



**2009
Citizen
Survey**
Part 2:
Survey Results

DISTRICT OF SAANICH

770 Vernon Avenue
Victoria, BC V8X 2W7

Phone (250) 475-1775

Web www.saanich.ca



Survey Results

Brief survey results are presented in this part of the report. Each section begins with an explanation of the components included and a summary of the findings is included for each figure or table within the following sections:

- Quality of Life
- Service Delivery
- Local Government

Quality of Life

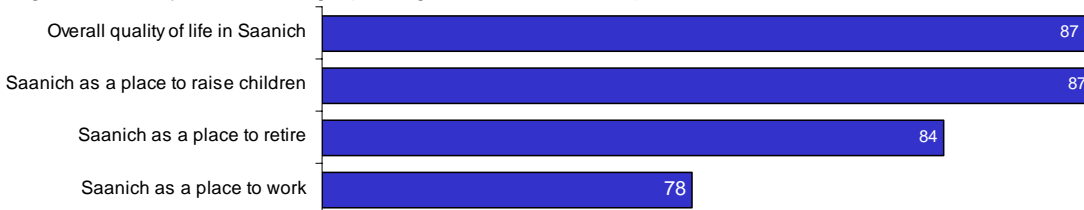
Measuring quality of life is complex, and involves many different indicators. The three groupings of results presented below – “a place to live”, “safety and security” and “likes and dislikes” – provide a reasonable indication of the perceived quality of life in Saanich.

The responses to these three groupings of questions suggest a very positive perception of quality of life in Saanich. Residents are happy living here, generally feel safe, appreciate the amenities, environment and location, and plan to stay. When asked what they dislike most about Saanich, a significant percentage of residents cite traffic and transportation – a theme that runs throughout the survey. Clearly this issue is one which residents feel strongly about as a problem and its impact on quality of life.

A Place to Live (Question #1)

When asked their perceptions of quality of life in Saanich, survey respondents were very positive about Saanich as a community in which to live. These questions received some of the most positive ratings in the survey (see App. III for all data). Residents assigned an average rating of 87% to the quality of life in Saanich. Quality of life ratings improved from 2003 in 2006 and remain consistently high in 2009. The average scores for 2009 are shown in Figure 1 below.

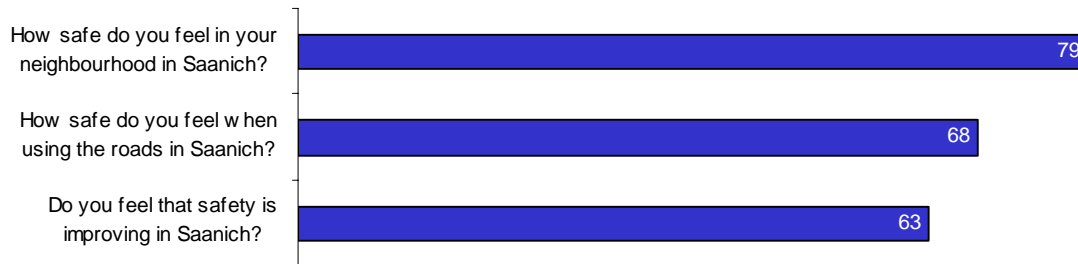
Figure 1: Quality of Life Ratings (average score - out of 100)



Safety & Security (Question #4)

Perceptions of safety and security remain consistent with 2006 results. Safety in Saanich neighbourhoods received a high score (average of 79), with only 3% indicating they felt unsafe or very unsafe. Not surprisingly, safety when using Saanich roadways received a lower average rating which is consistent with 2006. The perception that safety is improving was somewhat lower with an average score of 63 out of 100.

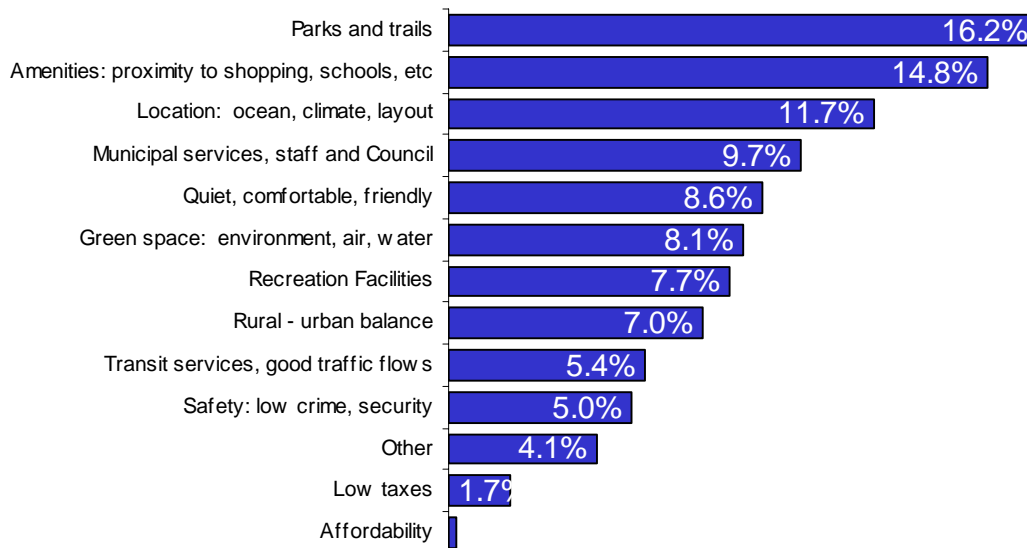
Figure 2: Perception of Safety (average score - out of 100)



Likes & Dislikes (Question #2 & #3)

Survey respondents were asked to list up to three things that they liked most about Saanich, and three things they dislike the most. Their responses were categorized into similar groupings or themes and are reported in aggregate form. Verbatim responses are available in Appendix IV.

Figure 3: Like Most About Saanich (% of respondents)



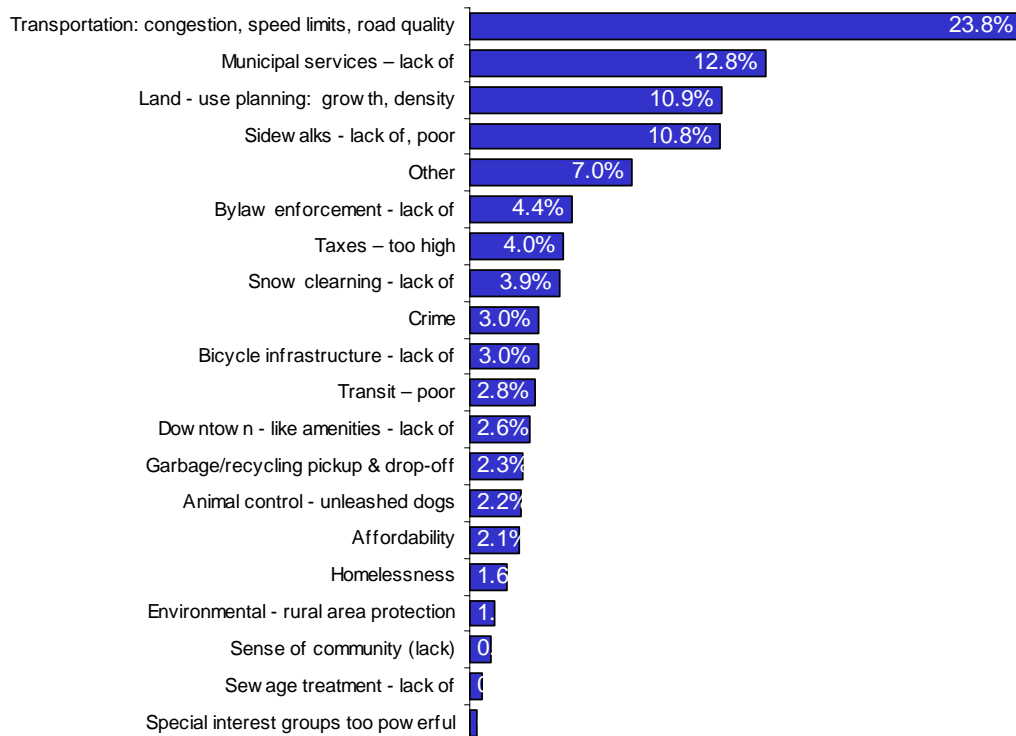
The survey results indicate that residents continue to place a high value on the municipality's parks and trails, excellent amenities (shopping, hospitals, schools, etc.) and small-town feel with quiet, friendly neighbourhoods and close proximity to rural areas. Municipal services and recreation facilities also figure prominently in the list of things citizens like most about Saanich. In 2009, residents place a slightly greater emphasis on location than they did in 2006.

Likes & Dislikes (Question #2 & #3 - Continued)

When asked to name up to three things they dislike most about living in Saanich, the largest proportion continue to mention traffic congestion and road quality. The 2009 transportation rating is down slightly from 28% in 2003 and consistent with the 23% rating in 2006. Other prominent issues mentioned are municipal services, growth pressures and the lack of sidewalks.

The survey results indicate that residents continue to stress traffic volume, congestion and road quality as the main areas that impact quality of life in Saanich. In 2009, residents place a slightly greater emphasis on the lack of municipal services such as sidewalks and street lighting. Lack of snow clearing and road condition comments may have been influenced by the unusual winter conditions during the survey period.

Figure 4: Dislike Most About Saanich (% of respondents)



Service Delivery

Several components are used to evaluate local government services: an assessment of the perceived quality and importance of a particular service; the citizen usage rate of a service; and finally a more general assessment of the customer service provided by Saanich employees. Results are very positive, although certainly exhibit a wide range in all three components. Saanich residents value excellent local government services, and appear generally satisfied with the selection and quality.

Quality vs. Importance of Local Government Services (Question #5)

The survey results provide a detailed assessment of 58 local government services. Each question provides slightly different information, one on service quality, and the other on service availability and appropriate resource allocation. The 2009 Citizen Survey asked respondents to rate each local government service by both satisfaction and importance. These two ratings can then be plotted onto a graph which shows four quadrants:

QUADRANT #1 (lower left): Low Satisfaction – Low Importance: Services in this quadrant may suffer from low awareness of their availability or benefits by the general population, or may offer the opportunity for resource reallocation.

QUADRANT #2 (lower right): High Satisfaction – Low Importance: These services may require little attention or may even offer an opportunity for resource reallocation.

QUADRANT #3 (upper left): Low Satisfaction – High Importance: These services may require more municipal resources, better management of existing resources or a new approach to service delivery.

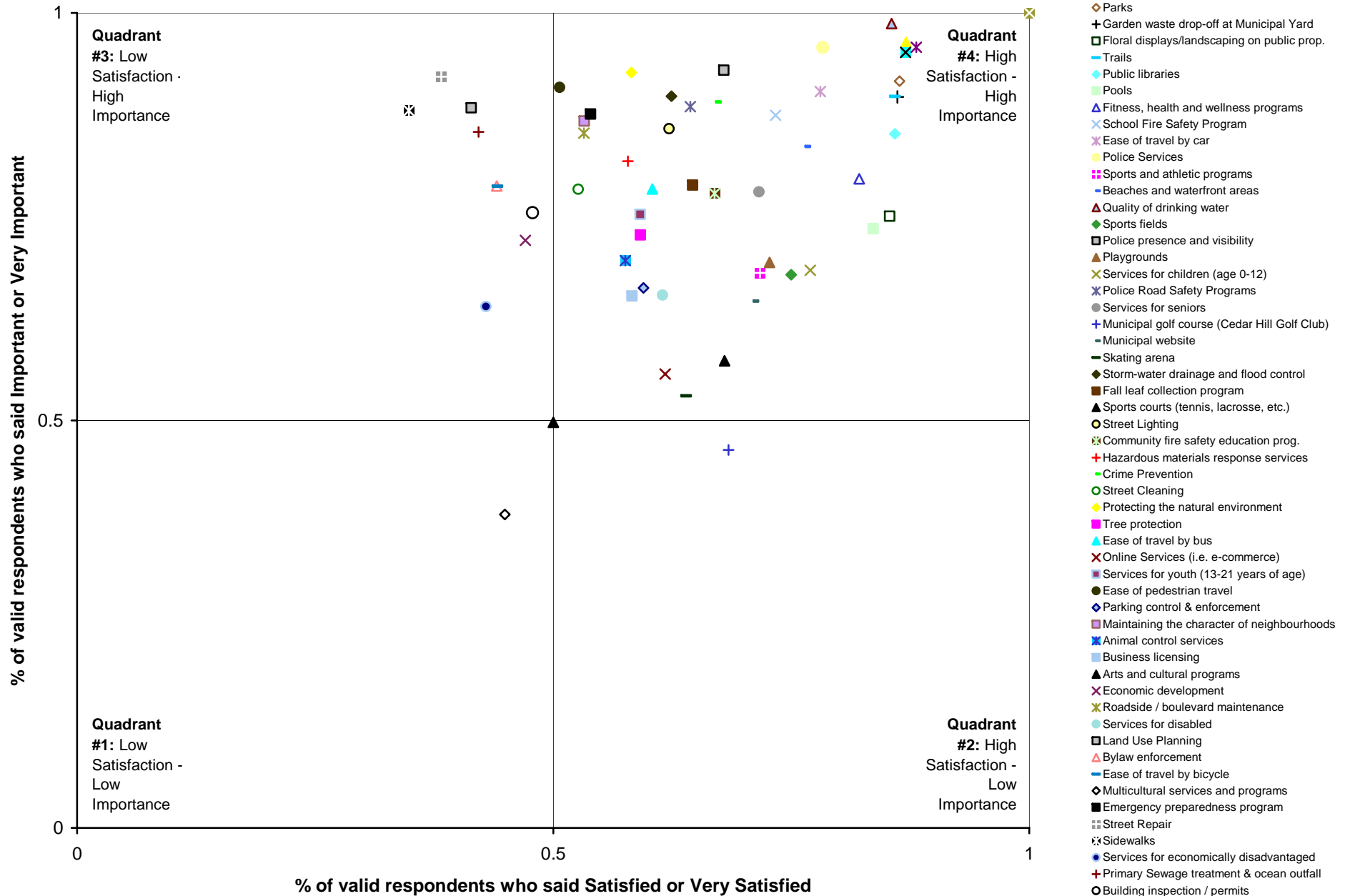
QUADRANT #4 (upper right): High Satisfaction – High Importance: Services in this quadrant largely meet current taxpayer expectations, both in terms of quality and resource allocation.

The satisfaction and importance results are shown in Figure 5 on the next page, indicating that 48 of the 58 (83%) listed services are in quadrants 1 and 4. Therefore the majority of local government services are meeting or exceeding taxpayer expectations in terms of quality and resource allocation.

There are 9 services in quadrant 3 with a low satisfaction/high importance rating. These services are: Sidewalks, street repair, primary sewage treatment and ocean outfall, bylaw enforcement, building inspection / permits, ease of travel by bicycle, land use planning, economic development and services for the economically disadvantaged. These services could be reviewed to determine if more municipal resources, better management of existing resources or a new approach to service delivery is required.

The only service rated in quadrant 2 (high satisfaction/low importance) is the Municipal Golf Course. This service may offer an opportunity for resource reallocation.

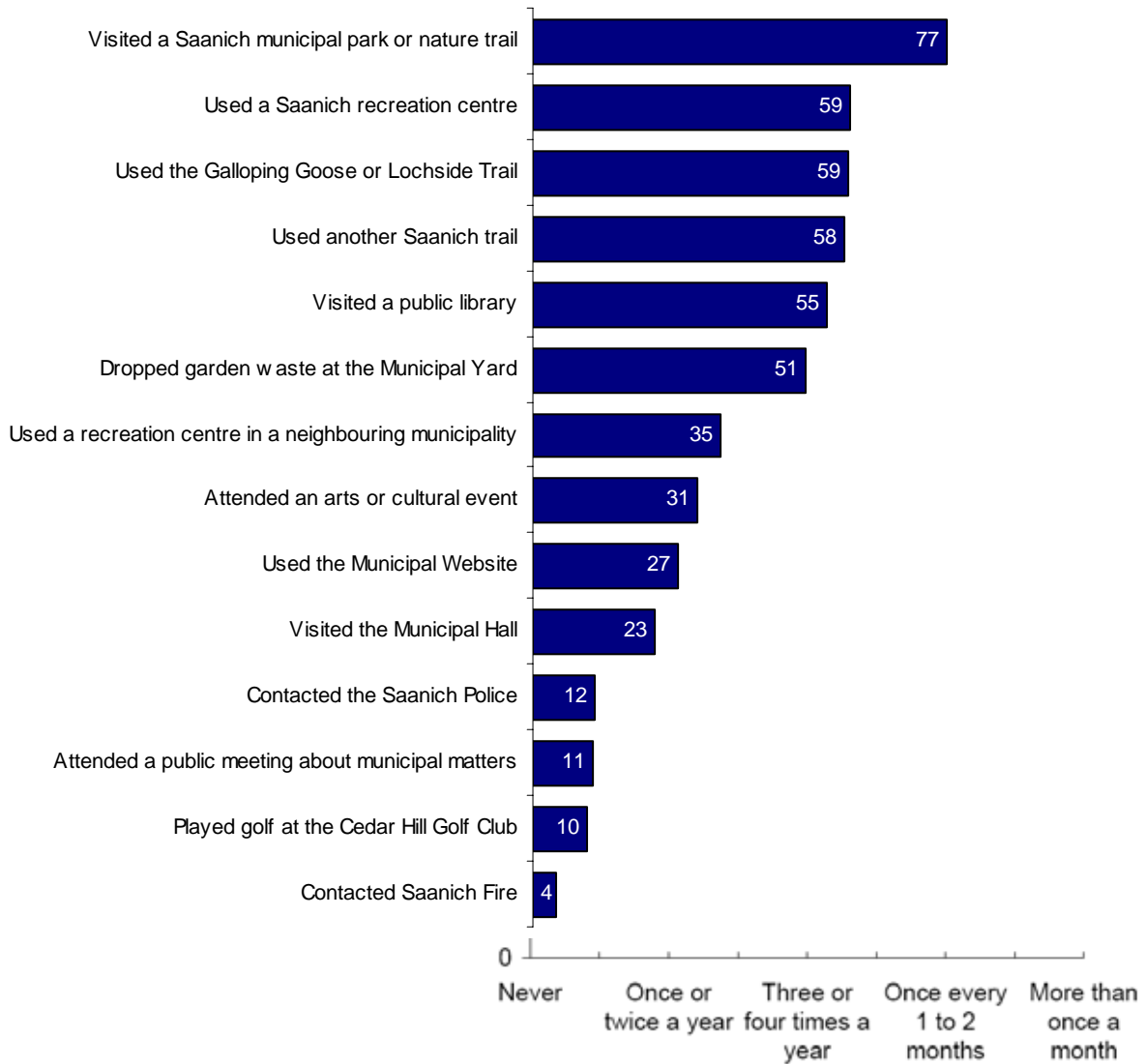
Figure 5: Satisfaction vs. Importance of Local Government Services



Citizen Usage Rates of Selected Services (Question #6)

Use of the available services by citizens varies tremendously. Not surprisingly, leisure-type activities are used at a significantly higher frequency than other services (the exception being the golf course). A large segment of the population uses Saanich’s recreation centres, libraries, parks and trails several times per year or more as shown in Figure 6 below:

Figure 6: Average Participation Rating During the past 12 months



Customer service (Question #11-15)

Over 50% of survey respondents report having had a personal contact with a Saanich employee in the past 12 months. The two most common ways to interact with Saanich employees are: by telephone (79% of all reporting interactions), and in person at a Municipal facility (59%).

Those respondents who have had a personal contact with an employee were then asked to rate the customer service provided by that employee in five standard customer service evaluation criteria: were they treated fairly, were staff knowledgeable and competent, whether staff went the extra mile to make sure they got what they needed, did the customer wait a reasonable amount of time and were they informed of everything they had to do to get the service.

Survey respondents report high levels of satisfaction with the customer service provided by Saanich employees. Average scores of 74 to 84 are consistent with the scores of other local governments. Of greater relevance to customer service evaluation is the “performance gap” between the customer’s satisfaction with the level of service they receive and the importance the customer places on that service level. Staff will be reviewing these performance gaps to determine appropriate actions plans to address them.

Figure 7: Customer service satisfaction and importance

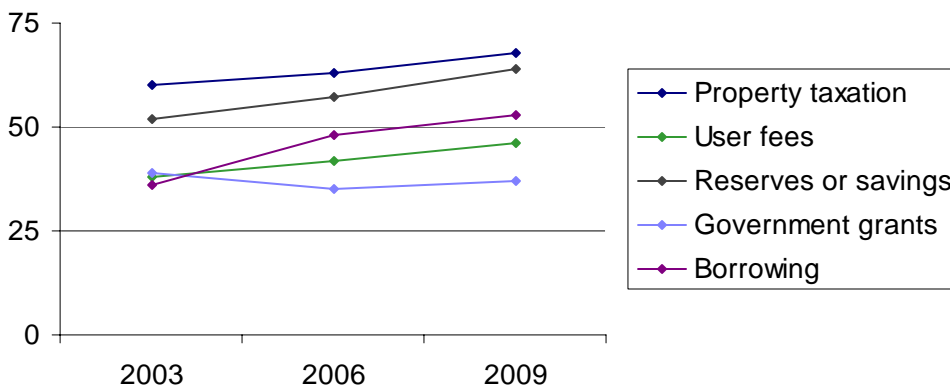


Local Government

Revenue Sources (Question #7)

Currently, a large majority of respondents continue to support the same level of reliance on property taxation as a source of revenue. The comparative chart below supports a return to the trend to place an increased reliance on government grants. Survey trend data indicates a steady increasing trend toward maintaining the same levels of reliance on property taxation and user fees.

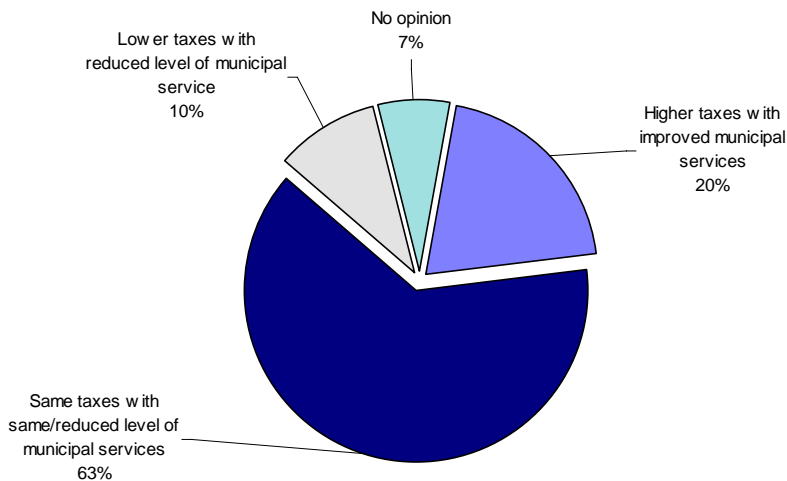
Figure 8a: % Respondents saying "Stay the Same" on Revenue Sources



Taxes and Service Levels (Question #8)

Results show that a majority of taxpayers are satisfied with the current level of services and appear unwilling to trade a tax increase for increased services.

Figure 8b: If faced with the following choices, which would you prefer?

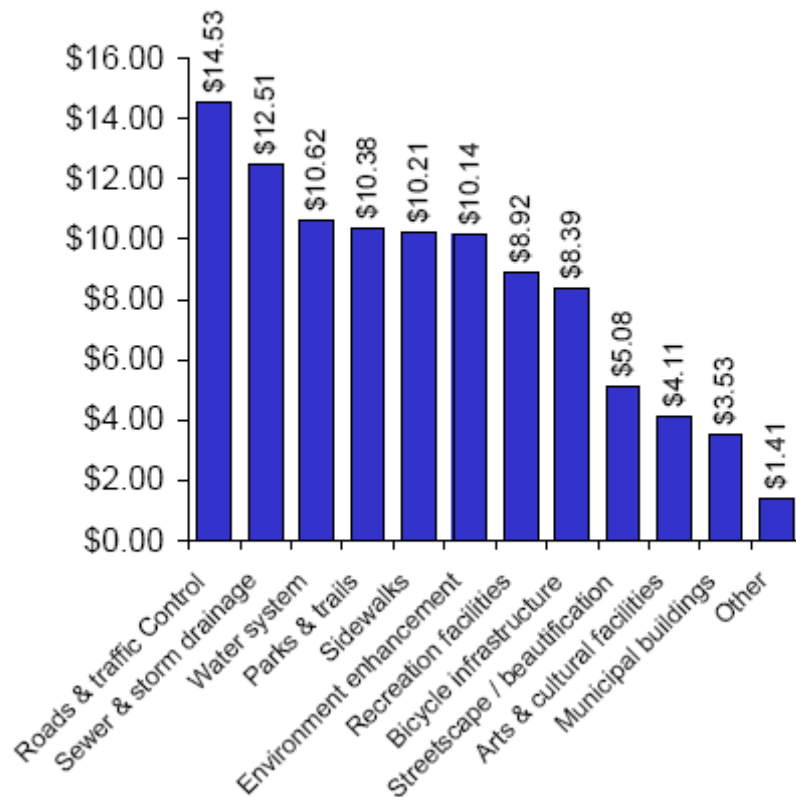


Capital Projects Spending (Question #9)

When asked how they would spend \$100 on a list of capital projects, survey respondents say that they would spend the most on transportation infrastructure, mirroring concerns raised in earlier sections. Followed closely behind transportation are the water, sewer and storm drainage systems then parks and trails along with sidewalks and environmental protection.

“Soft” recreation infrastructure such as parks and trails appears to be more favoured than “hard” recreation infrastructure such as recreation or arts/cultural centres, again mirroring a previous question showing that citizens use parks and trails more often than other forms of municipally supplied leisure infrastructure.

Figure 9: Capital Projects (if \$100 available to spend)



Economic Conditions (Question #10)

When citizens were asked to provide specific actions that the Municipality could take, recognizing uncertain global and local economic conditions, a wide variety of responses were received. The suggested actions ranged from “control costs” to “upgrade infrastructure”. A thematic analysis of the comments shows that the top three suggestions were:

Action recommended	% of respondents	# of respondents
Control costs / improve efficiency	20.6%	180
Promote green initiatives	13.2%	115
Upgrade infrastructure	10.8%	94

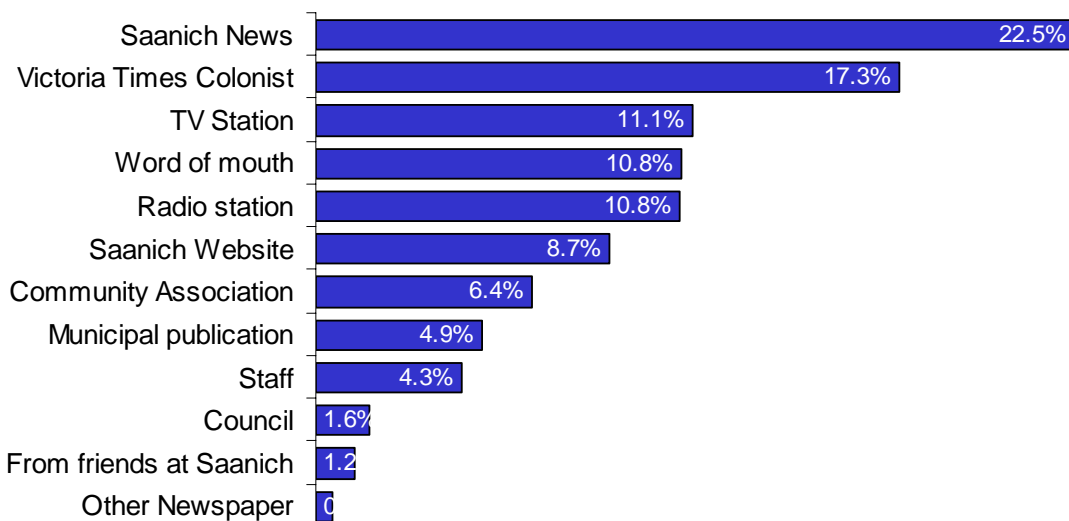
A complete listing of the comments by category is located in Appendix IV: Responses to Open-ended questions.

Citizen engagement (Question #16-17)

The survey asked respondents about their existing and preferred methods of access to municipal information, how they would like to be involved in the decision making process, and if the District of Saanich is receptive and responsive to citizen engagement.

Respondents identified the Saanich News (22% of respondents) and the Victoria Times-Colonist (17%) as the two most important ways they wish to access information about municipal issues. Word of mouth, TV and radio are the next most important, but lag the top two significantly in the 11% range. Municipal publications (such as brochures) and the Saanich website are favoured by less than 9% of respondents. See Appendix III for complete list of responses.

Figure 10: Most Important Ways Citizens Access Municipal Information



Finally, respondents were asked to rank citizen engagement practices of the District of Saanich – how well does Saanich welcome and listen to citizens. These rankings for 2009 show a return to 2003 results perhaps a reflection of the increased citizen involvement in events during the Saanich Centennial in 2006.

Comparative ranking of citizen engagement practices in Saanich	Average Score (out of 100)		
	2003	2006	2009
#11b. The District of Saanich government welcomes citizen involvement	63	68	62
#11c. The District of Saanich government listens to citizens	55	61	56

E-Government and E-Commerce (Question #5, #6, #16 and #17)

Citizen use, satisfaction with, and perceived importance of the existing municipal website show a steady increase when compared to the 2003 and 2006 surveys. The addition of on-line services such as recreation class registrations and online payments for municipal services have been very well received according to our actual web site visitation statistics. See Appendix III for a complete summary of results to these questions.

Comparative ranking of municipal website and on-line services	2003	2006	2009
#5 Municipal website (% satisfied or very satisfied)	57%	69%	71%
#6 Service usage – Used the Municipal website (average score out of 100)	10	17	27
#16 Ways citizens learn about municipal government issues – Saanich website (%)	4%	5%	8.7%
#17 Ways the municipality can involve citizens more in decision-making – Internet discussion board (average score out of 100)	35	35	43

Overall value (Question #11)

Respondents were asked three questions related to overall value and satisfaction with the governance of Saanich. The trend remains consistent when comparing the current ratings with those from 2003 and 2006 as shown below:

Comparative ranking of citizen perception of overall value and satisfaction	Average Score (out of 100)		
	2003	2006	2009
#11a. I receive good value for the municipal taxes I pay	62	65	67
#11d. I am pleased with the overall direction that the District of Saanich is taking	64	67	65
#11e. In general, I believe the District of Saanich government is doing a good job	67	71	70