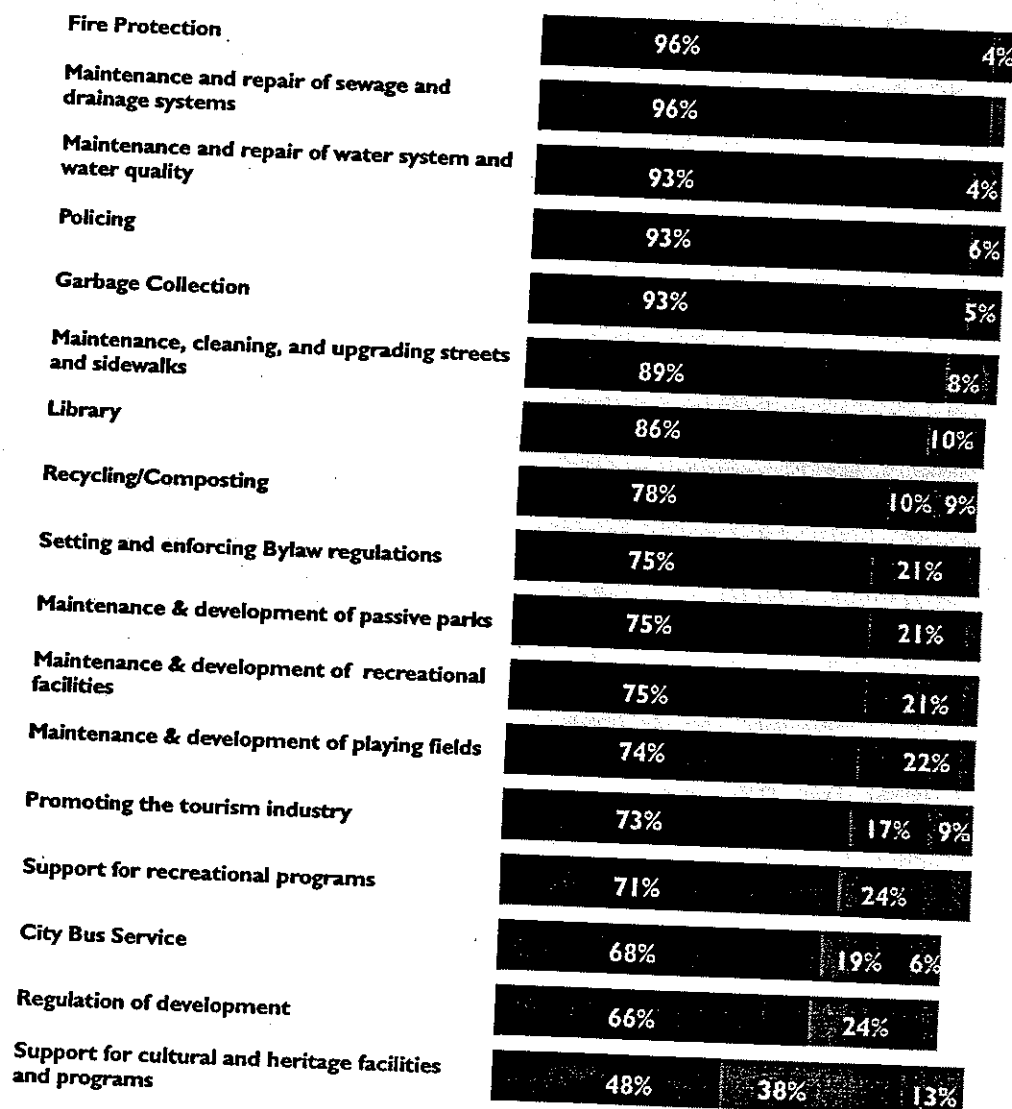
This consistency in views suggests that there is a cluster of service areas where cuts would be more acceptable to City of Port Alberni residents and another cluster where residents would be more resistant to service cuts.

And how satisfied are residents of Port Alberni with the City's delivery of programs and services? Overall, the City excels in six of the 17 service areas examined, but fails to meet public expectations in 7 areas. Although this "snapshot" of public perceptions gives City council an idea of their overall performance, it does not indicate their "true" strengths and weaknesses *per se*. That is, a "true" measure of government performance needs to be taken to a higher level by comparing it to the value placed on each service. This exercise sharpens the focus considerably on areas residents believe City council should concentrate its efforts. What we find is that the City exceeds public expectations in terms of providing fire protection, garbage collection and policing, but fails to meet public needs in terms of maintenance and cleaning of streets and sidewalk and maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage.

3.1 MOST IMPORTANT CITY SERVICES

Overall, Port Alberni residents would like the City to "fully maintain" the current level of services they provide. A closer look at the 17 services, however, reveal that the people of Port Alberni tend to place more value on services that provide them security or have an impact on the quality of life in the City than they do in areas which touch the more social and recreational aspects of living in Port Alberni.

Most Important City Services



☐ Fully Maintain
 ☐ Somewhat Reduce
 ☐ Fully Eliminate

The top five services the City should "fully maintain" obtained top ratings from over nine in ten residents: fire protection (96% "fully maintain"), maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems (96%), maintenance and repair of water system and water quality (93%), policing (93%), and garbage collection (93%). As well, most are in favour of "fully maintaining" the library (86%) and the current level of services provided in terms of the maintenance, cleaning and upgrading of streets and sidewalks (89%).

The second cluster of services comprises a set of service areas which are of value to about three-quarters of the residents of Port Alberni. Five of the seven services directly touch the more recreational interests of people living in the City including:

- Recycling and composting (78%)
- Setting and enforcing Bylaw regulations – property cleanup, animal control, secondary suites, parking enforcement, noise infractions, business licences, obstruction of streets or lanes (75%)
- Maintenance and development of passive parks – Kitsuksis Kyke Walkway, Roger Creek Park, Dry Creek Park, maintenance of trees and boulevards (75%)
- Maintenance and development of recreational facilities – arena, pool, Glenwood Centre, Echo Centre (75%)
- Maintenance and development of playing fields – Echo Fields, Bob Dailey Stadium (74%)
- Promoting the tourism industry (73%)
- Support for recreational programs – swimming lessons, child day camp, teen's programs (71%)

Around two-thirds would like City council to "fully maintain" the bus service currently available (68%) and the regulation of development (66%). The one service area where less than the majority wish to "fully maintain" is the City's cultural and heritage facilities and programs such as the AV Museum, McLean Mill National Historic Site, and E & N Station, a service only 48 percent of community wish to have "fully maintained."

Although the desire to "fully maintain" the services varies only somewhat across the 17 services examined, the people of Port Alberni are clearly not ready to "fully eliminate" any of the services. The only three areas where about one in ten of the Port Alberni community are prepared to have eliminated altogether are: the cultural and heritage facilities and programs (13%), promotions for the tourism industry (9%), and surprisingly, recycling and composting (9%). Six percent would like the City to "fully eliminate" the bus service.

Since the majority want to fully maintain the level of services being provided and only a handful are in favour of eliminating the service altogether, it is important

to look at those who support the idea of reducing the service somewhat. This approach is a more direct route to helping City council understand which service areas are of lesser importance to their constituents.

Not surprisingly, cultural and heritage facilities and programs top the list of services to be reduced somewhat. Close to two in five survey respondents (38%) would like to see this service area "somewhat reduced." Just over one in five would like the City to "somewhat reduce" the level of service they provide in terms of the regulation of development (24%), supporting recreational programs (24%), maintaining and developing playing fields (22%), maintaining and developing recreational facilities (21%), maintaining and developing passive parks (21%), and setting and enforcing Bylaw regulations (21%).

Just under one in five are prepared to see a reduction in service in terms of City buses (19%) and tourism promotions (17%). One in ten feel City council should "somewhat reduce" the level of service provided in terms of recycling/composting (10%), the library (10%), and streets and sidewalk maintenance and cleaning (8%).

Clearly, few people in Port Alberni wish to see any kind of reduction in service as far as policing (6% believe this service should be "somewhat reduce"), garbage collection (5%), maintenance and repair of water system and quality of water (4%), fire protection (4%), and maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems (2%).

Demographic Trends¹

The overall pattern of assessments residents give to city services remains quite consistent across the various demographic groupings. This is particularly true in terms of the top three most valued services: fire protection, maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems, and maintenance and repair of water system and water quality. Interestingly, the value placed on one of the least important service – regulation of development – remains consistent across all residents.

We do, however, find some variations in the degree of importance attached to particular services. Generally speaking, we find that women, renters, and lower income households (less than \$30,000) stand out from other population groups in the high rankings they give to *most* of the services. Services which touch the more recreational aspects of living in Port Alberni tend to be of greater value to people with children still at home as well as renters.

¹ Please note that differences which are statistically significant are noted with an asterisk. Other findings should be interpreted as directional in nature only and *should not* in any way be considered statistically significant or necessarily representative of the total population in Port Alberni due to small sample sizes.

Following is a list of those demographic subgroups which are somewhat more likely than others to believe City council should "fully maintain" each service.

Policing (93% "fully maintain")

- ☐ Women (96% vs 91% of men)
- ☐ Residents 35+ years old (95% vs. 86% of 18 to 34 year olds)*
- ☐ Households earning less than \$60,000 (95% vs 88% of upper income households - \$60,000+)

Garbage collection (93% "fully maintain")

- ☐ Households earning less than \$60,000 (95% vs 85% of upper income households - \$60,000+)

Maintenance, cleaning and upgrading of streets and sidewalks (89% "fully maintain")

- ☐ Women (93% vs 86% of men)

Library (86% "fully maintain")

- ☐ Women (90% vs 83% of men)
- ☐ 18 to 34 year olds (93% vs 84% of 35+ year olds)
- ☐ Renters (92% vs 85% of homeowners)

Recycling and composting (78% "fully maintain")

- ☐ Women (81% vs 75% of men)
- ☐ Renters (85% vs 76% of homeowners)
- ☐ Lower income households - less than \$30,00 (86% vs 75% of households earning \$30,000+)

Setting and enforcing Bylaw regulations (75% "fully maintain")

- ☐ Residents 35+ years old (79% of 35+ vs. 62% of 18 to 34 year olds)*
- ☐ Homeowners (77% vs 69% of renters)

Maintenance and development of passive parks (75% "fully maintain")

- ☐ Women (79% vs 72% of men)
- ☐ Renters (90% vs 72% of homeowners)*
- ☐ Lower income households - less than \$30,00 (82% vs 72% of households earning \$30,000+)

Maintenance and development of recreational facilities (75% "fully maintain")

- ☐ Residents 18 to 54 years old (78% vs. 70% of 55+ years old)
- ☐ Households with children (80% vs 71% of households without children)
- ☐ Renters (89% vs 72% of homeowners)*
- ☐ Lower income households – less than \$30,00 (79% vs 71% of households earning \$60,000+)

Maintenance and development of playing fields (74% "fully maintain")

- ☐ Households with children (80% vs 69% of households without children)
- ☐ Renters (87% vs 71% of homeowners)*
- ☐ Households earning less than \$60,00 (77% vs 66% of households earning \$60,000+)

Promoting the tourism industry (73% "fully maintain")

- ☐ Women (76% vs 70% of men)
- ☐ 18 to 34 year olds (78% vs 72% of 35+ year olds)
- ☐ Renters (82% vs 71% of homeowners)
- ☐ Households earning less than \$60,000 (75% vs 63% of upper income households – \$60,000+)

Support for recreational programs (71% "fully maintain")

- ☐ 18 to 34 year olds (85% vs 63% of 55+ year olds)*
- ☐ Households with children (77% vs 66% of households without children)
- ☐ Renters (85% vs 68% of homeowners)*

Bus service (68% "fully maintain")

- ☐ Women (76% vs 60% of men)*
- ☐ Households with children (74% vs 63% of households without children)
- ☐ Renters (77% vs 66% of homeowners)
- ☐ Households earning less than \$60,000 (70% vs 59% of upper income households – \$60,000+)

Cultural and heritage facilities and programs (48% "fully maintain")

- ☐ 18 to 34 year olds (61% vs 41% of 35 to 54 year olds)*
- ☐ Renters (71% vs 43% of homeowners)*
- ☐ Lower income households – less than \$30,000 (58% vs 43% of households earning \$30,000+)

3.2 RELATIVE VALUE ATTRIBUTED TO LOW PRIORITY SERVICES

To gain further insight into the value Port Alberni residents place on the various services provided by their city government, we asked them to consider the relative value they would cut from their low priority services, i.e. services they believe City council should "somewhat reduce" or "fully eliminate." More specifically, how much would they cut from each low priority service area to make up \$100 in service cuts? On average, the mean amount cut from all of the 17 services is \$24.90.

What this exercise shows is that Port Alberni residents are fairly consistent with their priorities. That is, people tend to cut more money from services of lesser priority, while taking a smaller value from services of greater importance.

Relative Importance of Lowest Priority Services (Average \$ amount would cut from lowest priority services to total \$100*)

		Sample Size:
Cultural/heritage facilities/programs	\$39.00	156
Bylaw regulations	\$30.00	68
Tourism industry	\$29.60	82
City bus service	\$27.00	70
Recycling/composting	\$25.40	56
Regulation of development	\$23.20	83
Maintenance and development of passive parks	\$20.30	72
Maintenance and development of playing fields	\$20.00	82
Policing	\$19.60	16+
Recreational programs	\$19.00	82
Maintenance and development of recreational facilities	\$18.90	72
Maintenance and repair of water system and water quality	\$17.90	19+
Fire protection	\$15.10	10+
Library	\$14.60	32+
Garbage collection	\$14.10	21+
Maintenance/cleaning and upgrading of streets and sidewalks	\$13.50	32+
Maintenance/repair of sewage and drainage systems	\$11.00	6+

* Among respondents who feel city council should "somewhat reduce" or "fully eliminate" this service.
+Please exercise caution when interpreting this data due to small sample sizes (<50). These results are directional in nature only. They should not in any way be considered statistically reliable or necessarily representative of the total population in Port Alberni.

Residents would be prepared to see the deepest cuts made in the support given to cultural and heritage facilities and programs (\$39.00), though not far behind is the development of Bylaw regulations (\$30.00), promotions for the tourism industry (\$29.60), bus service (\$27.00), recycling and composting (\$25.40), and regulation of development (\$23.20).

Slightly less dramatic cuts would be made to the maintenance and development of passive parks (\$20.30), maintenance and development of playing fields (\$20.00), policing (\$19.60), the support given to recreational programs (\$19.00), maintenance and development of recreational facilities (\$18.90), and maintenance and repair of water system and water quality (\$17.90).

Residents are not as prepared to cut money from the following services: fire protection (\$15.10), library (\$14.60), garbage collection (\$14.10), maintenance, cleaning, and upgrading of streets and sidewalks (\$13.50), and maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems (\$11.00). Incidentally, these five areas are ranked in the top seven most important services to the people of Port Alberni.

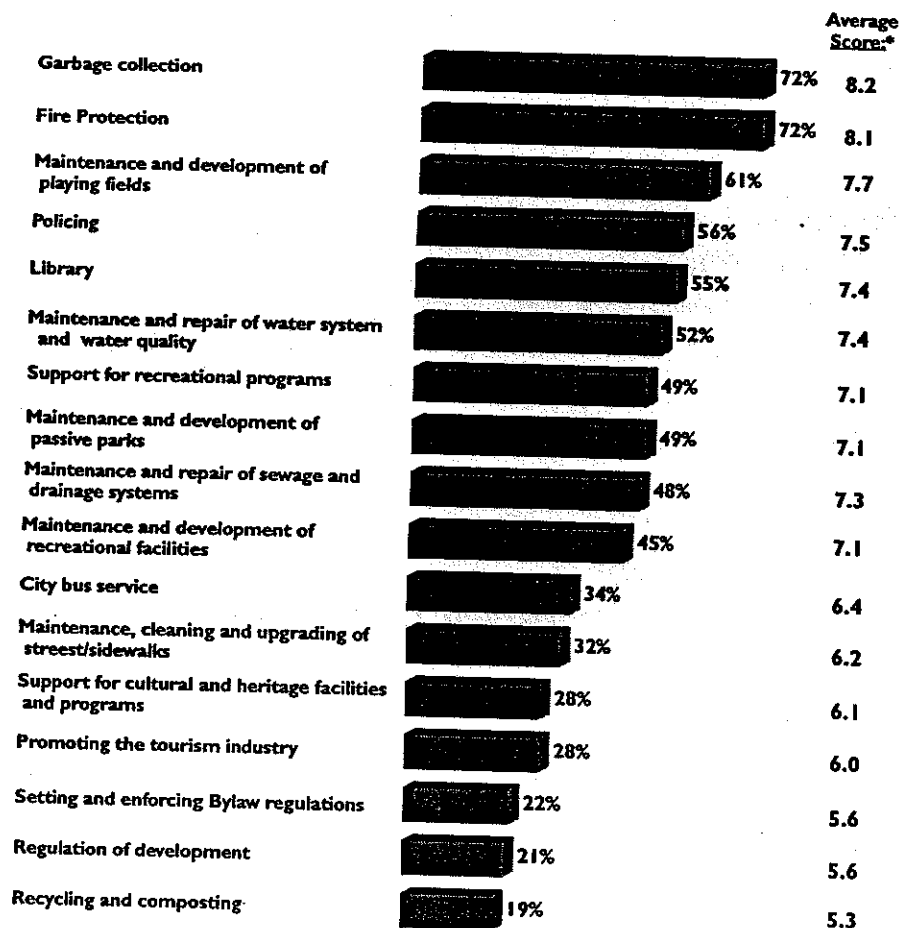
No reliable subgroup analysis can be conducted due to the small number of people found across the various population segments.

3.3 LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES

Now that we have a clearer understanding of what services the people of Port Alberni value the most and the least, it is equally as important to determine how well the City is performing in the same service areas.

Of the 17 services examined, the Port Alberni community are most satisfied with the City's services when it comes to garbage collection (72% rate it a 8, 9, 10) and fire protection (72%). Fewer, albeit still a majority, are satisfied with their efforts in terms of the maintenance and development of playing fields (61%), policing (56%), library (55%), and maintenance and repair of water system and water quality (52%).

Level of Satisfaction with City Services (% 8, 9, 10 on a 10- point scale)



* Average score on a 10-point scale where 1="extremely dissatisfied" and 10="extremely satisfied".

Just under one-half are satisfied with the City's provision of services in terms of the support given for recreational programs (49%), maintenance and development of passive parks (49%), maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems (48%), and maintenance and development of recreational facilities (45%).

And finally, one-third or less of Port Alberni residents are satisfied with the way the City provides service in the following areas: the bus service (34%), maintenance, cleaning and upgrading of streets and sidewalks (32%), support given to cultural and heritage facilities and programs (28%), promotions for the tourism industry (28%), setting and enforcing Bylaw regulations (22%), regulation of development (21%), and recycling and composting (19%).

Demographic Trends²

Generally speaking, women, older residents (55+), households without children, and lower income households (less than \$30,000) tend to have more favourable impressions of the City services.

Following is a list of demographic subgroups who are most satisfied with the services provided by the City.

Garbage collection (72% satisfied)

- ☐ Women (79% vs 66% of men)*
- ☐ Older residents – 55+ (79% vs 65% of 18-34 year olds)
- ☐ Households without children (74% vs 69% of households with children)
- ☐ Homeowners (74% vs 63% of renters)
- ☐ Lower income households – less than \$30,000 (78% vs 69% of households earning \$30,000+)

Fire protection (72% are satisfied)

- ☐ Women (77% vs 68% of men)
- ☐ Residents 35+ (77% vs 54% of 18 to 34 year olds)*
- ☐ Homeowners (75% vs 56% of renters)*

Maintenance and development of playing fields (61% satisfied)

- ☐ Women (64% vs 57% of men)

² Please note that differences which are statistically significant are noted with an asterisk. Other findings should be interpreted as directional in nature only and *should not* in any way be considered statistically significant or necessarily representative of the total population in Port Alberni due to small sample sizes.

Policing (56% satisfied)

- ☐ Women (65% vs 46% of men)*
- ☐ Older residents 55+ (64% vs. 52% of 18 to 54 year olds)
- ☐ Households without children (60% vs 50% of households with children)
- ☐ Lower income households - less than \$30,000 (68% vs 56% of households earning \$30,000 to \$60,000 and 44% of households earning \$60,000+)*

Library (55% satisfied)

- ☐ Women (62% vs 47% of men)*
- ☐ Older residents 55+ (62% vs. 51% of 18 to 54 year olds)
- ☐ Lower income households - less than \$30,000 (63% vs 50% of households earning \$30,000+)

Maintenance and repair of water system and water quality (52% satisfied)

- ☐ Women (56% vs 48% of men)
- ☐ Older residents 55+ (63% vs. 47% of 18 to 54 year olds)
- ☐ Lower income households - less than \$30,000 (62% vs 48% of households earning \$30,000+)*

Support for recreational programs (49% satisfied)

- ☐ Women (53% vs 46% of men)

Maintenance and development of passive parks (49% satisfied)

- ☐ Women (54% vs 45% of men)
- ☐ Renters (53% vs 49% of homeowners)

Maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems (48% satisfied)

- ☐ Older residents 55+ (59% vs. 42% of 18 to 54 year olds)*
- ☐ Households without children (51% vs 43% of households with children)

Maintenance and development of recreational facilities (45% satisfied)

- ☐ Women (50% vs 41% of men)
- ☐ Older residents 55+ (54% vs. 41% of 18 to 54 year olds)
- ☐ Lower income households - less than \$30,000 (50% vs 42% of households earning \$30,000+)

Bus service (34% satisfied)

- ☐ Women (37% vs 31% of men)
- ☐ Older residents 55+ (43% vs. 29% of 18 to 54 year olds)*
- ☐ Households without children (37% vs 28% of households with children)
- ☐ Renters (40% vs 32% of homeowners)
- ☐ Households earning less than \$60,000 (38% vs 21% of upper income households - \$60,000+)

Maintenance, cleaning and upgrading of streets and sidewalks (32% satisfied)

- ☐ Women (36% vs 28% of men)
- ☐ Older residents – 55+ (42% vs 27% of 18 to 54 year olds)*
- ☐ Households without children (34% vs 29% of households with children)
- ☐ Lower income households – less than \$30,000 (41% vs 29% of households earning \$30,000+)

Cultural and heritage facilities and programs (28% satisfied)

- ☐ Women (33% vs 23% of men)
- ☐ Older residents – 55+ (36% vs 24% of 18 to 54 year olds)*
- ☐ Lower income households – less than \$30,000 (36% vs 23% of households earning \$30,000+)

Promoting the tourism industry (28% satisfied)

- ☐ Older residents – 55+ (35% vs 24% of 18 to 54 year olds)
- ☐ Households without children (30% vs 24% of households with children)
- ☐ Renters (37% vs 26% of homeowners)
- ☐ Lower income households – less than \$30,000 (35% vs 24% of households earning \$30,000+)

Setting and enforcing Bylaw regulations (22% satisfied)

- ☐ Households without children (24% vs 18% of households with children)
- ☐ Renters (31% vs 20% of homeowners)
- ☐ Lower income households – less than \$30,000 (29% vs 19% of households earning \$30,000+)

Regulation of development (21% satisfied)

- ☐ Older residents – 55+ (28% vs 17% of 18 to 54 year olds)*
- ☐ Households without children (25% vs 15% of households with children)
- ☐ Lower income households – less than \$30,000 (26% vs 18% of households earning \$30,000+)

Recycling and composting (19% satisfied)

- ☐ 18 to 34 years old (26%) and 55+ (25% vs 11% of 35 to 54 years old)
- ☐ Households without children (21% vs 15% of households with children)
- ☐ Renters (29% vs 17% of homeowners)
- ☐ Lower income households – less than \$30,000 (25% vs 10% of upper income households - \$60,000+)

3.4 IMPORTANCE AND SATISFACTION LEVELS WITH CITY SERVICES COMBINED

In this section, we present the following perceptual map which helps depict the relationship between government performance and the importance of each of the 17 services tested. The purpose of this map is to provide a context for the findings of the research, and to put the results into a relevant perspective. That is, by comparing the value of each service against the government's performance, we can focus attention on areas in Port Alberni residents think City council should concentrate its efforts.

Service areas may be located in one of four quadrants: critical strength, critical weakness, latent strength or latent weakness. Looking at the grid, one sees that perceived need or importance (defined by the proportion citing the service should be "fully maintained") is represented on the vertical axis, with a range measuring from 0 percent to 100 percent, with 50 percent marking the mid-point which separates more important services from less important services. If urgency is attached to the service, it becomes either a critical weakness or critical strength, depending on whether the government's performance on that area is judged as positively or negatively. However, keeping in mind that circumstances can alter the importance of any given service area, services located in the bottom half of the grid are seen as "latent" — either as latent weaknesses or latent strengths for this government.

The following chart plots all 17 service areas examined in this study: thus, each service area can be located in one of four quadrants: critical strength, critical weakness, latent strength or latent weakness.

What this grid reveals is that about one-half of the services are "critical strengths" for the Port Alberni government, while the other half are "critical weaknesses." That is, on issues of relative importance to Port Alberni residents, the government receives high enough approval ratings in those areas to merit a critical strength label. They do however, have several "critical weaknesses," indicating that the public gives the government a poor performance rating on some of the areas the public deems as a top priority.

Specifically, "critical strengths" for the municipality of Port Alberni are: fire protection, garbage collection, policing, library, maintenance and repair of water system and water quality, and maintenance and development of playing fields.

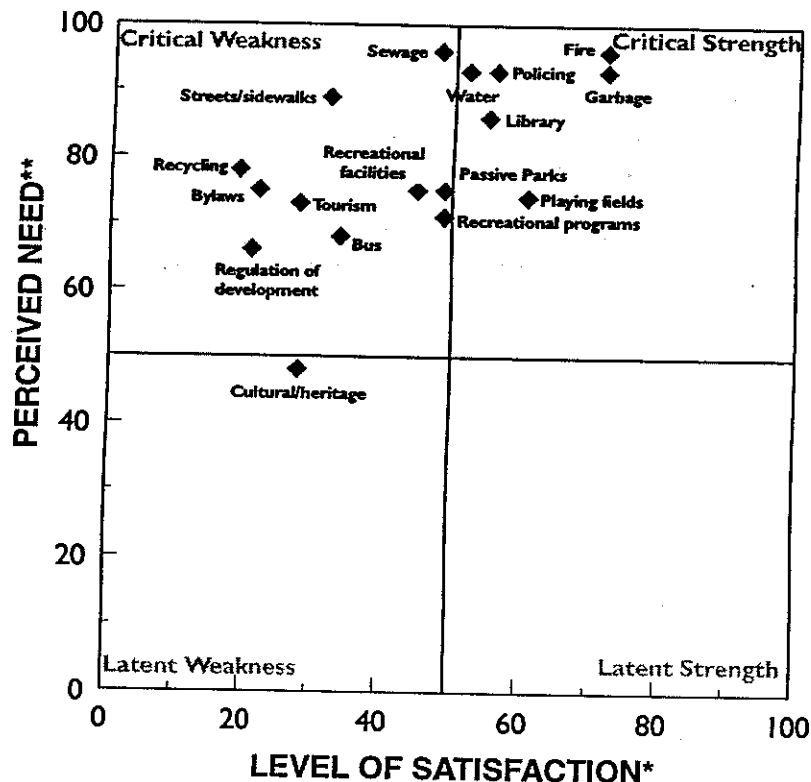
The following service areas are "critical weaknesses" for the government of Port Alberni meaning that there is room for improving government performance in terms of: maintenance, cleaning and upgrading streets and sidewalks, recycling

and composting, setting and enforcing Bylaw regulations, promoting tourism industry, regulation of development, and bus service.

The remaining four service areas currently sit on the border between the "critical weakness" and "critical strength" quadrant: maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage, maintenance and development of passive parks, support given to recreational programs, and maintenance and development of recreational facilities.

And finally, support given to cultural and heritage facilities is a "latent weakness" for the government meaning that people are less than satisfied with the government's performance in this area which is not a very important service in the first place.

Perceptual Map of Perceived Need and Level of Satisfaction with City Services



*Level of satisfaction is based on the proportion of residents who rate their satisfaction an 8, 9, or 10 on a 10-point scale, where 1 is "not at all satisfied" and 10 is "very satisfied".

**Perceived need is based on the proportion of residents who feel each service should be "fully maintained".

The following table illustrates perceived need and satisfaction levels along with their respective rankings.

Need and Satisfaction Overview				
	Need		Satisfaction	
	("fully maintain")	Rank	(score of 8, 9, 10)	Rank
Fire Protection	96	1	72	1
Maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems	96	1	48	7
Maintenance and repair of Water system and water quality	93	2	52	5
Policing	93	2	56	3
Garbage Collection	93	2	72	1
Maintenance, cleaning and upgrading streets and sidewalks	89	3	32	10
Library	86	4	55	4
Recycling/Composting	78	5	19	14
Setting and enforcing Bylaw regulations	75	6	22	12
Maintenance and development of passive parks	75	6	49	6
Maintenance and development of recreational facilities	75	6	45	8
Maintenance and development of playing fields	74	7	61	2
Promoting the tourism industry	73	8	28	11
Support for recreational programs	71	9	49	6
City Bus Service	68	10	34	9
Regulation of development	66	11	21	13
Support for cultural and heritage facilities and programs	48	12	28	11

4.0 REACTIONS TO FISCAL OPTIONS FOR MANAGING CITY SERVICES

OVERVIEW

There is some support among Port Alberni residents for City council to use a mix of both service cuts and property tax increases. Underlying this support, however, we find a population generally more inclined to favour service cuts than property tax increases, and hence a feeling that more money should be raised from reduced expenditures on services rather than from increased tax revenues. When it comes to choosing a particular approach for service cuts, residents favour a more selective exercise rather than the straight across the board option.

There is also broad support among people surveyed for City council to charge new user fees or increase user fees for City services, and to raise additional money from services currently operating on a cost recovery basis. User fees are significantly more popular than either service cuts or property tax increases. We do, however, raise a cautionary note with respect to the limited conclusions and directional implications which can be drawn from findings on user fees.

4.1 REACTION TO BROAD FISCAL MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Generally speaking, Port Alberni residents appear more likely to support the idea of service cuts and user fees than they are to give a green light to raising property taxes. However, much stronger support surfaces for cuts in selected service areas rather than implementing an across the board policy. Meanwhile, Port Alberni residents are somewhat divided when it comes to using a mix of service cuts and property tax increases to maintain the same level of services.

More than two-thirds (65%) surveyed say they would support City council cutting services, but only in some areas: 20 percent "strongly support" this idea and 45 percent support it "somewhat." The remaining one-third (31%) oppose the idea.

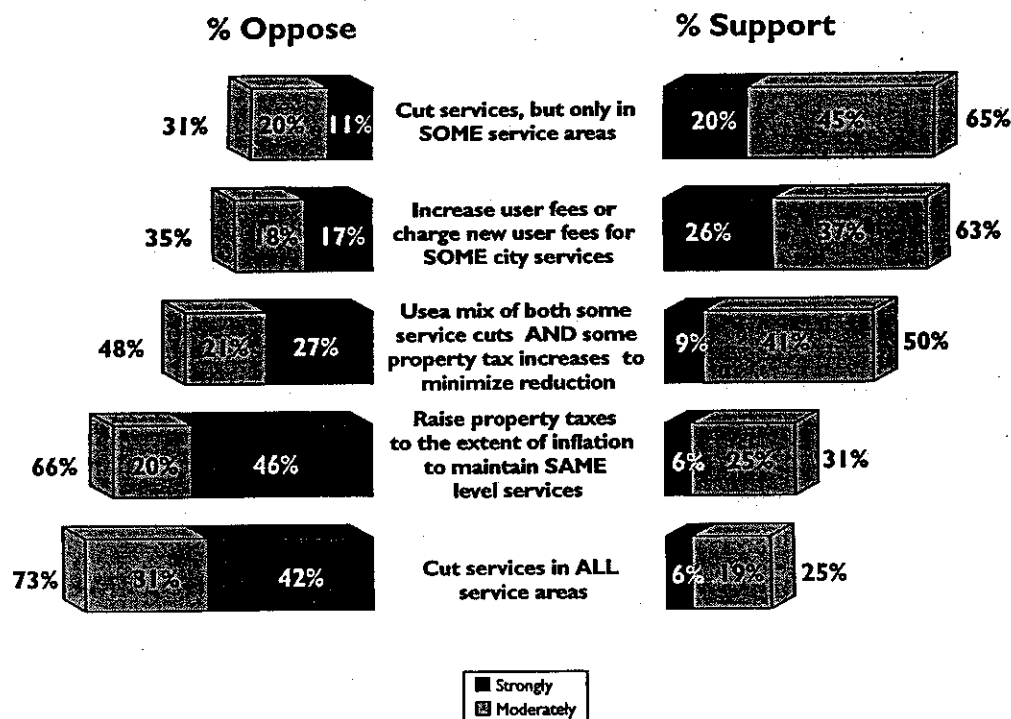
A similar number of people in the Port Alberni community – 63 percent – support the idea of increasing user fees or charging new user fees for some City services in order to maintain current levels of service: 26 percent "strongly support" this plan and 37 percent "somewhat support" it. The rest – 35 percent – oppose this idea: 17 percent "strongly oppose" it and 18 percent "somewhat oppose" it.

Meanwhile, we see significant resistance from residents to bearing the brunt of a tax increase. Fully two-thirds **oppose** the idea of raising property taxes to the extent of inflation to maintain the same level of city services they now receive; just under one-third (31%) support a tax increase.

By comparison, Port Alberni seem somewhat undecided about the idea of a mix in service cuts and tax increases. While 54 percent support using a mix of service cuts and property tax increases, 48 percent oppose it.

A similar number of residents feel negatively towards an across the board set of service cuts. In all, close to three-quarters of residents (73%) surveyed oppose service cuts which would be implemented proportionately in all service areas; 25 percent support this option.

Reactions to Fiscal Management Options



Demographic Trends³

While the overall pattern of reactions to the various fiscal management options remains consistent across all areas of Port Alberni and among all population segments, there are some variations within specific groups. Following is a list of groups in the population most likely to support each option tested.

Cut services, but only in some areas (65% support)

- ☐ Men (73% vs 57% of men)*
- ☐ Residents 35+ (66% vs 59% of 18 to 34 years old)
- ☐ Homeowners (66% vs 56% of renters)
- ☐ Upper income households - \$60,000+ (77% vs 67% of households earning \$30,000 to \$60,000 and 57% of households earning less than \$30,000)*

Increase user fees or charge new user fees (63% support)

- ☐ Women (66% vs 60% of men)
- ☐ 18 to 54 year olds (68% vs 50% of 55+)*
- ☐ Households with children (70% vs 57% of households without children)
- ☐ Homeowners (64% vs 58% of renters)
- ☐ Households earning \$30,000+ (71% vs 49% of lower income households – less than \$30,000)*

Use mix of both some service cuts and some property tax increase (50% support)

- ☐ Households earning \$30,000+ (55% vs 42% of lower income households – less than \$30,000)

Raise property taxes to extent of inflation to maintain same level of services (31% support)

- ☐ Women (35% vs 27% of men)
- ☐ Residents 35+ (34% vs 21% of 18 to 34 years old)
- ☐ Upper income households - \$60,000+ (43% vs 27% of households earning less than \$60,000)*

Cut services by same proportion across the board (25% support)

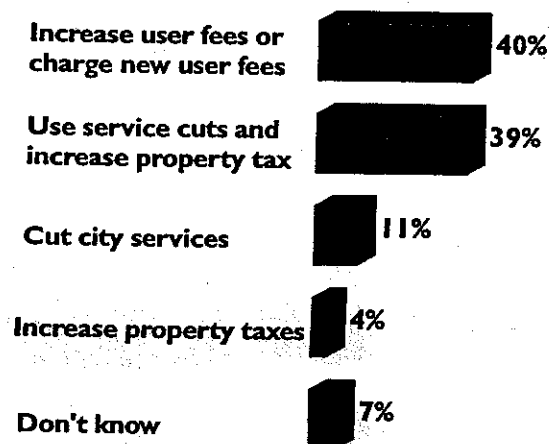
- ☐ Men (31% vs 20% of women)
- ☐ Residents 35+ (27% vs 19% of 18 to 34 years old)
- ☐ Homeowners (27% vs 13% of renters)
- ☐ Households earning \$30,000+ (29% vs 19% of lower income households – less than \$30,000)

³ Please note that differences which are statistically significant are noted with an asterisk. Other findings should be interpreted as directional in nature only and *should not* in any way be considered statistically significant or necessarily representative of the total population in Port Alberni due to small sample sizes.

4.2 PREFERRED FISCAL MANAGEMENT OPTION

When asked to choose between service cuts, increase in property taxes, mixture of service cuts and property taxes, and implementation of user fees, the people of Port Alberni are somewhat divided between these latter two options: That is, 40 percent would rather see user fees implemented or increased, 39 percent would like to see a mixture of some service cuts and an increase in property taxes. Only 11 percent opt for service cuts only, and an even smaller number (4%) choose an increase in property taxes. Seven percent are unsure.

Preferred Fiscal Management (% Choosing each option)



Demographic Trends

The overall trend in preferences for fiscal management options is fairly consistent across population groups in Port Alberni with the following minor exceptions:

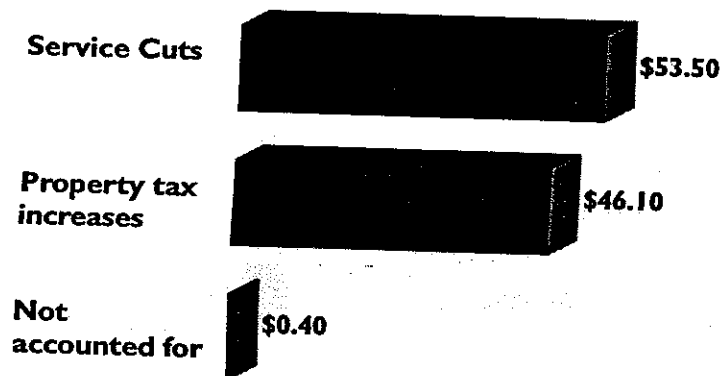
Demographically, increasing existing user fees or charging new user fees is somewhat more popular among men (44%), residents 18-34 years of age (54%), households with children (44%), and renters (45%). Conversely, using a mix of service cuts and property tax increase tend to be more popular among women (43%).

4.3 MIXING SERVICE CUTS AND PROPERTY TAX INCREASES

When considering the possible mix between cuts and tax increases, City of Port Alberni residents who favour a mix of service cuts and property tax increase tend to lean more towards raising money from service cuts than from property tax increases, albeit not by much.

Out of every \$100 the City needs to generate, residents would look to find, on average, \$53.50, from service cuts and \$46.10 from property tax increases.⁴

Suggested Mix of Service Cuts and Property Tax Increases* (Average \$ amounts expected from each option out of \$100)



**Among respondents who support the idea of some service cuts
AND some property tax increase to help offset service cuts (n=154).*

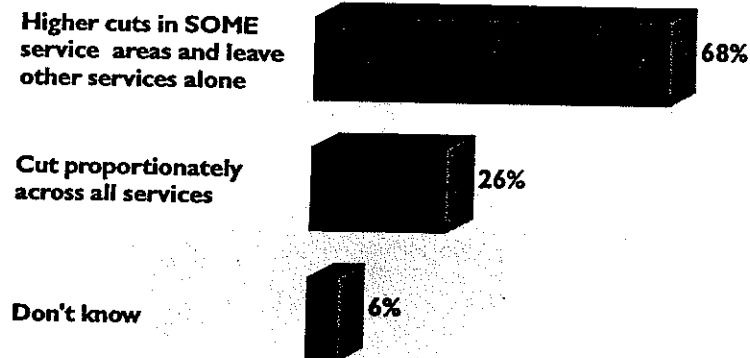
There are no significant variations within population groups in the number of people who chose user fees over property tax increase.

⁴ Remaining amounts to total \$100 are not accounted for due to respondents not knowing or choosing not to make up the full \$100 total.

4.3 I APPROACHES TO SERVICE CUTS

When we turn to look at views in the more specific area of service cuts, most Port Alberni residents strongly prefer that City council exercise some selective judgement in how it proceeds with the cuts rather than establishing an across the board approach. When choosing between these two options for cutting services, a solid majority of 68 percent of residents wants council to make higher cuts in *some* service areas, and leave other services alone. One-quarter of residents surveyed (26%) think it better for council to make cuts in services proportionately across the board. Six percent of residents do not express a preference either way.

Preference for Approach to Service Cuts (% Choosing each option)



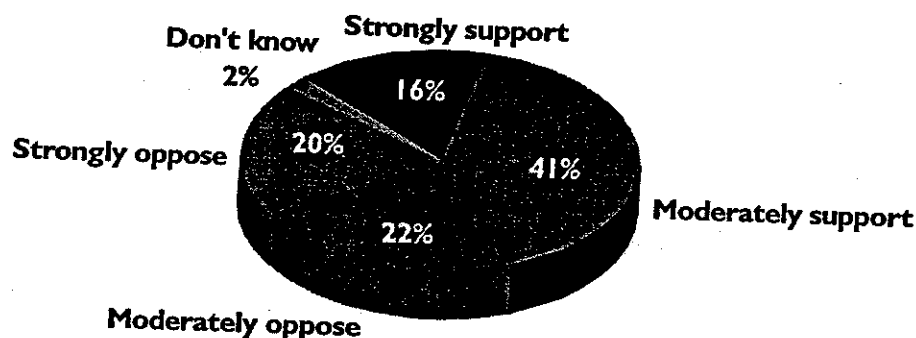
These views are held quite consistently across all population segments, though some groups are more likely than others to favour the selective cuts approach; these include: men (75%), middle-age (76%) or younger (68%) individuals, people living in households with children (74%), homeowners (69%), and upper income households - \$60,000+ (77%).

4.4 ATTITUDES TOWARDS USER FEES

Port Alberni residents are somewhat supportive of charging higher fees towards City services like permits and licenses, recreation programs, garbage collection fees and using the "extra" money raised to help pay for other City services. Fully 57 percent of residents surveyed support this plan, including 16 percent who "strongly support" it and 41 percent who support it "moderately." Forty two percent oppose: 22 "moderately oppose" and 20 percent "strongly oppose."⁵

Reactions* to User Fees Options

User fees are currently used to help recover the costs of providing certain City services such as permits and licenses, recreation programs, or garbage collection fees. Would you support or oppose the City charging higher user fees for this type of service and using the extra money raised to help pay for other city services? (Would that be strongly/moderately support/oppose?)



**Among respondents who strongly/moderately support increasing or charging user fees (n=251).*

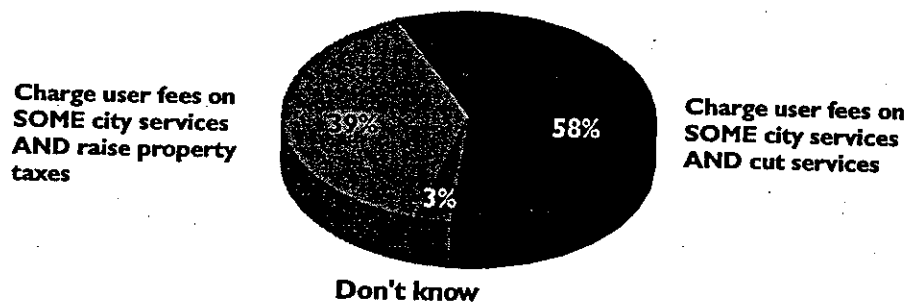
Viewpoints remain consistent across Port Alberni's population groups.

⁵ Despite the favourable review given the user fee approach, a cautionary flag must be raised. It is very often the case that people are quite open to user fees as long as they do not touch them personally. Because our survey exercise on user fees was more limited in scope than other options, it should be seen as a "finger in the wind," indicating support for an option that is worth considering, but, directionally, results need to be interpreted more carefully. Until further indicators can be established of which specific services people feel ready to pay user fees for, and the level of fee to be charged, the results found in this study must remain preliminary measures of how the public broadly feels about user fees.

4.41 CHOOSING BETWEEN USER FEES AND OTHER FISCAL OPTIONS

When asked to choose between "charging user fees on some City services and cutting services" and "charging user fees on some City services and raising property taxes," the Port Alberni community who support the concept of user fees tend to favour the first option. That is, 58 percent would rather have council charge user fees and cut service, while slightly fewer – 39 percent – would rather see a combination of user fees and an increase in property taxes. A further 3 percent are unsure.

Preference* for User Fees vs. Other Fiscal Options



**Among respondents who strongly/moderately support increasing or charging user fees (n=251).*

Demographically, user fees and cutting services altogether are favoured primarily by the following groups: men (63%), older residents – 55+ (63%), households without children (65%), homeowners (63%), and households earning \$30,000 (60%).

Conversely, the strong preference for user fees and property tax increases is primarily evident among: women (42%), residents 18 to 54 (43%), households with children (49%), renters (72%), and lower income households – less than \$30,000 (52%).

CONCLUSIONS

In undertaking this consultation of Port Alberni residents, we endeavoured to address the following areas:

- ♦ In what service areas are people most/least prepared to accept service cuts?
- ♦ What is the degree of support for a number of different fiscal management options the City is considering in order to maintain current levels of service?

In addition to these questions, we wished to draw a contextual picture of the main local issues and concerns people feel are facing the city more generally, and also gauge the public's perception of the current quality of City services they receive.

Findings from our surveys of Port Alberni residents serve to answer each of these questions, and suggest some implications for Port Alberni's City council as it prepares to make decisions regarding the management of City services. We outline below our view of the main conclusions and implications to be drawn from the results.

SERVICE PRIORITIES

- ♦ Generally speaking, Port Alberni residents tend to place more value on services that provide them security or have an impact on the quality of life in the City than they do in areas which touch the more social and recreational aspects of living in Port Alberni. By the same token, services of lesser value tend to be targets for the deepest cuts in funding and vice versa. This consistency in views suggests that there is a cluster of service areas where cuts would be more acceptable to City of Port Alberni residents and another cluster where residents would be more resistant to service cuts.
- ♦ Specifically, the Port Alberni community are prepared to see the City take deeper cuts in the areas of: cultural and heritage facilities and programs, the tourism industry, maintenance and development of passive parks, playing fields, and recreational facilities, and level of support given to recreational programs. They are also prepared to see significant cuts made when it comes to Bylaw regulations, regulation of development, and City bus service.
- ♦ They are less willing, however, to see cuts made in areas of significant importance including: fire protection, sewage and drainage, policing, garbage collection, streets and sidewalk maintenance and cleaning.

SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES

- ◆ Residents of Port Alberni are pleased with the overall services the City provides. They also tend to lean towards the belief that the quality of services has improved in the past few years.
- ◆ For the most part, Port Alberni performs well in areas of importance to the constituents. There is however, some room for improving government performance in three areas: maintenance and cleaning of streets and sidewalk, maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems, and recycling and composting.

FISCAL OPTIONS FOR MANAGING CITY SERVICES

- ◆ There is some support among residents of Port Alberni for City council to use a mix of both service cuts and property tax increases in order to maintain its current level of services. There is very little support for the City to proceed with either tax increases or service cuts in isolation.
- ◆ In considering the appropriate mix, however, it is noteworthy that people generally lean more towards raising money from service cuts rather than from tax increases. This suggests that the appropriate "mix" is less a question of splitting things down the middle than it is of finding an acceptable balance.
- ◆ When it comes to considering the best approach to service cuts, the Port Alberni community strongly prefer cuts in selected service areas; there is little support for a straight across the board percentage cut applied to all service areas.
- ◆ Our findings show quite strong support for the idea of charging user fees or increasing user fees for some City services, and especially in place of either service cuts or property tax increases. There is also broad support for raising additional money from services currently operating on a cost recovery basis to help pay for other City services. This is somewhat indicative of an unwillingness among residents to accept either service reductions or property tax increases. However, because support for user fees is taken in the absence of any consideration of which services would be targeted for user fees and the magnitude of the fees, these results need to be read with some caution.
- ◆ For City council, views on the acceptability of user fees offer an opportunity to pursue another option for maintaining the same level of City service. It is clear that residents would be open to the idea of paying user fees on some City services, and would welcome City council moving in this direction, especially if it would mean foregoing property tax increases or service reductions. The challenge for council may well be how to include user fees in

the overall mix of options it will adopt in addressing its management of City services.

- ◆ On the issue of taxes, it is important to keep in mind that taxes is one of the three most important concerns of the Port Alberni community next to jobs and a new hospital. The level of attention paid to the taxation issue by residents highlights how sensitive they will be to any strategy City council adopts which involves an increase in property taxes.
- ◆ Concern for taxes is all within the backdrop that taxpayers feel they pay just the "right amount" of taxes and that they get good service value for their tax dollars.

APPENDIX

– Questionnaire –

**City of Port Alberni
Service Review Study
62-2411-01 JC#2657**

Hello, this is _____ calling from the Angus Reid Group. We're a professional public opinion research company. Today we're talking to a random sample of residents in the City of Port Alberni about some important local issues. This survey will take only about 15 minutes to complete. I'd like to speak to the person in your household who is 18 years of age or older and who had the most recent birthday? Is that you?

Yes CONTINUE

No "MAY I PLEASE SPEAK TO THAT PERSON?" (RE-READ INTRODUCTION)

IF NECESSARY, SCHEDULE CALL-BACK TIME

A. SEX (DO NOT READ)

Male	50
Female	50

B. Do you currently live inside or outside the City of Port Alberni?

Inside (CONTINUE)

Outside (THANK AND TERMINATE)

Don't Know (CONTINUE)

PROVIDE BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION IF NECESSARY: That is, do you live within these boundaries? (IF YES=CONTINUE, IF NO=THANK AND TERMINATE)

North = Georgia Rd

South = Ship Creek Rd

West = 21st Ave

East = 1st Ave

C. Do you rent or own your current place of residence?

Rent	16
Own	84
DK/NS	-

1. To begin with, what is the most important local issue facing the City of Port Alberni, that is the one issue you feel should receive the greatest attention from Port Alberni's City council? **(DO NOT READ LIST - PROBE ACCEPT ONE ANSWER ONLY)** Are there any other important local issues? **(DO NOT READ LIST - PROBE ACCEPT TWO ANSWERS)**

First mention

Other mentions

	First mention	Total mentions
CRIME IN GENERAL	-	1
POLICING/ LAW ENFORCEMENT	1	1
YOUTH PROBLEMS/DELINQUENCY/GANGS	1	4
SAFETY	-	-
PROPERTY DAMAGE	-	1
THEFT/BREAK-INS	-	1
ECONOMY IN GENERAL	7	9
UNEMPLOYMENT	23	26
UNDEREMPLOYMENT	1	2
CREATING JOBS WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY	13	17
ATTRACTING BUSINESS	7	13
ECONOMY/JOB OPPORTUNITIES	5	10
ENVIRONMENT IN GENERAL	-	1
GARBAGE PICKUP/LITTER	-	1
RECYCLING/COMPOSTING	-	-
POLLUTION/AIR/WATER	-	1
NOT ENOUGH PARKS	-	-
GOVERNMENT SERVICES IN GENERAL	2	3
PROVISION OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES	1	2
PROVISION OF MUNICIPAL WATER	1	2
PROVISION OF MUNICIPAL SEWERS	-	-
RECREATION FACILITIES/ SERVICES	-	3
GOVERNMENT SERVICES	-	1
TAXATION/MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT SPENDING	4	8
GOVERNMENT OVERSPENDING	3	7
PROPERTY TAX INCREASES	2	4
INEFFICIENT GOVERNMENT	1	3
DEFICITS	-	-
USER FEES FOR SERVICES	-	-
TRANSPORTATION IN GENERAL	-	-
TRAFFIC CONGESTION	-	-
CONDITION OF STREETS	4	6
LACK OF ACCESS IN/OUT OF COMMUNITY	-	-
POLLUTION/AIR QUALITY	-	-
SAFETY OF STREETS (STREET LIGHTING, TRAFFIC SIGNS)	-	1

POOR QUALITY/LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSIT	-	-
LACK OF ALTERNATIVE CHOICES	-	-
DEVELOPMENT IN GENERAL	1	3
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	1	1
LAND-USE PLANNING	1	2
OVER RESTRICTIVE	-	-
UNSIGHTLY BUILDINGS (REVILITIZATION, BEAUTIFICATION)	-	-
OTHER	-	-
HOSPITALS	9	17
NEW ARENA	2	7
TOURISM	1	2
INCREASING BUSINESS TAXES	3	4
FORESTRY INDUSTRY	1	1
EDUCATION	1	2
LOWER TAXES/ TAXES ARE TOO HIGH (UNSPECIFIED)	3	5
NEGATIVE ATTITUDE	-	1
NEW ROADS/ BRIDGES	1	2
FISHERIES/ FISHING INDUSTRY	-	1
NEED A NEW COUNCIL	1	1
YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT	-	1
BEAUTIFICATION OF CITY/ RENOVATING/ RENEWING OLD BUILDING	-	1
NO OPPORTUNITY WAS GIVEN TO VOTE ON WATER METERS	-	1
HEALTHCARE	-	1
BUDGET CUTS	1	1
MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT (UNSPECIFIED)	-	1
NEW MAYOR	1	1
MORE STORES/ MALLS	1	1
OTHER	2	3
NONE	1	1
DK/ NS	4	4

2. Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the overall quality of services provided to you by the City of Port Alberni? (Would that be very/somewhat satisfied/dissatisfied?)

Very satisfied	22
Somewhat satisfied	61
Somewhat dissatisfied	7
Very dissatisfied	8
DK/ NS	2

3. And, would you say that the overall quality of services provided has got better or worse over the past few years? (Would that be much/somewhat better/worse?)

Much better	4
Somewhat better	44
Somewhat worse	33
Much worse	9
DK/ NS	11

INTRODUCTION

4. As you may or may not know, the City of Port Alberni is responsible for providing a variety of different services to you as a resident of the city.

For each one of the following services, please tell me if you would like the City to fully maintain, somewhat reduce, or fully eliminate this service. **(READ ITEM - RANDOMIZE)? What about: (READ NEXT ITEM)?**

	Fully Maintain	Somewhat Reduce	Fully Eliminate	DK/ NS
Maintenance, cleaning, and upgrading of streets and sidewalks (this includes general maintenance of sidewalks, street lighting, street sweeping, reconstruction, traffic control, snow and ice removal)	89	8	3	-
Setting and enforcing Bylaw regulations (including property cleanup, animal control, secondary suites, parking enforcement, noise infractions, business licences, obstruction of streets or lanes (non traffic))	75	21	2	2
Regulation of development (zoning, subdivision/building inspection)	66	24	3	7
Policing	93	6	1	1
Promoting the tourism industry	73	17	9	2
Garbage Collection	93	5	3	-
Recycling/Composting	78	10	9	3
City Bus Service	68	19	6	8
Maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems	96	2	1	2
Maintenance and repair of water system and water quality	93	4	2	1
Library	86	10	2	2
Maintenance and development of playing fields (Echo Fields, Bob Dailey Stadium)	74	22	3	1
Maintenance and development of passive parks (Kitsuksis Dyke Walkway,	75	21	3	1

maintenance of trees and boulevards, Roger Creek Park, Dry Creek Park)				
Maintenance and development of recreational facilities (arena, pool, Glenwood Centre, Echo Centre)	75	21	3	1
Support for recreational programs (e.g. swimming lessons, child day camp, teen's programs)	71	24	4	2
Support for cultural and heritage facilities and programs (e.g. AV Museum, McLean Mill National Historic Site, E & N Station)	48	38	13	1
Fire protection	96	4	-	-

5. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of these services provided to you by the City of Port Alberni?

Let's use a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" means you are "extremely dissatisfied" and 10 means you are "extremely satisfied", with "5" meaning you are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Remember, you can pick any number between 1 and 10. The first service is **(READ ITEM - RANDOMIZE)?** What about **(READ NEXT ITEM)?**

Ranking on 1 - 10 scale

	Extremely satisfied					Extremely dissatisfied					Mean
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Maintenance, cleaning and upgrading of streets and sidewalks	12	5	15	17	11	17	9	7	4	3	6.2
Setting and enforcing Bylaw regulations	7	2	12	15	8	28	11	4	4	7	5.6
Regulation of development	7	2	12	11	10	33	6	5	4	5	5.6
Policing	24	11	20	16	9	12	3	3	1	1	7.5
Promoting the tourism industry	12	3	14	12	12	25	8	7	3	5	6.0
Garbage collection	33	18	22	10	5	7	2	1	1	1	8.2
Recycling/ composting	7	2	10	10	10	27	8	7	7	8	5.3
City Bus Service	14	5	15	11	7	23	3	4	2	4	6.4
Maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems	20	7	21	15	11	18	1	1	2	1	7.3
Maintenance and repair of water system and water quality	19	9	23	18	10	12	2	2	2	2	7.4
Library	22	9	24	13	8	16	2	2	2	1	7.4
Maintenance and development of playing fields	24	15	22	12	7	13	3	1	2	-	7.7
Maintenance and development of passive parks	15	8	26	16	10	16	3	4	1	1	7.1
Maintenance and development of recreational facilities	16	10	20	19	12	13	5	2	2	2	7.1

Support for recreational programs	19	8	23	12	9	15	4	3	1	2	7.1
Support for cultural and heritage facilities and programs	12	5	12	13	9	29	4	6	3	5	6.1
Fire protection	36	14	23	9	4	9	2	2	1	2	8.1

6. As you may or may not know, the City of Port Alberni, like many resource based communities in the province, is experiencing difficult economic times. This is having an impact on its ability to provide services to you at current levels.

Now, there are a number of different options the City has in order to deal with this situation. I'm going to read you a few of these options, and I'd like to know whether you support or oppose each one. What about **(READ ITEM - RANDOMIZE)**? Would you support or oppose City Council taking this action? (Would that be strongly/moderately support oppose?)

	Strongly support	Moderately support	Moderately oppose	Strongly oppose	DK/ NS
Raise property taxes to the extent of inflation in order to maintain the SAME level of city services you now receive	6	25	20	46	3
Cut services, but only in SOME service areas	20	45	20	11	4
Cut services in ALL service areas	6	19	31	42	3
Use a mix of both (ROTATE) some service cuts AND some property tax increases to minimize service reduction	9	41	21	27	3
Increase user fees or charge user fees for some City services	26	37	18	17	3

7. Now, if it came right down to it, would you prefer that the City **(READ ALL ITEMS - RANDOMIZE - ACCEPT ONE ANSWER ONLY)**?

Increase property taxes	4
Cut City services	11
Use a mix of both (ROTATE) some property tax increases AND some service cuts to minimize service reduction	39
Increase existing user fees or charge new user fees for some City services to help offset service cuts	40
DK/ NS	7

IF "RAISE TAXES AND CUT SERVICES" IN Q.7, ASK Q.8:

8. Suppose City Council decides to move ahead with a mix of service cuts and property tax increases in order to minimize service reduction. If this were the case, how much do you think the City should raise from property taxes and how much from service cuts? For

example, out of every \$100 the City needs to find to make up the difference, how much would you want the City to get through **(READ FIRST ITEM - RANDOMIZE)** and how much through **(READ SECOND RESPONSE)? (RECORD \$ AMOUNT FOR EACH)**

	\$0 to \$20	\$21 to \$40	\$41 to \$60	\$61 to \$80	\$81 to \$100	DK/ NS	Average
Property tax increase	6	19	42	9	-	25	\$46.1
Service cuts	2	10	47	12	2	26	\$54.5

9. Now, suppose City Council decides to implement service cuts to make up the difference. Thinking about service cuts, would you want City council to **(READ ITEMS - ROTATE)?**

Make higher cuts in SOME service areas and leave other services alone	68
Make service cuts in ALL service areas	26
DK/ NS	6

IF "HIGHER CUTS IN SOME AREAS, LEAVE OTHERS ALONE" IN Q.9, ASK Q.10: SKIP IF **NON** OF THE ITEMS IN Q4 ARE CHOSEN AS 'SOMEWHAT REDUCE/FULLY ELIMINATE'

(Note to Interviewer: If respondent picked only 1 option in Q4 to 'somewhat reduce'/'fully eliminate', please fill in Q10 with \$100)

10. Now, I'm going to read to you those services you considered being the least important priorities for Port Alberni's City council in an earlier question. The services are: **(READ LIST OF ITEMS FROM Q.4 'SOMEWHAT REDUCE & FULLY ELIMINATE' - RANDOMIZE)**. Suppose you had to get \$100 by cutting services in these areas. How much would you cut from each service area to make up the total \$100? **(RECORD DOLLAR AMOUNTS, TOTAL SHOULD EQUAL \$100)**

	\$0 to \$20	\$21 to \$40	\$41 to \$60	\$61 to \$80	\$81 to \$100	DK/ NS	Average
Maintenance, cleaning, and upgrading of streets and sidewalks	78	13	3	3	-	3	\$13.5
Setting and enforcing Bylaw regulations	56	16	13	3	10	1	\$30.0
Regulation of development	61	16	9	-	7	5	\$23.20
Policing	56	25	13	-	-	6	\$19.60
Promoting the tourism industry	52	20	20	2	6	-	\$29.60
Garbage collection	76	19	5	-	-	-	\$14.1
Recycling/ composting	61	21	7	2	9	-	\$25.4
City Bus Service	59	17	14	1	9	-	\$27.0
Maintenance and repair of sewage and drainage systems	67	-	17	-	-	17	\$11.0
Maintenance and repair of water	74	5	11	-	5	5	\$17.90

system and water quality							
Library	81	13	3	-	-	3	\$14.60
Maintenance and development of playing fields	65	29	2	1	2	-	\$20.0
Maintenance and development of passive parks	72	21	3	-	4	-	\$20.30
Maintenance and development of recreational facilities	72	19	6	-	3	-	\$18.90
Support for recreational programs	71	22	2	-	4	1	\$19.0
Support for cultural and heritage facilities and programs	36	25	20	6	11	3	\$39.0
Fire protection	60	40	-	-	-	-	\$15.1

IF "STRONGLY/MODERATELY SUPPORT" INCREASING OR CHARGING USER FEES IN Q.6, ASK Q.11 AND Q.12

11. User fees are currently used to help recover the costs of providing certain City services such as permits and licenses, recreation programs, or garbage collection fees. Would you support or oppose the City charging higher user fees for this type of service and using the extra money raised to help pay for other city services? (Would that be strongly/moderately support/oppose?)

Strongly support	16
Moderately support	41
Moderately oppose	22
Strongly oppose	20
DK/ NS	2

12. Now, when it comes right down to it, which would you prefer to help cover the cost of these services? **(READ EACH SET - RANDOMIZE; ROTATE WITHIN EACH SET, SEPARATE WITH "OR" - ACCEPT ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

Charging people user fees on SOME City services AND Raising property taxes	39
Charging people user fees on SOME City services AND Cutting services	58
DK/ NS	3

IF "OWN" IN C, THEN ASK Q.13 & 14

13. Thinking about all the programs and services you receive from the City of Port Alberni, would you say that overall you get good value or poor value for your property tax dollars? (Would that be very/fairly good/poor value?)

Very good value	21
Fairly good value	58
Fairly poor value	14
Very poor value	7
DK/ NS	1

14. And, in general, would you say that the property taxes you currently pay on your residence are too high, too low, or about right? (Would that be much too/too high/low?)

Much too high	9
Too high	29
About right	60
Too low	1
Much too low	-
DK/ NS	1

And, now, before I let you go, I just need to ask you a few questions for our statistical calculations.

15. Which of the following categories does your age fall into?

18 to 34 years	21
35 to 54 years	46
55 to 64 years	15
65 or older	18
DK/ NS	1

16. Do you have children currently living in your household?

Yes	43	ASK Q.17
No	58	SKIP TO Q.18

17. How many are...(READ LIST AND RECORD NUMBER)

	None	1	2	3	DK/ NS
Over 19 years of age	78	15	4	2	1
Teenagers between 12 and 18	47	31	18	4	1
Under 12	41	28	22	8	1

18. What is your occupation?

Business Owner/Operator/Self-employed	7
Executive, manager	5
Secretarial, clerical	5
Sales	3
Skilled or unskilled labour	17
A profession	10
A technical occupation	4
Farmer, fisher	1
Student	3
Homemaker	9
Retired	25
Unemployed	6
Service	4
Teacher	1
Disabled	1
DK/ NS	1

19. And, finally, which of the following categories best describes your family income? That is the total income before taxes of all persons in your household combined?

Under \$10,000	4
\$10,000 to \$19,999	10
\$20,000 to \$29,999	13
\$30,000 to \$39,999	14
\$40,000 to \$49,999	11
\$50,000 to \$59,999	13
\$60,000 to \$69,999	9
\$70,000 to \$79,999	5
\$80,000 to \$99,999	5
\$100,000 and over	5
DK/ NS	11

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION!
YOUR INPUT IS VERY HELPFUL

