



Ipsos Reid



City of Port Alberni 2011 Budget Survey

Final Report

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Executive Summary

Quality of Life: The vast majority of Port Alberni residents think the City of Port Alberni has a good quality of life. However, nearly four-in-ten residents say the quality of life has worsened over the past five years, with employment/economic issues as the main driver of this perceived decline.

Port Alberni residents are split as to how community safety has changed over the past five years, with roughly equal proportions saying safety has improved, worsened and not changed.

Issue Agenda: Economic issues lead the public issue agenda. More than four-in-ten residents mention an economic issue as the issue they would like to see receive the greatest attention from local leaders. Second tier issues include municipal government services and taxation/municipal government spending.

City Operations: Port Alberni residents are divided in their perceptions of Council and Administration, although Administration rates a little better than Council. Six-in-ten residents say they are satisfied with the performance of Administration, compared to five-in-ten who are satisfied with Council.

Overall, half are satisfied with the way their municipal government including Council and Administration as a whole is going about running the community.

City Services: Residents are generally satisfied overall with City services, with nearly eight-in-ten giving favourable ratings for the overall level and quality of services provided by the City of Port Alberni.

In particular, citizens express high satisfaction with fire services, police services, public works (drinking water, storm water and sewer) and parks and recreation services.

Satisfaction is lower, but still above a majority for recycling, heritage resources (Alberni Valley Museum, McLean Mill and the steam train), streets and sidewalks (maintenance, cleaning and upgrading) and local planning.

Fewer than half of residents are satisfied with the City when it comes to economic development and garbage collection.

Financing: Overall, nearly six-in-ten residents believe they receive good value for their municipal tax dollars.

Looking to future budget decisions, citizens are split about equally when given a choice between increasing taxes and making cuts to services.

A strong majority of citizens support the idea of generating additional revenue through corporate sponsorships and development fees. There is less support for increased or new user fees and much less support for implementing pay parking.

Seven-in-ten citizens say they oppose further reductions to the industrial tax rate.



Recycling and Composting: Most Port Alberni residents are composting kitchen and yard waste at home. Nearly nine-in-ten residents of single detached homes say they compost their yard waste and nearly six-in-ten say they compost their kitchen food scraps.

About half of single detached home residents say they are willing to pay some amount for weekly curbside pick-up of kitchen scraps and yard waste. About half of residents are also willing to pay some amount to have a drop-off composting depot available for kitchen scraps and yard scraps.

Former Plywood Plant Site: A majority of residents say they would like to see the former Plywood Plant site sold, mostly with mixed use zoning that would allow for both industrial and commercial activities.

Communication and Website: Residents most prefer the City to communicate with them through newspapers, mail and email.

More than four-in-ten citizens say they have visited the City's website in past 12 months. Among visitors, more than eight-in-ten give a positive review to the content and information available on the website.

Customer Service: Nearly six-in-ten residents say they have personally contacted or dealt with the City of Port Alberni or one of its employees in the past 12 months.

Satisfaction ratings among those contacting the City are very high, with nine-in-ten saying they are satisfied with the overall service they received.

Introduction

Objectives

The City of Port Alberni commissioned Ipsos Reid to conduct a public opinion survey of residents to help guide staff and Council as they develop the City's 2011 budget. Broadly speaking, the primary objective of this research was to provide the City with a comprehensive assessment of citizens' priorities, satisfaction with municipal services, funding preferences, and attitudes towards other topical issues facing the community. More specific objectives included:

- Identify the issues seen as most in need of attention from local leaders;
- Assess perceptions towards the overall quality of life in Port Alberni;
- Assess perceptions of the City's municipal operations;
- Measure satisfaction with specific City services;
- Determine perceived value for taxes and identify preferred funding options;
- Gauge the level of support for a further reduction in the industrial tax rate;
- Determine willingness to pay for new composting services;
- Understand usage preferences for the former Plywood Plant site;
- Identify preferred communications channels for receiving City-related information;
- Gauge usage and perceptions of the City's website; and,
- Determine the incidence of contacting the City and satisfaction with contact experiences.

The insight gained from this research will ultimately help guide the City of Port Alberni make important decisions regarding planning, budgeting, and issues management.

Where comparable, the City of Port Alberni's results have been reported against Ipsos Reid's database of municipal norms for British Columbia to provide additional insight, context, and benchmarks against which the City can evaluate its performance. These norms are based on up to 33,000 observations in nearly 35 different municipalities representing a mix of community sizes and urban/rural locations across the province.

Methodology

Ipsos Reid conducted a total of 400 telephone interviews with a randomly selected representative sample of Port Alberni residents aged 18 years or older. All interviews were conducted between November 22 and 30, 2010. Sample was drawn by postal code and respondents were asked in the beginning of the survey whether or not they live in the City of Port Alberni to further validate residency. To ensure appropriate representation from key demographic segments, quotas were set by gender and age. The final data has also been weighted to ensure that the sample's age/gender distribution reflects that of the actual population in Port Alberni according to the 2006 Census.

Overall results are accurate to within ± 4.9 percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty. The margin of error will be larger for sample subgroups.

Detailed Findings

Quality of Life

Overall Quality of Life in the City of Port Alberni

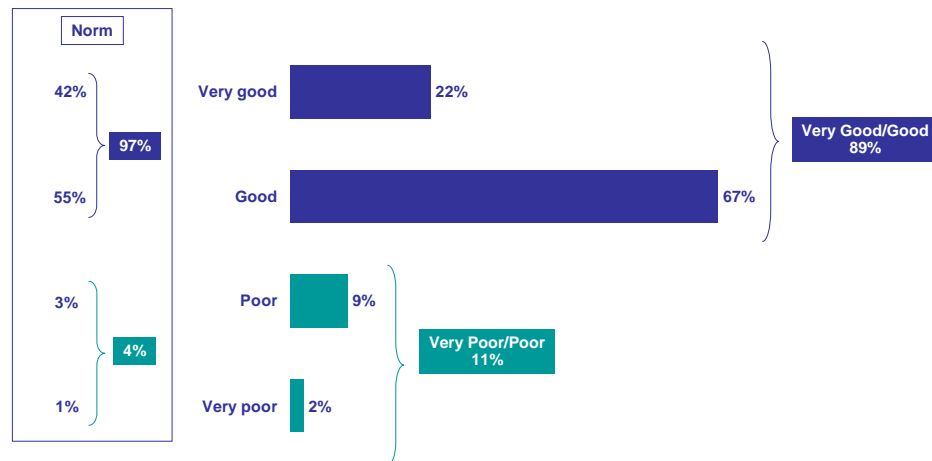
Vast majority of citizens say they have a good quality of life in Port Alberni.

Overall, nine-in-ten (89%) citizens rate the quality of life in the City of Port Alberni positively, with 22% saying “very good” and 67% saying “good”. Only one-in-ten (11%) describe the quality of life as “very poor” (2%) or “poor” (9%).

Despite the positive result, this rating (combined “very good/good” scores) is below what is typically reported in other British Columbian municipalities, especially when it comes to “very good” ratings.

Overall Quality of Life in the City of Port Alberni

How would you rate the overall quality of life in the City of Port Alberni today?



Base: All respondents (n=400)

Quality of life perceptions are consistent across demographic groups.

Change in Quality of Life Past Five Years

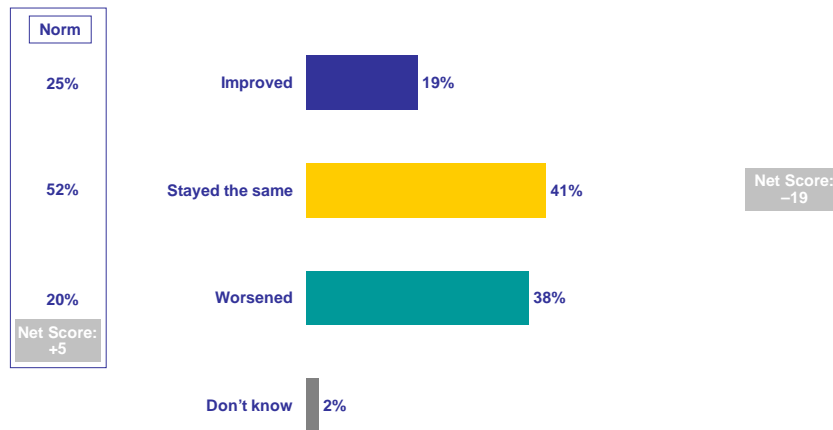
More citizens think quality of life is getting worse than better.

When asked how the quality of life in Port Alberni has changed over the past five years, residents are most likely to say it has either “stayed about the same” (41%) or “worsened” (38%). Only about two-in-ten (19%) residents say the quality of life has “improved” during this timeframe, resulting in a net momentum score (improved – worsened) of -19 points. Overall, these findings suggest that despite citizens’ overall positive perceptions of Port Alberni’s quality of life, there is also a sense this has deteriorated over the past few years.

These results are different from what we typically see in other British Columbian municipalities where residents generally report a slightly improving quality of life.

Change in Quality of Life Past Five Years

And, do you feel that the quality of life in the City of Port Alberni in the past five years has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?



Base: All respondents (n=400)

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These perceptions regarding the changing quality of life are consistent across demographic groups.

Reasons why Quality of Life has Improved

No single reason stands out for why quality of life has improved.

Among those who feel the quality of life in Port Alberni has improved over the past three years (n=73), no single reason stands out. The top reasons mentioned include “more stores” (17%), “more infrastructure” (14%) and “economy has improved” (12%).

Reasons why Quality of Life has Improved

(Among those who think the quality of life has improved)

Why do you think the quality of life has improved?



Includes mentions of 3% or more only.

Base: Quality of life has improved in the past five years (n=73)*

**Small base size, interpret with caution.*



Reasons why Quality of Life has Worsened

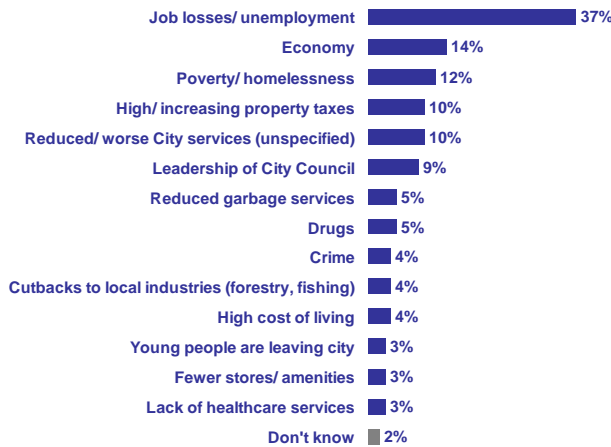
Employment issues are main reason for thinking quality of life has worsened.

Nearly four-in-ten of those who feel the quality of life in Port Alberni has worsened over the past three years (n=155) cite reasons related to “job losses/unemployment” (37%). Other reasons for worsened perceptions include “the economy” (14%), “poverty/homelessness” (12%), “high/increasing property taxes” (10%) and “reduced/worse City services” (10%).

Reasons why Quality of Life has Worsened

(Among those who think the quality of life has worsened)

Why do you think the quality of life has worsened?



Includes mentions of 3% or more only.

Base: Quality of life has worsened in the past five years (n=155)



Change in Community Safety Past Five Years

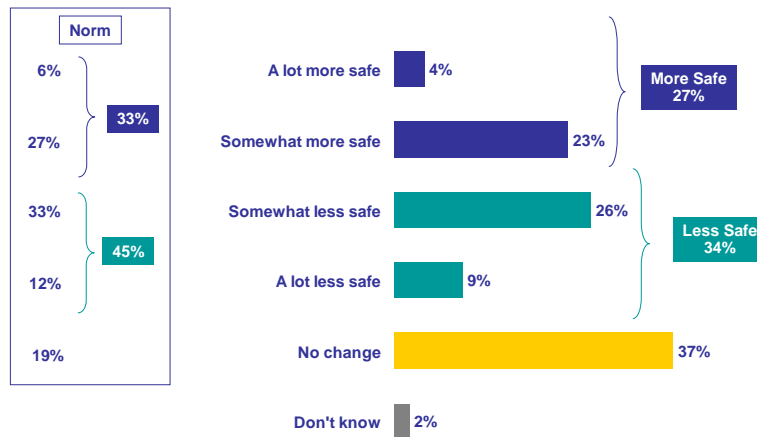
Citizens have mixed views on changes to safety in community.

Port Alberni residents have divergent views on how community safety has changed over the past five years. Slightly more than one-third (37%) say they feel “no change” in their safety in the past five years. Another one-third (34%) say they feel “less safe” (34%), while just less than three in ten feel “more safe” (27%).

These results are somewhat more positive than the norm for other BC municipalities. Typically the percentage who feels “less safe” is higher than what is recorded in Port Alberni.

Change in Community Safety Past Five Years

Would you say you generally feel more safe or less safe in your community now than you did five years ago?
(Would that be a lot or somewhat more/less safe?)



Base: All respondents (n=400)

Perceptions regarding the changing safety in the community are consistent across demographic groups.

Issue Agenda

Top-of-Mind Issues

Economic issues lead the public issue agenda.

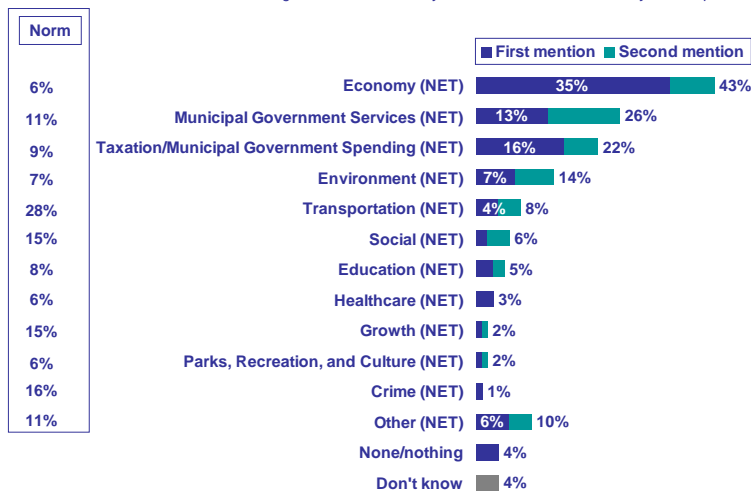
Slightly more than four-in-ten (43%) Port Alberni residents mention an issue related to the “economy” when asked to name the most important issue facing the community they feel should get the greatest attention from local leaders.

Next to the economy, second tier community concerns include issues related to “municipal government services” (26%) and “taxation/municipal government spending” (22%). Other top-of-mind concerns include “environment” (14%), “transportation” (8%), “social issues” (6%) and “education” (5%).

Compared to the norm for other BC municipalities, Port Alberni residents place a higher priority on issues related to the economy, as well as to municipal government services and municipal taxation/spending. Conversely, Port Alberni residents are less likely to mention concerns related to issues such as transportation, social issues, growth and crime.

Top-of-Mind Issues

In your view, as a resident of the City of Port Alberni, what is the most important issue facing your community, that is the one issue you feel should receive the greatest attention from your local leaders? Are there any other important local issues?



Multiple mentions accepted.

Base: All respondents (n=400)

Issues related to the **economy** are more likely to be mentioned by the 35 to 54 year age segment (53% mention) and by the higher household income segment (53% of \$60K+ mention vs. 39% among <\$60K).

Issues related to **taxation/municipal government spending** are more likely to be mentioned by men (27% of men vs. 18% of women) and less likely to be mentioned by the lower household income segment (12% of <\$30K mention vs. 25% among \$30K).

City Operations

Satisfaction with City Operations

Residents divided in perceptions of Council and Administration

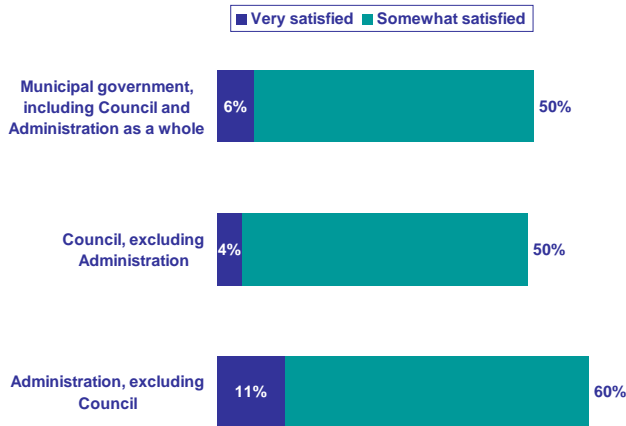
One-half (50%) of residents say they are satisfied with the way their **municipal government including Council and Administration as a whole** is going about running the community. This includes 6% who are “very satisfied” and 45% who are “somewhat satisfied”. A similar proportion (49%) is not satisfied with the overall municipal government performance, including 32% who are “not very satisfied” and 17% who are “not at all satisfied”.

The ratings are similar for **Council excluding Administration**, with half (50%) of residents expressing satisfaction (4% “very satisfied”, 46% “somewhat satisfied”) and half expressing dissatisfaction (35% “not very satisfied”, 14% “not at all satisfied”).

The ratings are somewhat better for **Administration excluding Council**, with six-in-ten (60%) residents saying they are satisfied (11% “very satisfied”, 49% “somewhat satisfied”) compared to 36% who are not satisfied (24% “not very satisfied”, 12% “not at all satisfied”).

Satisfaction with City Operations

*Taking everything into account, how satisfied are you with the way the City of Port Alberni...is going about running the community?
What about with the way...is going about running the community?*



Base: All respondents (n=400)

Satisfaction with **Council excluding Administration** is higher among women (55% satisfied vs. 45% of men) and among those with children in the household (61% satisfied vs. 45% among households with no kids).

Satisfaction with **Administration excluding Council** is higher among those under the age of 55 years (65% satisfied vs. 53% among 55+ years) and those with children in the household (71% satisfied vs. 55% among households with no kids).

City Services

Overall Satisfaction with City Services

Most residents are satisfied with City services.

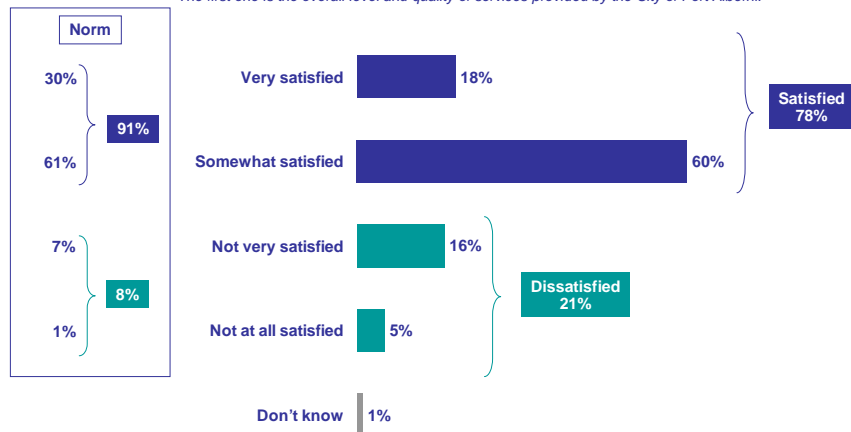
Nearly eight-in-ten (78%) citizens are satisfied with the overall level and quality of services provided by the City of Port Alberni. Of this, 18% are “very satisfied” and 60% are “somewhat satisfied”. The remaining 21% express a more negative view, including 5% saying “not at all satisfied” and 16% saying “not very satisfied”.

Overall satisfaction (combined “very/somewhat satisfied” responses) in Port Alberni is below what we typically see in other British Columbian municipalities.

Overall Satisfaction with City Services

I'm now going to read a list of services provided to you by the City of Port Alberni. Please tell me how satisfied you are with each one, using a scale of very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied.

The first one is the overall level and quality of services provided by the City of Port Alberni.



Base: All respondents (n=400)

Satisfaction ratings are consistent across demographic groups.



Satisfaction with Specific Services

Majority of citizens satisfied with all services except economic development and garbage collection.

Citizens were also asked to rate their satisfaction with specific services provided by the City of Port Alberni. Review of these results show that the majority of citizens are satisfied with most of the services tested other than economic development and garbage collection.

Overall, citizens are most satisfied with the following four services:

- Fire services (95% satisfied, 73% “very satisfied”)
- Police services (89% satisfied, 45% “very satisfied”)
- Public works including drinking water, storm water and sewer (87% satisfied, 44% “very satisfied”)
- Parks and recreation services (84% satisfied, 46% “very satisfied”)

A majority of residents are also satisfied with the following four services:

- Recycling (73% satisfied, 28% “very satisfied”)
- Heritage resources including the Alberni Valley Museum, the McLean Mill and the steam train (72% satisfied, 36% “very satisfied”)
- Maintenance, cleaning and upgrading of streets and sidewalks (64% satisfied, 18% “very satisfied”)
- Local planning (56% satisfied, 6% “very satisfied”)

Less than half of residents are satisfied with the following two services:

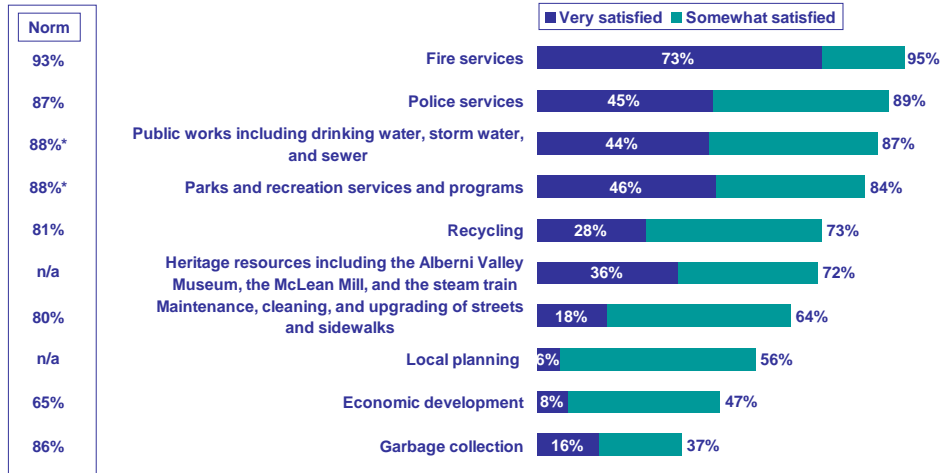
- Economic development (47% satisfied, 8% “very satisfied”)
- Garbage collection (37% satisfied, 16% “very satisfied”)

The results for Port Alberni are on par with other BC municipalities when it comes to fire services, police services, public works (drinking water, storm water and sewer) and parks and recreation services and programs.

Port Alberni results are well below municipal norms for garbage collection and also below norms for recycling, economic development and maintenance, cleaning and upgrading of streets and sidewalks.

Satisfaction with Specific Services

I'm now going to read a list of services provided to you by the City of Port Alberni. Please tell me how satisfied you are with each one, using a scale of very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or not at all satisfied.



*Not directly comparable due to differences in question wording.

Base: All respondents (n=400)

Satisfaction with **heritage resources** is higher among women (78% satisfied vs. 67% of men) and among younger residents (90% satisfied among 18-34 years vs. 68% among 35+ years).

Satisfaction with **economic development** is higher among lower household income residents (56% satisfied among <\$30K) and lower among higher income households (41% among \$60K+).

Financing

Value of Taxes

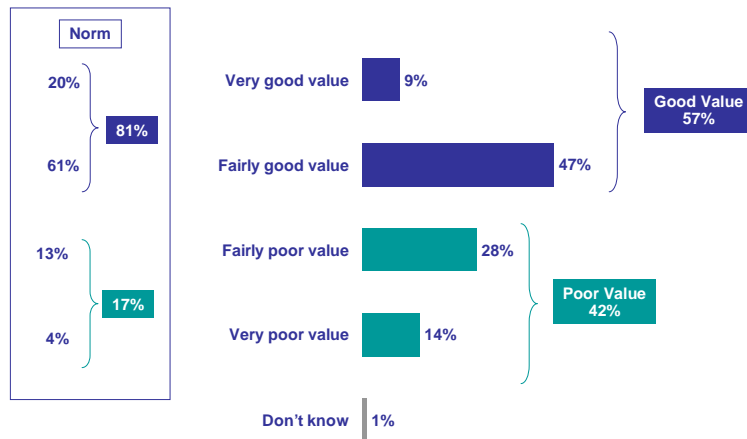
A majority of citizens believe they receive good value for their municipal tax dollars.

Overall, slightly less than six-in-ten (57%) citizens say they receive good value for the taxes they pay to the City of Port Alberni. Of this, 9% say they receive “very good value” and 47% say they receive “fairly good value”. Just over four-in-ten (42%) citizens feel otherwise, including 14% saying “very poor value” and 28% saying “fairly poor value”.

These results (combined “very/fairly good value” responses) are substantially below what is typically seen in other British Columbian municipalities.

Value of Taxes

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 the taxes you pay? (Is that very or fairly good/poor value?)



Base: All respondents (n=400)

Perceptions that they receive good value are higher among lower household income residents (66% of <\$30K) and lower among higher income households (50% among \$60K+).

Tax Increases versus Service Cuts

Citizens split on taxation – service balance.

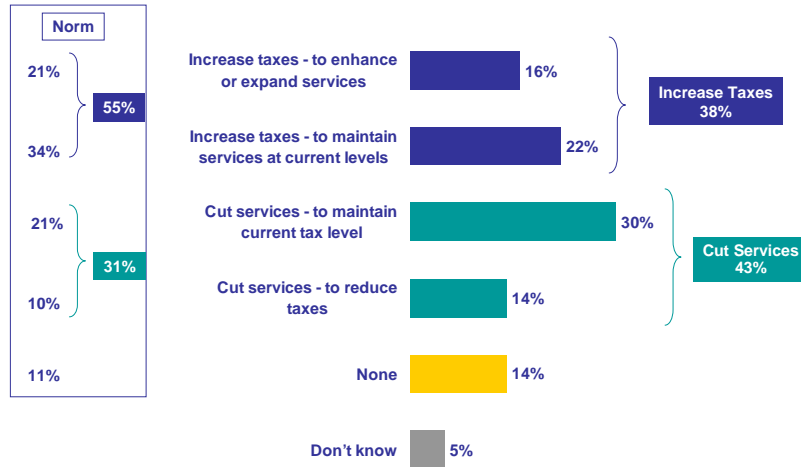
When citizens are given a choice between increased taxes or service cuts, 38% choose increased taxes while 43% opt for cuts in services.

Looking at tax increases specifically shows that 22% of citizens would prefer the City to “increase taxes - to maintain services at current levels”, while 16% prefer “increasing taxes - to enhance or expand services” (16%). When it comes to service cuts, 30% opt for “cutting services - to maintain current tax level” while 14% would like to see the City “cut services - to reduce taxes”.

These results show less of an appetite for increasing taxes compared to other BC municipalities.

Tax Increase versus Service Cuts

Municipal property taxes are the primary way to pay for services provided by the City of Port Alberni. Due to the increased cost of maintaining current service levels and infrastructure, the City must balance taxation and service delivery levels. To deal with this situation, which of the following four options would you most like the City to pursue?



Base: All respondents (n=400)

Younger residents are the most likely to support increasing taxes (51% of 18-34 years vs. 34% of 35+ years).

Alternative Means of Revenue Generation

Citizens support revenue generation through corporate sponsorship and development fees.

Respondents were told that in addition to adjusting the property tax/service delivery balance, the City of Port Alberni has the option to generate some additional revenue to help pay for municipal services and programs. They were then asked whether they would support or oppose each of five alternative means of revenue generation.

A majority of citizens supported two of the means of revenue generation:

- Corporate sponsorship for municipal programs and facilities (84% support, 36% “strongly support”)
- Increased or new development application fees for things such as building permits, subdivisions, etc (71% support, 28% “strongly support”)

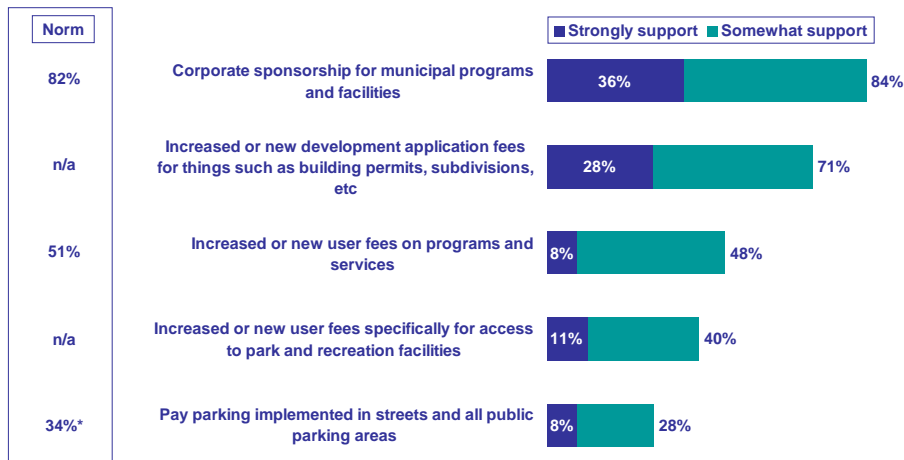
There was less support for the following three means of revenue generation:

- Increased or new user fees on programs and services (48% support, 8% “strongly support”)
- Increased or new user fees specifically for access to park and recreation facilities (40% support, 11% “strongly support”)
- Pay parking implemented in streets and all public parking areas (28% support, 8% “strongly support”)

These results for Port Alberni are in line with comparative norms from other BC municipalities.

Alternative Means of Revenue Generation

In addition to adjusting the property tax/service delivery balance, the City of Port Alberni has the option to generate some additional revenue. Please tell me whether you would support or oppose the City using each of the following to help pay for municipal services and programs. (Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose?)



*Not directly comparable due to differences in question wording.

Base: All respondents (n=400)



Support for **corporate sponsorship for municipal programs and facilities** is higher among younger residents (88% among <55 years vs. 78% among 55+ years).

Support for **increased or new development application fees** decreases with older ages (81% support among 18-34 years vs. 73% among 35 to 54 years, 64% among 55+ years) and with rising household incomes (81% support among <\$30K vs. 76% among \$30-\$60K, 66% among \$60K+).

Industrial Tax Rate

Citizens oppose further reductions to the industrial tax rate.

Citizens were read the following information and then asked if they would support or oppose the City of Port Alberni further reducing the industrial tax rate, even if it means increasing the residential share of property taxes and/or reducing the services the City provides to residents.

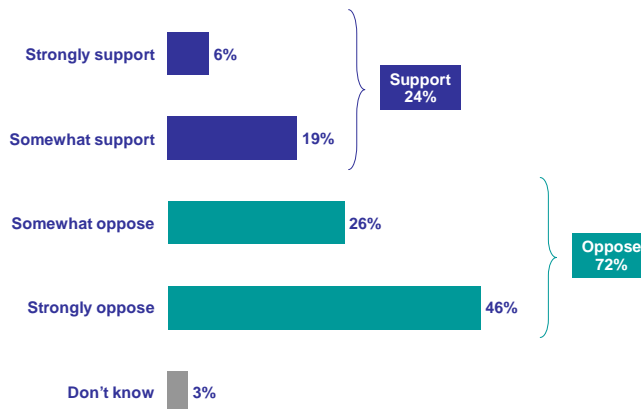
As you may know, the paper and saw mill industry in Port Alberni currently pays 30% of the City's property taxes. This was lowered from 35% in 2009 and will be lowered to 25% by 2012. Some people have suggested that the industrial tax rate needs to be reduced even further in order for the community to maintain employment and attract new investment from a competitive industry. If the industrial tax rate is reduced further, the City would need to make up for the reduction in funds through other means, including increasing the residential share of property taxes and/or reducing the services it provides to residents.

Seven-in-ten (72%) residents say they oppose further reductions to the industrial tax rate, including 26% who “somewhat oppose” and 46% who “strongly oppose” this idea. One-quarter (24%) of residents say they support this idea (6% “strongly support”, 19% “somewhat support”).

Industrial Tax Rate

As you may know, the paper and saw mill industry in Port Alberni currently pays 30% of the City's property taxes. This was lowered from 35% in 2009 and will be lowered to 25% by 2012. Some people have suggested that the industrial tax rate needs to be reduced even further in order for the community to maintain employment and attract new investment from a competitive industry. If the industrial tax rate is reduced further, the City would need to make up for the reduction in funds through other means, including increasing the residential share of property taxes and/or reducing the services it provides to residents.

Overall, would you support or oppose the City of Port Alberni further reducing the industrial tax rate, even if it means increasing the residential share of property taxes and/or reducing the services the City provides to residents? (Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose?)



Base: All respondents (n=400)

Support for increasing the industrial tax rate is highest among those with higher household incomes (33% support among \$60K+ vs. 19% among <\$60K).

Recycling and Composting

Composting Kitchen and Yard Waste

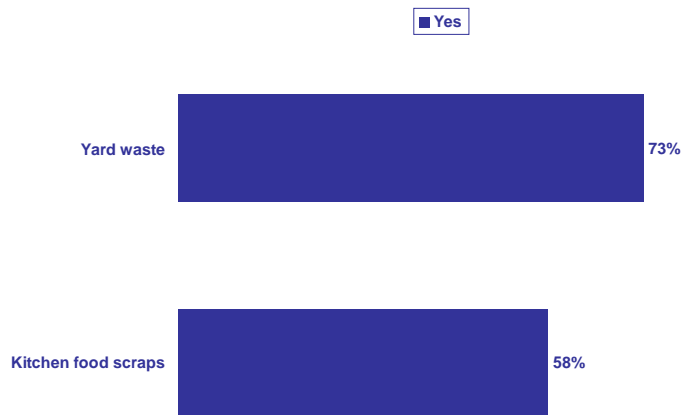
Most Port Alberni residents are composting kitchen and yard waste at home.

A majority of Port Alberni residents living in single detached homes (88% of sample) say they currently compost their yard waste at home (73%) and their kitchen food scraps at home (58%).

Composting Kitchen and Yard Waste

(Among those living in a single, detached house)

Do you currently compost your... at home? What about your...?



Base: Live in single, detached house (n=354)

Home composting rates are consistent across demographic groups.

Willingness to Pay for Weekly Curbside Pick-Up

About half of residents are willing to pay some amount for weekly curbside pick-up of kitchen scraps and yard waste.

Respondents living in single detached homes were read the information below and then asked to name the maximum annual fee they would be willing to pay for weekly curbside pick-up of kitchen food scraps and yard waste.

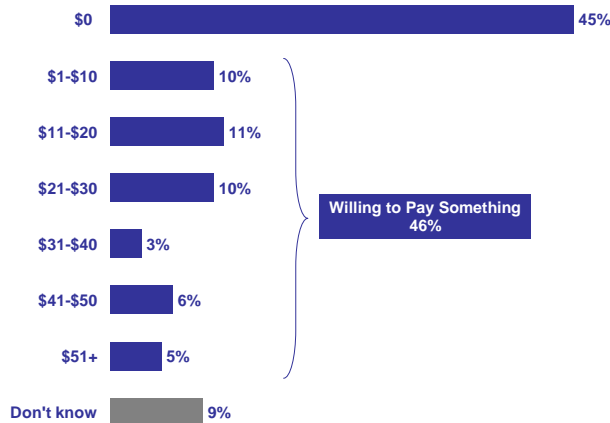
As you may know, Port Alberni residents living in single, detached houses currently receive bi-weekly curbside pick-up of recyclables such as cardboard, box board, mixed papers, tin cans, and some household plastics. The annual fee for this service is \$30.20 per household. Consideration is being given to expanding this service to include curbside pick-up of additional kitchen and yard waste.

Slightly less than half (46%) of residents say they would be willing to pay something for weekly curbside pick-up of kitchen and yard waste. Among those willing to pay something, the median amount is \$21-\$30.

Willingness to Pay for Weekly Curbside Pick-Up (Among those living in a single, detached house)

As you may know, Port Alberni residents living in single, detached houses currently receive bi-weekly curbside pick-up of recyclables such as cardboard, box board, mixed papers, tin cans, and some household plastics. The annual fee for this service is \$30.20 per household. Consideration is being given to expanding this service to include curbside pick-up of additional kitchen and yard waste.

What is the maximum annual fee you would be willing to pay for weekly curbside pick-up of kitchen food scraps and yard waste? This fee would be in addition to the annual recycling fee that residents already pay.



Base: Live in single, detached house (n=354)

Willingness to pay something for this service is higher among women (56% of women vs. 34% of men), younger residents (55% among <55 years vs. 34% among 55+ years) and residents in households with children (54% vs. 42% among households with no kids).

Willingness to Pay for Drop-Off Composting Depot

About half of residents are willing to pay some amount for a drop-off composting depot for kitchen and yard waste.

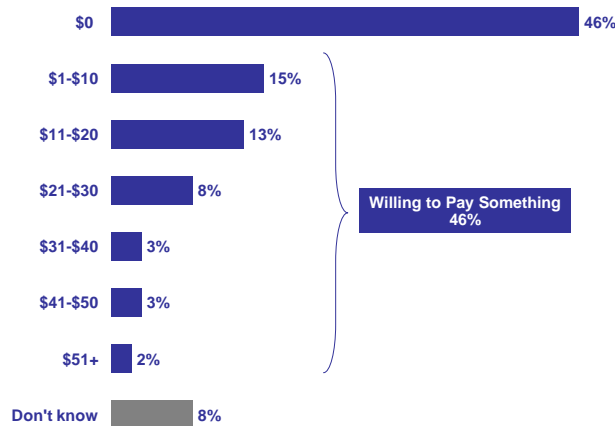
Next, respondents from single detached homes were asked about the maximum fee they would pay to have a drop-off composting depot for kitchen scraps and yard waste.

As with the pick-up service, slightly less than half (46%) of residents say they would be willing to pay something to have a composting depot provided. Among those willing to pay something, the median amount is \$11-\$20.

Willingness to Pay for Drop-Off Composting Depot

(Among those living in a single, detached house)

Rather than offering weekly curbside pick-up of kitchen food scraps and yard waste, a drop-off composting depot for these types of items could be provided. What is the maximum annual fee you would be willing to pay to have this type of facility provided? Again, this fee would be in addition to the annual recycling fee that residents already pay



Base: Live in single, detached house (n=354)

Willingness to pay something for this service is higher among women (52% of women vs. 37% of men), younger residents (54% among <55 years vs. 34% among 55+ years) and residents in households with children (52% vs. 42% among households with no kids).

Former Plywood Plant Site

Uses for Former Plywood Plant Site

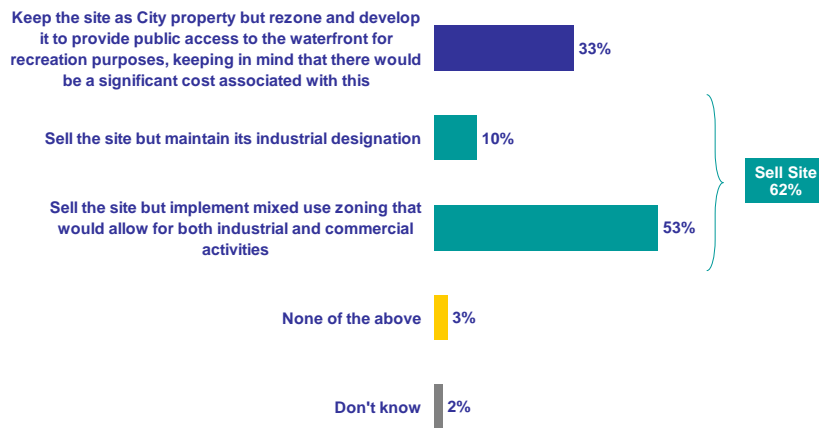
Majority of residents support selling site.

A majority (62%) of Port Alberni residents say they would like to see the former Plywood Plant site sold. Most of these residents (53% overall) support “selling the site but implementing mixed use zoning that would allow for both industrial and commercial activities”. A further 10% support “selling the site but maintaining its industrial designation”.

One-in-three (33%) residents say they would most like to see the City “Keep the site as City property but rezone and develop it to provide public access to the waterfront for recreation purposes, keeping in mind that there would be a significant cost associated with this”.

Uses for Former Plywood Plant Site

Next a question about the former Plywood Plant site that is located on the waterfront at the City’s southern boundary. As you may know, the City purchased this site in 1993 but has not committed to any specific use for it at this time. While this site is currently zoned for industrial use, some people have suggested the City consider alternative uses for it. I’m going to read a number of different possible uses for this site and would like you to tell me which one you would most like the City to pursue.



Base: All respondents (n=400)

Women are more likely than men to want to keep the site as City property (42% of women vs. 23% of men).



Communication and Website

Preferred Communication Channels

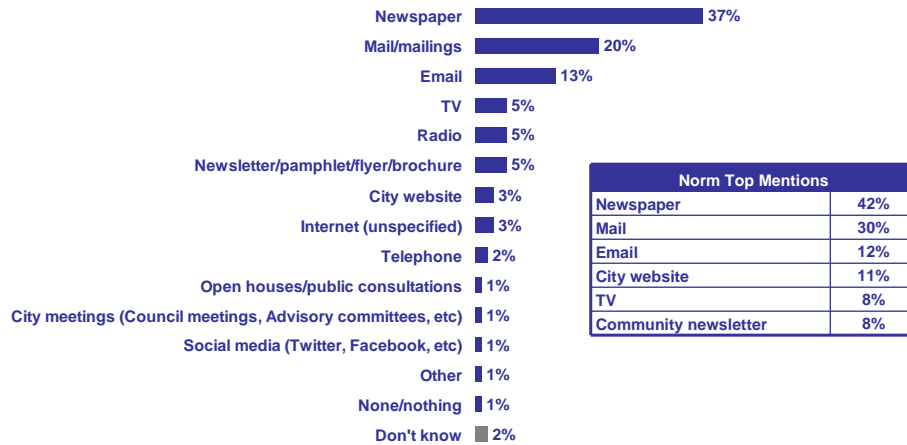
Residents prefer the City to communicate by newspapers, mail and email.

Overall, 37% of citizens identify the newspaper as the best way for the City of Port Alberni to communicate information to them. Another 20% mention mail/mailings and 13% opt for email communications.

The results for Port Alberni are consistent with the preferred communication preferences in other BC municipalities.

Preferred Communication Channels

What methods would be best for the City to communicate information to you?



Base: All respondents (n=400)

A **newspaper** preference is higher among older residents (42% of 35+ years vs. 20% of 18-34 years), households with no children (41% vs. 30% among households with kids) and middle/higher income households (40% among \$30K+ vs. 27% among <\$30K).

An **email** preference is higher among younger residents (24% of 18-34 years vs. 15% of 35-54 years, 6% of 55+ years), households with children (20% vs. 9% among households with no kids) and higher income households (21% among \$60K+ vs. 9% among <\$60K).



Website Visitation

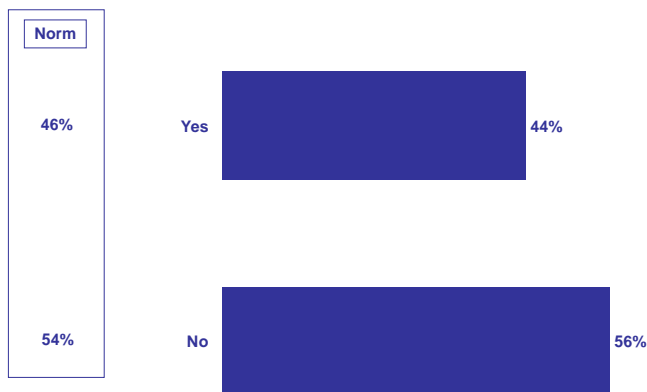
More than four-in-ten have visited City site in past 12 months.

More than four-in-ten (44%) residents say they have visited the City of Port Alberni's website in the past 12 months.

This visitation rate is consistent with the norm for other BC municipalities.

Website Visitation

In the past 12 months, have you visited the City of Port Alberni's website?



Base: All respondents (n=400)

Past year visitation is higher among younger residents (64% among 18-34 years, 49% among 35-54 years, 28% among 55+ years) and residents with children in the household (63% vs. 34% among households with no kids).



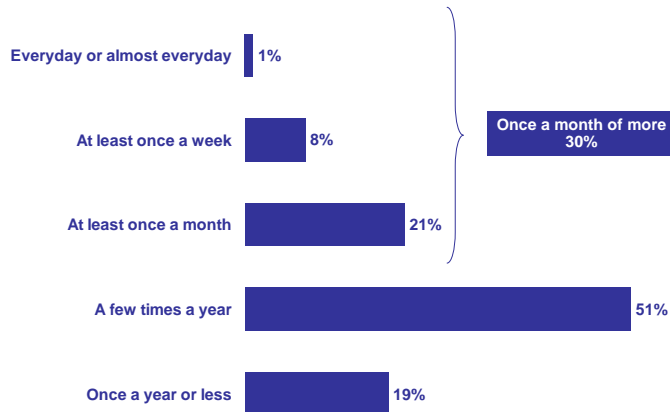
Frequency of Visiting Website

Three-in-ten past year visitors say they typically visit once a month or more.

Among past year visitors to the City website, three-in-ten (30%) say they visit once a month or more.

Frequency of Visiting Website (Among those who visited website past 12 months)

How often do you typically visit the City's website?



Base: Visited website past 12 months (n=163)

Usefulness of Website

Most website users rate it as useful.

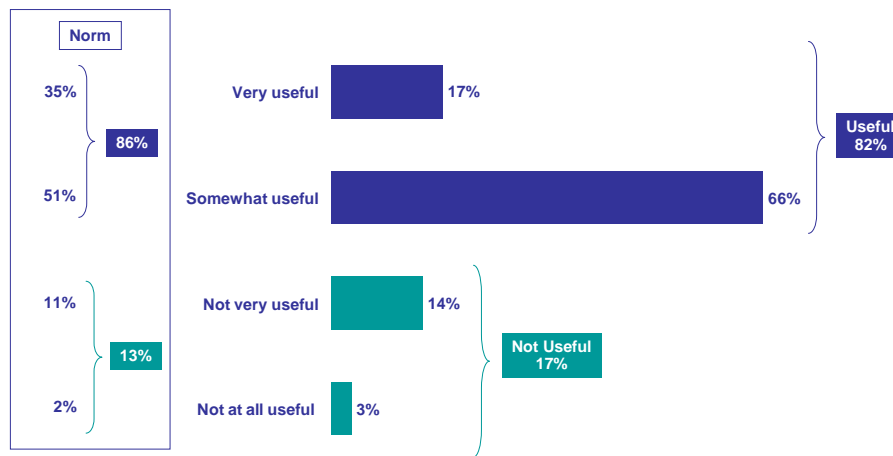
More than eight-in-ten (82%) past year visitors rate the content and information available on the City’s website as either “very useful” (17%) or “somewhat useful” (66%).

This result (“very useful” plus “somewhat useful”) is mostly consistent with the norm for other BC municipalities, although the “very useful” percentage is less than the norm.

Usefulness of Website

(Among those who visited website past 12 months)

How useful is the content of information and online services available on the City’s website? Is it (READ LIST)?



Base: Visited website past 12 months (n=163)



Customer Service

Contact with City

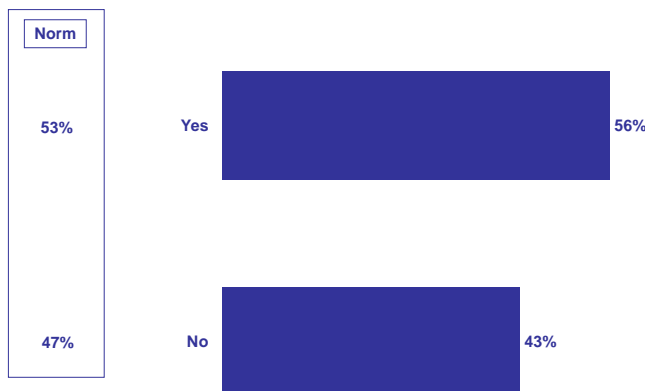
Majority have had contact with City of Port Alberni in past 12 months.

A slight majority (56%) of residents say they have personally contacted or dealt with the City of Port Alberni or one of its employees in the past 12 months.

This level of contact is consistent with the norm for other BC municipalities.

Contact with City

In the last 12 months, have you personally contacted or dealt with the City of Port Alberni or one of its employees?



Base: All respondents (n=400)

Residents from higher income households are the most likely to have had contact (65% among \$60K+ vs. 56% among \$30-\$60K, 44% among <\$30K).

Satisfaction with Overall Service Received

High satisfaction rating among those in contact with City.

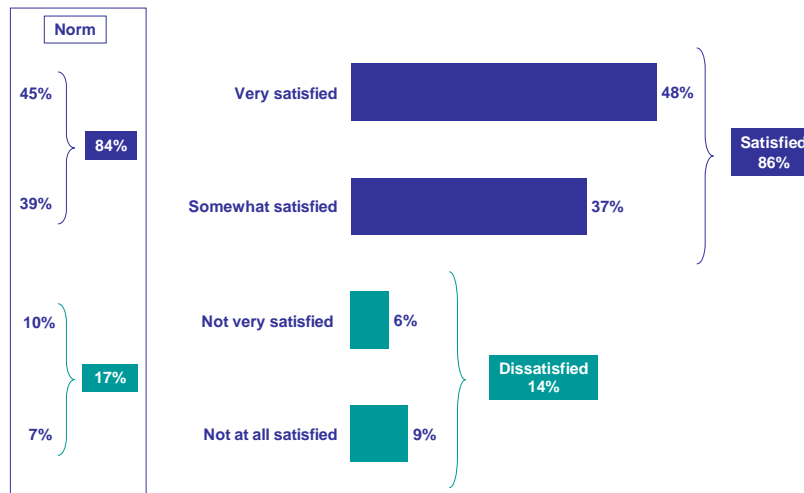
Almost nine-in-ten (86%) citizens who have had contact with the City in the past year are satisfied with the overall service they received. Of this, 48% are “very satisfied” and 37% are “somewhat satisfied”. The remaining 14% say they are either “not very satisfied” (6%) or “not at all satisfied” (9%).

Overall satisfaction (combined “very/somewhat satisfied” responses) in Port Alberni is on par with other British Columbian municipalities.

Satisfaction with Overall Service Received

(Among those who contacted City past 12 months)

And thinking of the last time you contacted the City of Port Alberni, how satisfied are you with the overall service you received?



Base: Dealt with City past 12 months (n=225)

Satisfaction ratings are consistent across demographic groups.

Appendix A: Weighted Sample Characteristics

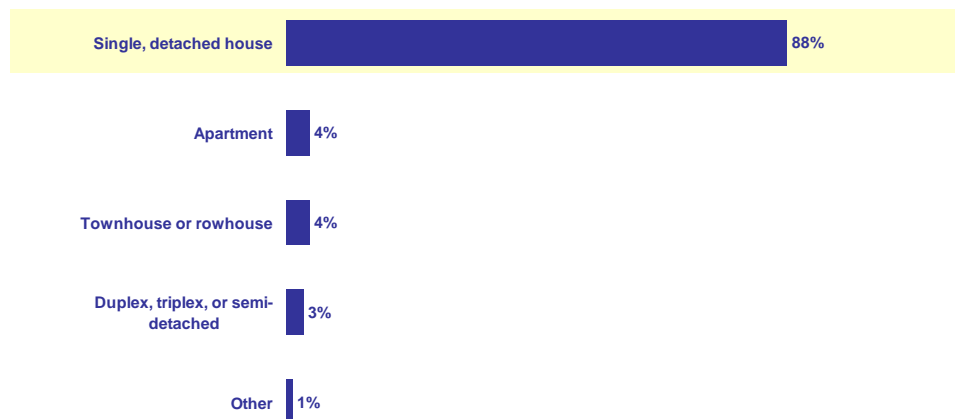
The table below illustrates the breakdown of the sample into key demographic and household categories. Please note that the overall results are weighted to ensure that the age/gender distribution reflects that of the actual population in the City of Port Alberni according to the 2006 Census data.

Weighted Sample Characteristics

	All Respondents (n=400) %		All Respondents (n=400) %
Gender:		Household Composition:	
Male	49%	With children	34%
Female	51%	Without children	65%
Age:		Income:	
18 to 34	22%	Under \$30,000	21%
35 to 54	37%	\$30,000 to less than \$60,000	34%
55 or older	42%	\$60,000 to less than \$90,000	24%
		\$90,000 or more	12%
		Refused	10%

Housing Type

What type of housing do you currently occupy?



Base: All respondents (n=400)



Appendix B: Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

Hello, this is _____ calling from Ipsos Reid. We're a professional public opinion research company calling on behalf of the City of Port Alberni. We are not selling anything. The City is looking for your input about the programs and services it provides and the issues you think the City should prioritize.

(IF NECESSARY: Please be assured that this survey is completely confidential.)

(IF NECESSARY: This survey will take around 12 minutes to complete.)

(INTERVIEWER NOTE: If inconvenient timing, schedule a call back.)

May I please speak with the person in your household 18 years of age or older who most recently had a birthday? Is that you?

Yes **[CONTINUE]**

Don't know **[ASK AGAIN, IF STILL DK/REF THEN THANK AND TERMINATE]**

No

May I speak to that person? **[READ INTRODUCTION]**

SCREENING

A. First of all, do you or does anyone in your household work for **(READ LIST)?**

[RANDOMIZE]

The City of Port Alberni, including the Port Alberni Fire Department

The Port Alberni Detachment of the RCMP

The media, that is a radio or TV station, newspaper, or magazine

A market research firm

[ALWAYS LAST] (DO NOT READ) None

[IF 'NONE' IN QA, CONTINUE. OTHERWISE, THANK AND TERMINATE.]

B. Do you live in the City of Port Alberni?

Yes

No

[IF 'YES' IN QB, CONTINUE. OTHERWISE, THANK AND TERMINATE.]

C. Can you please provide me with your postal code? (IF NECESSARY, ADD: I assure you that this information will remain completely confidential. We only use it for classification purposes.) (INTERVIEWER NOTE: Try to get the full 6-digit postal code. If necessary, we will accept only the first 3 digits.)

[IF 'V9Y' IN QC, CONTINUE. OTHERWISE, THANK AND TERMINATE.]



D. The City of Port Alberni is interested in hearing from a broad cross-section of the public, including representation from all age groups. Please tell me into which of the following age categories you fall. **(READ LIST UNTIL ANSWERED)**

- 18 to 34
- 35 to 54
- 55 or older

[IF 'DK/REF' IN QD, THANK & TERMINATE. OTHERWISE, CONTINUE.]

E. **(DO NOT ASK)** RECORD GENDER

- Male
- Female

TOP-OF-MIND ISSUES

1. In your view, as a resident of the City of Port Alberni, what is the most important issue facing your community, that is the one issue you feel should receive the greatest attention from your local leaders? **[ACCEPT 1 MENTION]** Are there any other important local issues? **[ACCEPT 1 MENTION]** **[IF 'NONE/DK/REF' AT ANY TIME, SKIP TO Q2]**

- None/nothing
- Other [specify]

[RECORD 1ST MENTION]
[RECORD 2ND MENTION]

QUALITY OF LIFE

2. How would you rate the overall quality of life in the City of Port Alberni today? Would you say **(READ LIST)**?

- Very good
- Good
- Poor
- Very poor

3. And, do you feel that the quality of life in the City of Port Alberni in the past five years has **(READ LIST)**?

- Improved
- Stayed the same
- Worsened

[IF 'IMPROVED' IN Q3, ASK Q4. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO Q5.]

4. Why do you think the quality of life has improved? **[ACCEPT 1 MENTION]**

[IF 'WORSENERED' IN Q3, ASK Q5. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO Q6.]

5. Why do you think the quality of life has worsened? **[ACCEPT 1 MENTION]**



[ASK ALL]

6. Would you say you generally feel more safe or less safe in your community now than you did five years ago? (Would that be a lot or somewhat more/less safe?)

A lot more safe

Somewhat more safe

Somewhat less safe

A lot less safe

(DO NOT READ) No change

PERCEPTIONS OF CITY OPERATIONS

Changing topics slightly, I'd now like to ask you a few questions about the City of Port Alberni's municipal operations.

7. Taking everything into account, how satisfied are you with the way the City of Port Alberni's **[INSERT ITEM]** is going about running the community? Are you **(READ LIST)**? What about with the way **[INSERT ITEM]** is going about running the community? **(REPEAT LIST IF NECESSARY)**

[DO NOT RANDOMIZE]

Municipal government, including Council and Administration as a whole

Council, excluding Administration

Administration, excluding Council

Very satisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Not very satisfied

Not at all satisfied

SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES

Changing topics slightly...

8. I'm now going to read a list of services provided to you by the City of Port Alberni. Please tell me how satisfied you are with each one, using a scale of **(READ LIST)**. The first one is **[INSERT ITEM]**. How about **[INSERT ITEM]**? **(REPEAT LIST IF NECESSARY)**

[RANDOMIZE]

[ALWAYS 1ST] The overall level and quality of services provided by the City of Port Alberni

Parks and recreation services and programs

Public works including drinking water, storm water, and sewer

Heritage resources including the Alberni Valley Museum, the McLean Mill, and the steam train

Police services

Garbage collection

Recycling

Local planning

Maintenance, cleaning, and upgrading of streets and sidewalks

Fire services

Economic development



Very satisfied
Somewhat satisfied
Not very satisfied
Not at all satisfied

FINANCING

Changing topics slightly...

9. 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 the taxes you pay? (Is that very or fairly good/poor value?)

Very good value
Fairly good value
Fairly poor value
Very poor value

10. Municipal property taxes are the primary way to pay for services provided by the City of Port Alberni. Due to the increased cost of maintaining current service levels and infrastructure, the City must balance taxation and service delivery levels. To deal with this situation, which of the following four options would you most like the City to pursue? **(READ LIST) [ACCEPT 1 MENTION]**

[ROTATE 1-4, 4-1]

Increase taxes – to enhance or expand services
Increase taxes – to maintain services at current levels
Cut services – to maintain current tax level
Cut services – to reduce taxes

[ALWAYS LAST] (DO NOT READ) None

11. In addition to adjusting the property tax/service delivery balance, the City of Port Alberni has the option to generate some additional revenue. Please tell me whether you would support or oppose the City using each of the following to help pay for municipal services and programs. The first one is **[INSERT ITEM]**. (Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose?) How about **[INSERT ITEM]**? **(REPEAT LIST IF NECESSARY)**

[RANDOMIZE]

Increased or new user fees on programs and services (IF NEEDED: These are the fees you would pay to participate in some municipal programs or services)

[ALWAYS AFTER ITEM ABOVE] Increased or new user fees specifically for access to park and recreation facilities (IF NEEDED: These are the fees you would pay to access some of these facilities)

Corporate sponsorship for municipal programs and facilities

Pay parking implemented in streets and all public parking areas

Increased or new development application fees for things such as building permits, subdivisions, etc



- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose

As you may know, the paper and saw mill industry in Port Alberni currently pays 30% of the City's property taxes. This was lowered from 35% in 2009 and will be lowered to 25% by 2012. Some people have suggested that the industrial tax rate needs to be reduced even further in order for the community to maintain employment and attract new investment from a competitive industry. If the industrial tax rate is reduced further, the City would need to make up for the reduction in funds through other means, including increasing the residential share of property taxes and/or reducing the services it provides to residents.

12. Overall, would you support or oppose the City of Port Alberni further reducing the industrial tax rate, even if it means increasing the residential share of property taxes and/or reducing the services the City provides to residents? (Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose?)

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose

RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING

Changing topics slightly...

13. What type of housing do you currently occupy? **(READ LIST) [ACCEPT 1 MENTION]**

[DO NOT RANDOMIZE]

- Single, detached house
- Duplex, triplex, or semi-detached
- Apartment
- Townhouse or rowhouse
- Secondary suite

(DO NOT READ) Other [do not specify] (INTERVIEWER NOTE: If respondent says 'condominium', ask: Do you mean an apartment, townhouse, or duplex?)

[IF 'SINGLE, DETACHED HOUSE' IN Q13, ASK Q14-Q16. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO INTRODUCTION TO Q17.]

14. Do you currently compost your **[INSERT ITEM]** at home? What about your **[INSERT ITEM]**?
(RECORD RESPONSE FOR EACH ITEM)

[RANDOMIZE]

- Kitchen food scraps
- Yard waste

- Yes
- No



As you may know, Port Alberni residents living in single, detached houses currently receive bi-weekly curbside pick-up of recyclables such as cardboard, box board, mixed papers, tin cans, and some household plastics. The annual fee for this service is \$30.20 per household. Consideration is being given to expanding this service to include curbside pick-up of additional kitchen and yard waste.

15. What is the maximum annual fee you would be willing to pay for weekly curbside pick-up of kitchen food scraps and yard waste? This fee would be in addition to the annual recycling fee that residents already pay. (IF NECESSARY: Please provide your best estimate.)
(RECORD DOLLAR AMOUNT)

[RANGE \$0-\$1000]

16. Rather than offering weekly curbside pick-up of kitchen food scraps and yard waste, a drop-off composting depot for these types of items could be provided. What is the maximum annual fee you would be willing to pay to have this type of facility provided? Again, this fee would be in addition to the annual recycling fee that residents already pay. (IF NECESSARY: Please provide your best estimate.) **(RECORD DOLLAR AMOUNT)**

[RANGE \$0-\$1000]

PLYWOOD PLANT SITE

[ASK ALL]

Next a question about the former Plywood Plant site that is located on the waterfront at the City's southern boundary. As you may know, the City purchased this site in 1993 but has not committed to any specific use for it at this time. While this site is currently zoned for industrial use, some people have suggested the City consider alternative uses for it.

17. I'm going to read a number of different possible uses for this site and would like you to tell me which one you would most like the City to pursue. **(READ LIST) [ACCEPT 1 MENTION ONLY]**

[RANDOMIZE]

Keep the site as City property but rezone and develop it to provide public access to the waterfront for recreation purposes, keeping in mind that there would be a significant cost associated with this

Sell the site but maintain its industrial designation

Sell the site but implement mixed use zoning that would allow for both industrial and commercial activities

[ALWAYS LAST] (DO NOT READ) None of the above



COMMUNICATION AND WEBSITE

Changing topics slightly...

19. What methods would be best for the City to communicate information to you? **(DO NOT READ LIST) [ACCEPT 1 MENTION]**

- Newspaper
- Mail/mailings
- City website
- Internet (unspecified)
- Email
- Newsletter/pamphlet/flyer/brochure
- City meetings including Council meetings, Advisory committees, etc
- Open houses/public consultations
- TV
- Radio
- Telephone
- Social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc)
- None/nothing
- Other (specify)

20. In the past 12 months, have you visited the City of Port Alberni's website?

- Yes
- No

[IF 'YES' IN Q20, ASK Q21-Q22. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO Q23.]

21. How often do you typically visit the City's website? Would you say **(READ LIST)**?

- Everyday or almost everyday
- At least once a week
- At least once a month
- A few times a year
- Once a year or less

22. How useful is the content of information and online services available on the City's website?
Is it **(READ LIST)**?

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not too useful
- Not at all useful



CUSTOMER SERVICE

[ASK ALL]

23. In the last 12 months, have you personally contacted or dealt with the City of Port Alberni or one of its employees?

- Yes
- No

[IF 'YES' IN Q23, ASK Q24. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO INTRODUCTION TO Q27]

24. And thinking of the last time you contacted the City of Port Alberni, how satisfied are you with the overall service you received? Would you say **(READ LIST)**?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not very satisfied
- Not at all satisfied

DEMOGRAPHICS

[ASK ALL]

Finally, I just want to ask you some questions for statistical purposes.

27. Do you have any children under the age of 18 living in your household?

- Yes
- No

28. Which of the following categories best describes your household's income? That is, the total income before taxes of all persons in your household combined. Please stop me when I've reached your category. **(READ LIST)**

- Under \$30,000
- \$30,000 to less than \$60,000
- \$60,000 to less than \$90,000
- \$90,000 or more