

Civic League Releases Results of the Community Values Survey

Protecting the source of our drinking water heads the list of the community values identified in the North Bay Civic League's Community Values Survey. The North Bay Civic League conducted its inaugural Community Values Survey from early May to September 17, 2010. The survey was distributed to members of a wide range of community organizations, such as the North Bay Chamber of Commerce, North Bay Area Social Planning Council, W.P. Kennedy Gallery, Living Fit Group, North Bay Indian Friendship Centre, and environmental groups. It was open to the general public with the aim of getting the best cross section of opinions about what matters most to North Bayites. 502 people responded to the survey, 464 online and 38 on paper.

The survey was well received by residents. Comments received included:

"It's gratifying to know that someone cares about what the general populous of North Bay thinks."

"North Bay residents need more say on local issues. . . we need more fairness and transparency."

"I sincerely hope that this type of civic involvement will continue."

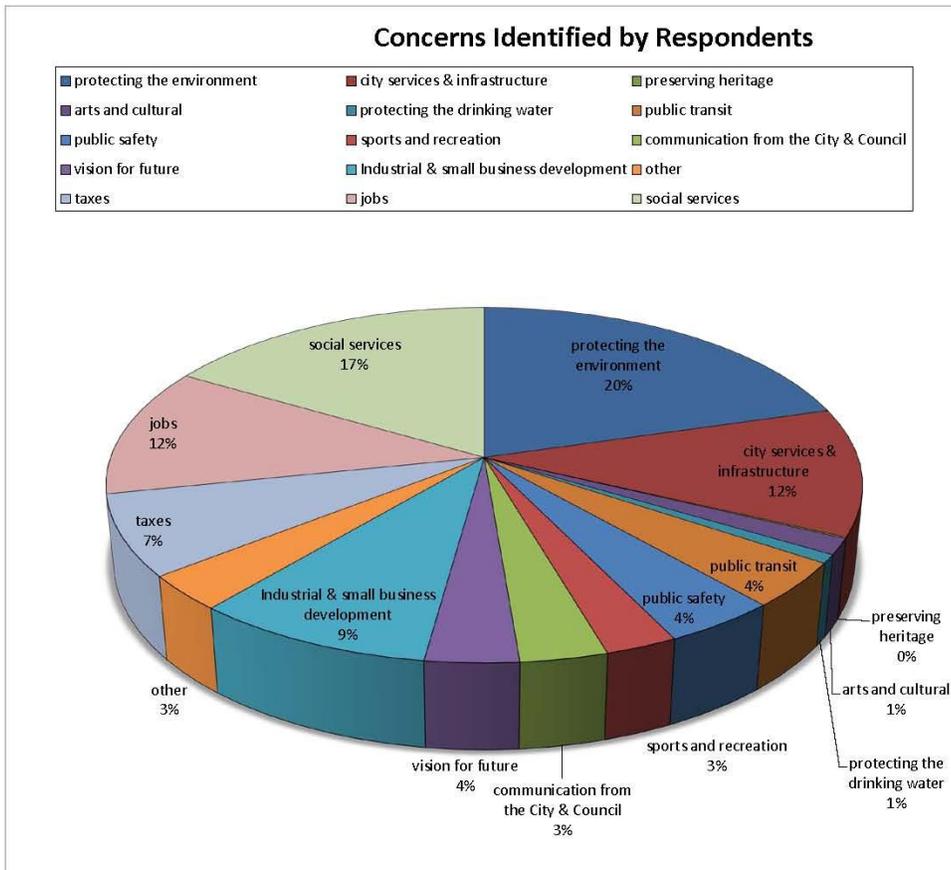
Twelve closed-ended questions were asked of respondents. Responses to these questions were ranked in order based on the community's sense of importance followed by an evaluation of city council's efforts to address these concerns.

Community Value	# of responders
Protecting the source of our drinking water is important	493
Feeling safe in all areas of the city is important.	492
Having a vision for North Bay's social, economic and environmental future is important	486
Communication on major issues is a responsibility of City Council	479
Protecting the environment is important e.g. parks, clean air, green space, safe beaches, trails, waste reduction, bike lanes	475

Possibly of even more interest is how City Council's performance was rated by the respondents. For the first two items, protecting the source of drinking water and feeling safe, Council's performance was approved by 56% and 51% respectively. However, the approval dropped significantly for having a vision, communication, and protecting the environment (28%, 24% and 25% respectively).

In answer to the general question, "Do you think City Council is addressing your main concerns adequately?" 58% said "no" 28% said "don't know" and only 14% said "yes"

Respondents were also asked the question "What for you are the two most pressing areas of concern for North Bay?" Topping the list was protecting the environment (20% of respondents) followed by Social Services (17%). "Jobs" and "city infrastructure and services" tied at third with (12%). Tax rates came in fifth with 7%.



In reference to environmental concerns, respondents noted protecting green space, parks, and our drinking water sources.

Protection and enhancement of Social Services is also of concern to many residents. The closing of the psychiatric hospital and the loss of beds to Sudbury came through in the survey. Many respondents also noted the lack of affordable housing and services for low income residents and seniors as community needs.

A large number of respondents raised the issue of quality jobs in North Bay. Closely linked to this issue was the need to provide opportunities for young adults in North Bay to keep them in the community. One respondent wrote, "My husband and I are seniors. North Bay was a wonderful place to raise our children, however, they have all left the area. . . too bad we don't have decent paying jobs to offer them, as our area has everything else to offer young families. Where else can you find a city with two lakes, a ski hill, walking and bike trails and a waterfall all within the city limits?"

There were also a number of citizens concerned with city services and infrastructure. Road surface quality and traffic congestion stood out as the most cited of these concerns.

62% of the respondents were female.

54% of respondents were between the ages of 31-59. 28% were over 60 and 17% were between the ages of 20-30.

44% of the respondents have lived in North Bay 21-50 years. 14% have lived here 11-20 years and 14 % have lived in the city for more than 50 years.

In response to why people chose North Bay as their home, 50% choose North Bay as a place to live because of the natural environment, 45% because of work while only 38% cited growing up here as one of their reasons. 79% of the respondents intend to continue living in North Bay and 83% of respondents intend to vote in the next municipal election.

The North Bay Civic League looks forward to the reactions of municipal candidates to our survey results. Most importantly, the North Bay Civic League encourages the public to vote in the upcoming election, in order to have their voices heard and their issues addressed.