

NORTH BAY
ONTARIO • CANADA

Community Survey 2024





What We Did.

Introduction

The City of North Bay conducted a Community Survey to gather resident feedback on key topics, including budgeting priorities, city services, transit, communications, and customer service.

The survey ran online from late August to the end of September 2024, attracting participation from over 2,000 residents. To reach a broad audience, the City utilized multiple promotional channels, such as QR-coded cards at the City's customer service counter and outreach during the "Welcome to North Bay" event at Memorial Gardens.

Although not a scientific study, the feedback provides a snapshot of community sentiment, complementing other data sources in shaping City decisions.

Key themes emerged from the survey responses, most notably the importance of community safety and well-being. This was identified as a top priority for the Mayor and Council, with many respondents emphasizing the need for focused attention in this area.

The survey also revealed diverse perspectives on addressing rising costs and municipal property taxes. Nearly half of the respondents supported increasing taxes to maintain or expand services, while others preferred maintaining current tax levels even if it required reducing service quality or quantity. A smaller segment favored lowering taxes and reducing services.

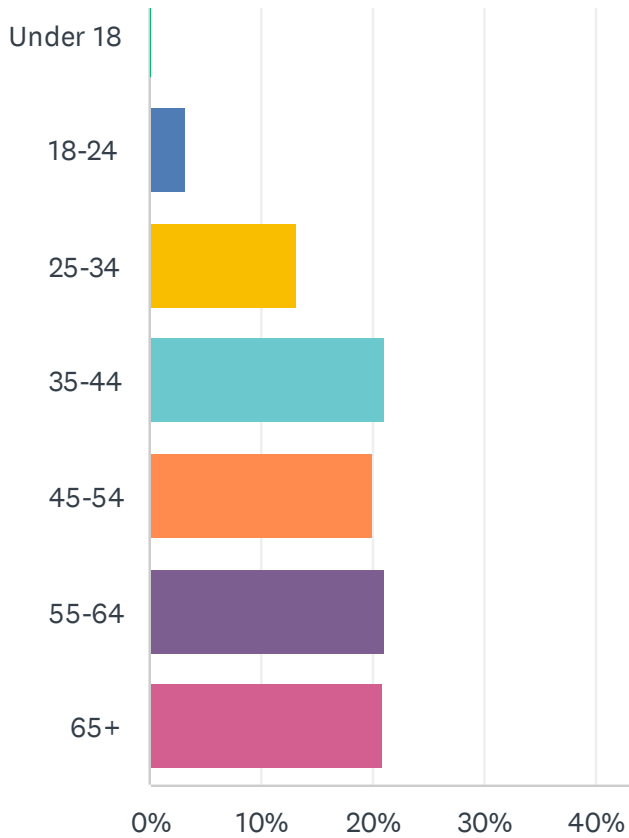
Overall, the results indicate higher levels of satisfaction with many city services, though there the result show there are areas where improvements are needed.



Who We Heard From.

Age

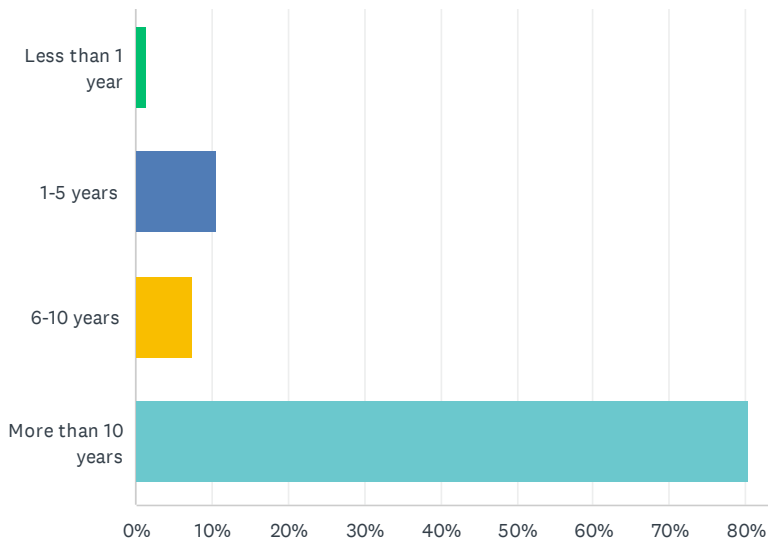
Respondents ranged in age from under 18 to over 65, with participation lower among age groups 18 to 34. In contrast, age groups 36 and older were almost evenly represented



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Under 18	0.20% 4
18-24	3.19% 64
25-34	13.30% 267
35-44	21.18% 425
45-54	20.08% 403
55-64	21.13% 424
65+	20.93% 420
TOTAL	2,007

Living in North Bay

Approximately 80% of respondents have lived in North Bay for more than 10 years. Meanwhile, 7.5% have lived in the City for six to 10 years, and 10.6% have called North Bay home for one to five years.

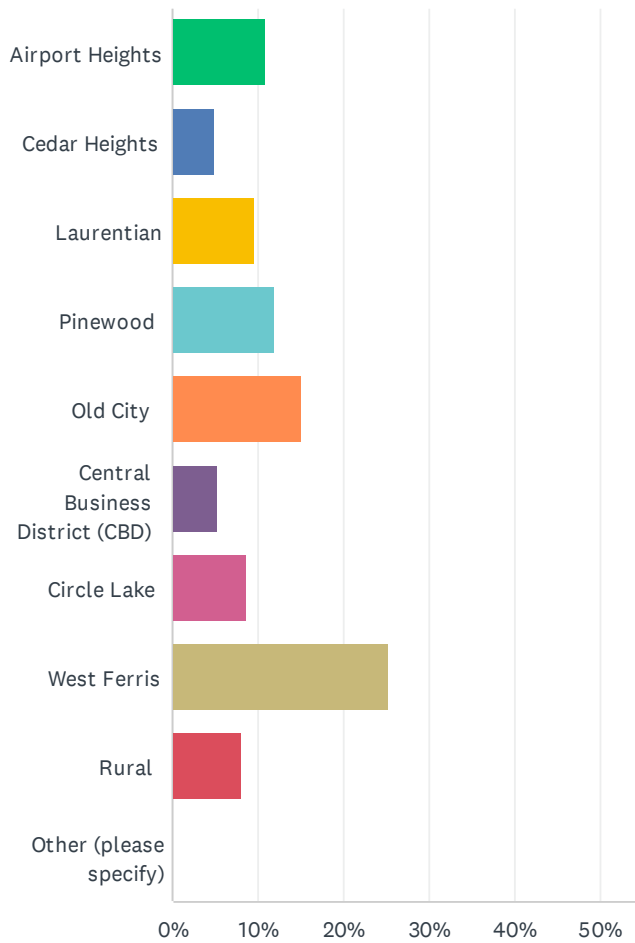


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Less than 1 year	1.39% 28
1-5 years	10.60% 213
6-10 years	7.52% 151
More than 10 years	80.49% 1,617
TOTAL	2,009



Where in North Bay

Input was gathered from across all areas of the city, with just over 25% of responses coming from West Ferris, North Bay’s largest residential area.



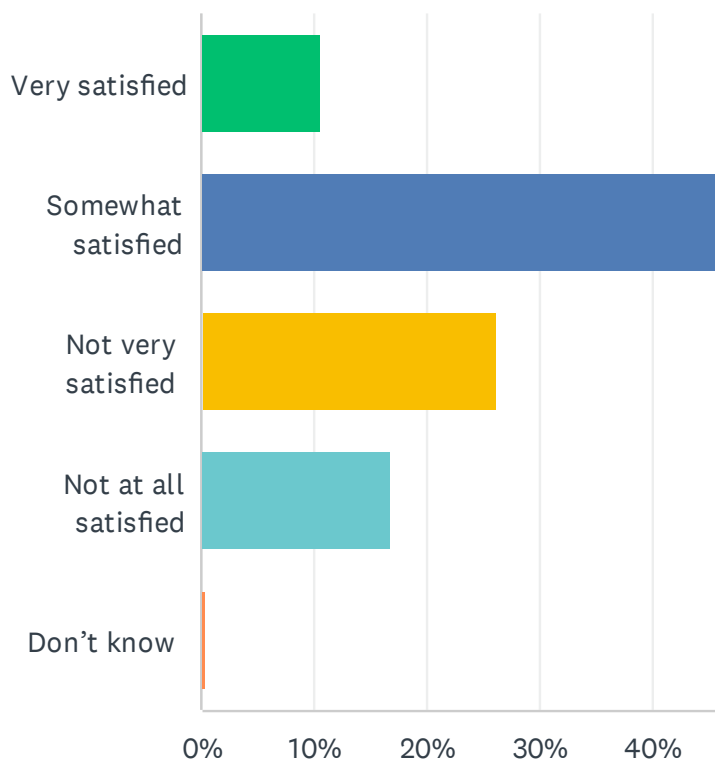
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Airport Heights	10.93% 221
Cedar Heights	5.00% 101
Laurentian	9.55% 193
Pinewood	11.92% 241
Old City	15.13% 306
Central Business District (CBD)	5.24% 106
Circle Lake	8.65% 175
West Ferris	25.47% 515
Rural	8.11% 164
Other (please specify)	0.00% 0
TOTAL	2,022

*Areas of the City were categorized based on the planning districts identified in the City of North Bay’s Official Plan.



Overall Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with living in North Bay, with 56.56% reporting they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied, 26.24% indicating they were not very satisfied, and 16.83% stating they were not at all satisfied.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very satisfied	10.65% 198
Somewhat satisfied	45.91% 854
Not very satisfied	26.24% 488
Not at all satisfied	16.83% 313
Don't know	0.38% 7
TOTAL	1,860



What Residents Love Most

Respondents were asked to use one or two words to describe what they like best about living in North Bay. The majority highlighted North Bay's natural surroundings as their top choice, with lakes, nature, and the waterfront emerging as the most common responses.



Top Priority

Community safety and well-being emerged as the top priority for attention from the Mayor and Council, with homelessness, mental health and addiction, and crime and safety cited as key concerns. The word cloud below illustrates some of the most frequent responses, with the most common words appearing larger and bolder.

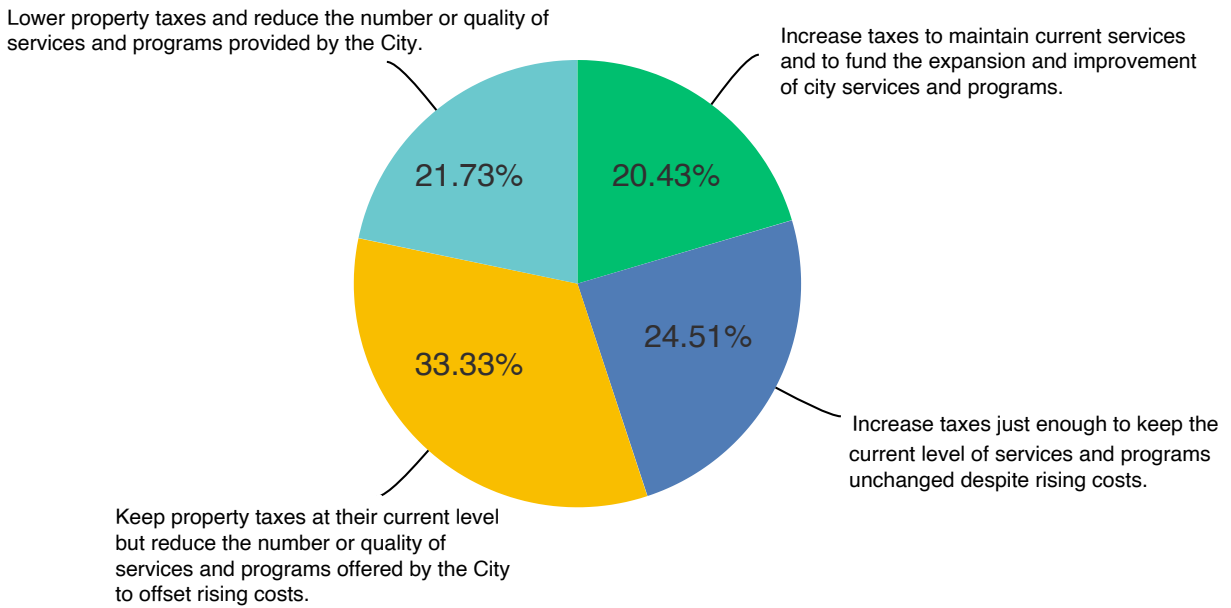
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Budget Priorities

Respondents were asked how the City should address rising costs and municipal property taxes, considering ongoing efforts to find operational efficiencies while facing inflationary pressures and increasing expenses.

When it comes to taxes and services, preferences varied. Nearly half of respondents (44.94%) indicated a willingness to increase taxes to maintain or expand services. Meanwhile, 33.33% supported maintaining current tax levels but even if it meant reducing service quality or quantity. A smaller group (21.73%) preferred lowering taxes and reducing services.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Increase taxes to maintain current services and to fund the expansion and improvement of city services and programs.	20.43%	315
Increase taxes just enough to keep the current level of services and programs unchanged despite rising costs.	24.51%	378
Keep property taxes at their current level but reduce the number or quality of services and programs offered by the City to offset rising costs.	33.33%	514
Lower property taxes and reduce the number or quality of services and programs provided by the City.	21.73%	335
TOTAL		1,542

Budget Comments & Suggestions

Suggestions for service enhancements were more prevalent than recommendations for reductions. Many respondents called for more policing, expanded services for homelessness, housing, improved road maintenance, cleaner parks, and enhanced recycling programs.

Suggested reductions focused on perceived “unnecessary” spending. Respondents proposed staff reductions, salary freezes, and reallocating funds from projects such as the new Recreation and Community Centre to address social issues and other more urgent needs. However, there were varied opinions on what constituted unnecessary expenditures or urgent priorities, reflecting the diverse perspectives and priorities within the community.

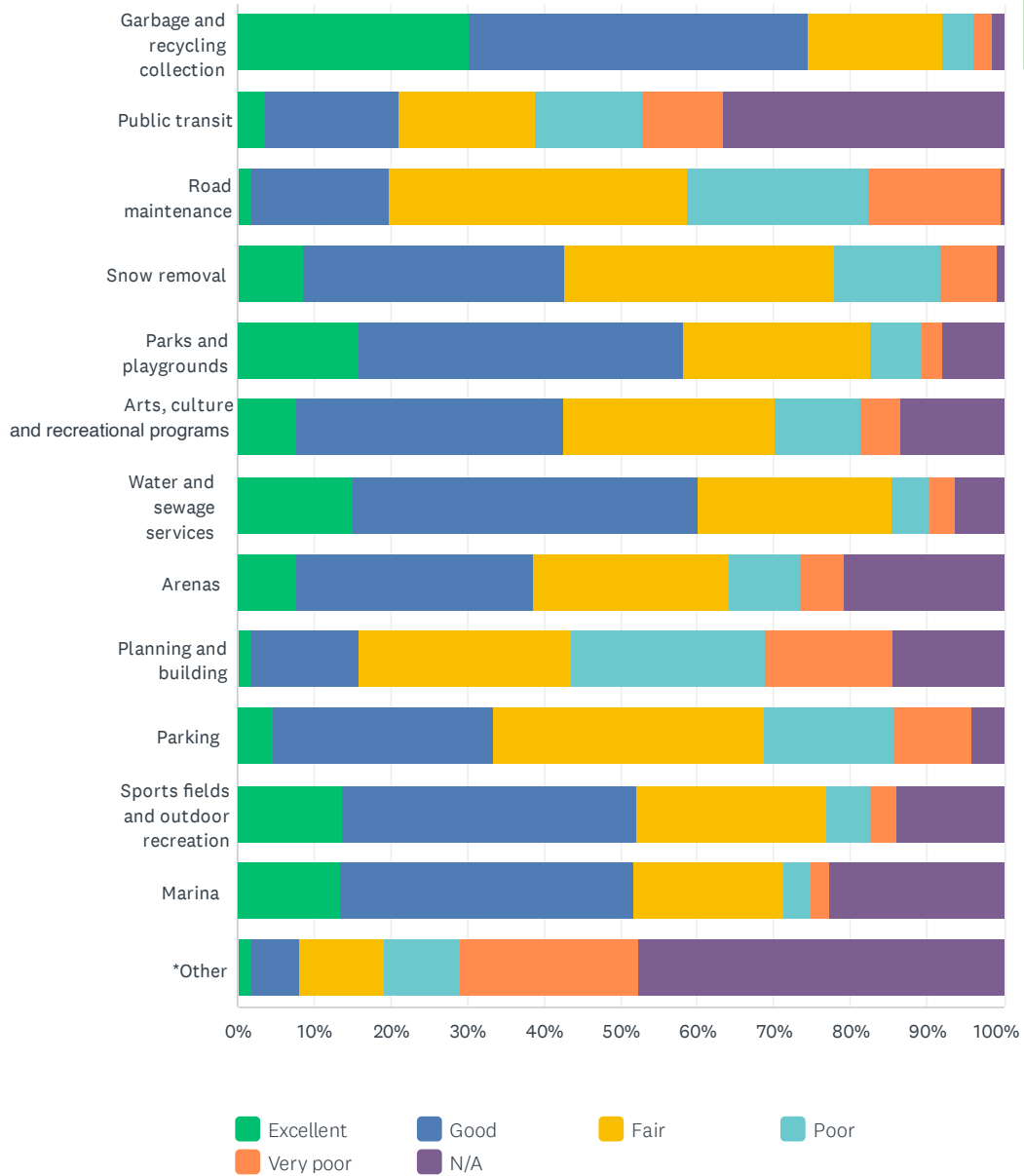
Below are unedited samples of respondent feedback:

- Eliminate new arena improve roads and increase services for homeless and mental health and addictions.
- Reduce property taxes by reducing the bloated overpaid city staff and bureaucracies and getting the remaining staff to work a lot more efficiently
- Continue to work to better manage the homelessness situation in the city, so that residents and business owners feel safe a supported.
- Library, capital centre and airport should all be reduced
- Don't lessen services, find new ways to generate revenue other than property taxes, such as incentives for industry to move here and pay taxes.
- Do not eliminate anything. Arenas needs improvement.
- Increase police protection,Reduce the amount of city employees
- Eliminate the new hockey arena, spend money on homeless shelters and treatment centers
- Continue waterfront development, expand after school/youth program, fund socialservice/DNSSAB activities beyond just legislative
- Let's get the new arena project started. The more attractive we make our community the more medical professionals we will attract.
- More bluebox pick up and add compost pick up
- I would like to see more support in housing, mental health and addictions
- Children, youth and adult recreation programs should be expanded and improved to increase quality of life. City transit should also be improved re: wait times and hours of operation



Services in North Bay

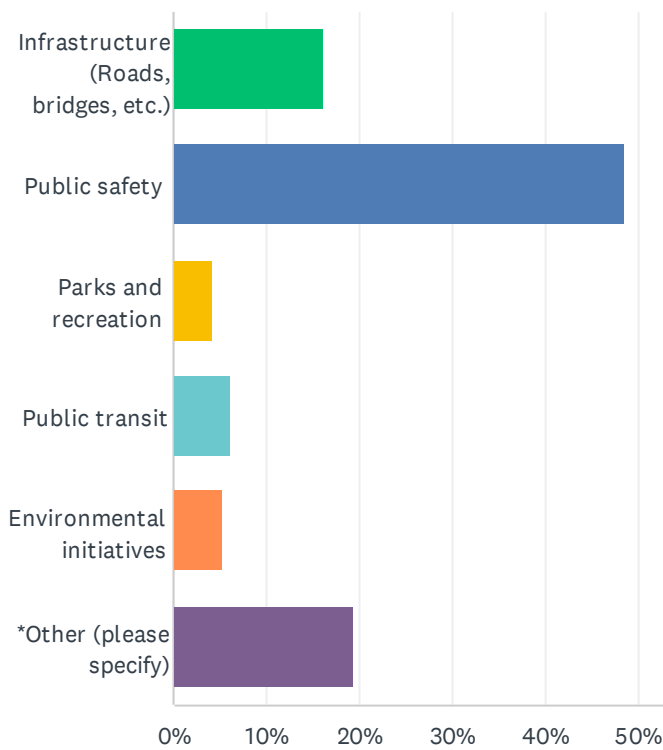
Respondents were asked to rate several core City services, and the results reveal varying levels of satisfaction across different areas. Overall, the majority of services received fair to positive satisfaction ratings.



**Respondents who selected 'Other' identified a variety of services, with many highlighting housing and social services. Several comments also addressed specific situations across different areas of the City.*

Services in North Bay

Respondents were asked which municipal service they would prioritize for additional funding. The majority chose public safety as their top priority, followed by infrastructure improvements. A significant portion of respondents also suggested funding for other areas, including housing and support services for mental health and addiction.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Infrastructure (Roads, bridges, etc.)	16.21% 267
Public safety	48.51% 799
Parks and recreation	4.31% 71
Public transit	6.13% 101
Environmental initiatives	5.34% 88
Other (please specify)	19.49% 321
TOTAL	1,647

**Respondents who selected 'Other' identified a variety of services, with many highlighting housing and social services. Several comments also addressed specific situations across different areas of the City.*

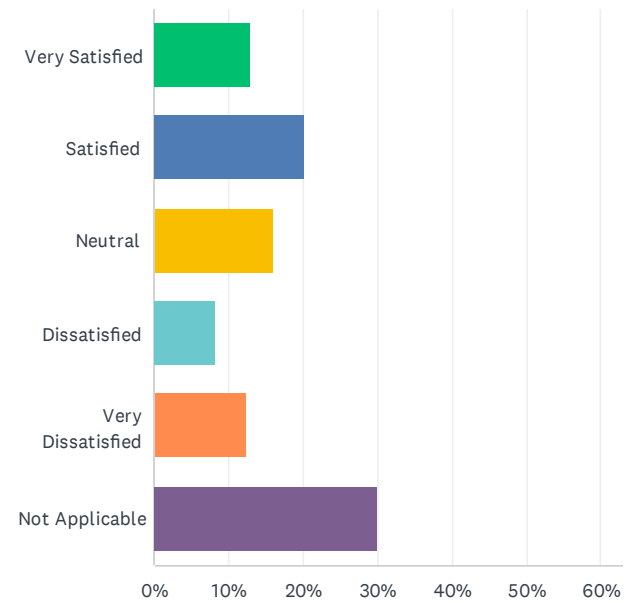
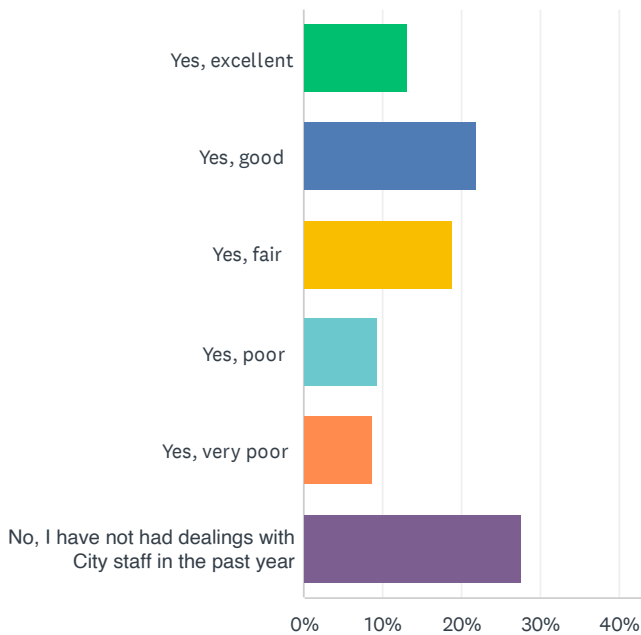


Customer Service

The survey asked respondents about their experiences with City of North Bay staff across all areas of the organization over the past two years. Over a quarter of respondents had no interaction in the past two years. Of those who interacted with staff, most rated their experience positive to neutral.

Have you had dealings with City of North Bay staff in the past two years? If so, how would you rate your experience with their helpfulness and professionalism?

How satisfied are you with the resolution of your issue or the answer to your inquiry?



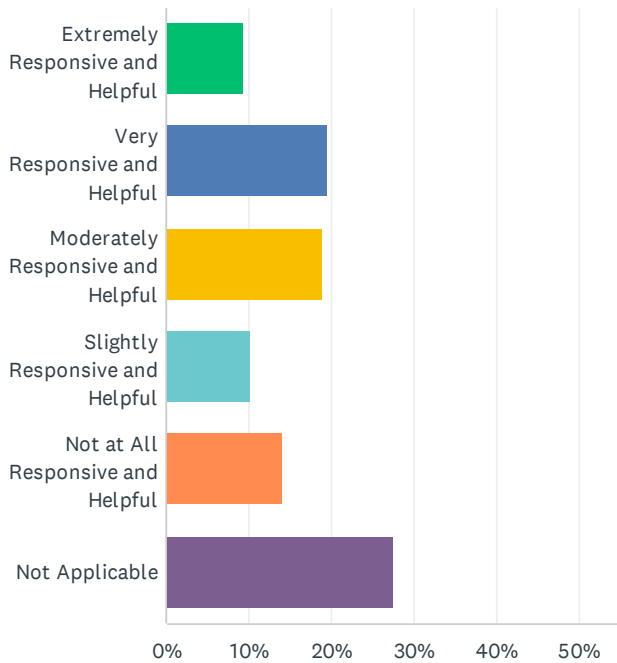
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, excellent	13.15%	212
Yes, good	22.02%	355
Yes, fair	18.92%	305
Yes, poor	9.43%	152
Yes, very poor	8.68%	140
No, I have not had dealings with City staff in the past year	27.79%	448
TOTAL		1,612

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very Satisfied	13.07%	208
Satisfied	20.16%	321
Neutral	15.95%	254
Dissatisfied	8.29%	132
Very Dissatisfied	12.37%	197
Not Applicable	30.15%	480
TOTAL		1,592

Customer Service

The survey asked respondents about their experiences with City staff’s responsiveness and helpfulness in addressing their needs and inquiries. The results show a mixed level of satisfaction, with most satisfied, very satisfied, or neutral about the outcome. Although most did not need follow-up (54%). Of those who did only 38.9% were satisfied.

How responsive and helpful was the City staff in addressing your needs and inquiries?



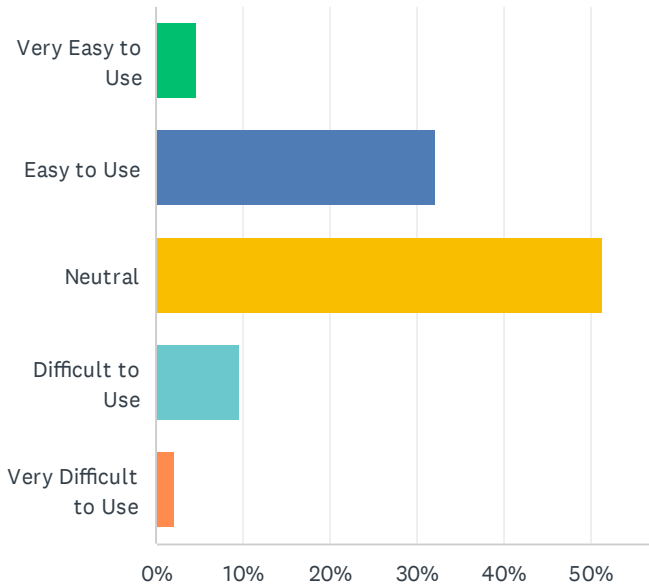
ANSWER CHOICES	PERCENTAGE	RESPONSES
Extremely Responsive and Helpful	9.34%	149
Very Responsive and Helpful	19.61%	313
Moderately Responsive and Helpful	19.05%	304
Slightly Responsive and Helpful	10.34%	165
Not at All Responsive and Helpful	14.16%	226
Not Applicable	27.51%	439
TOTAL		1,596



Online Services

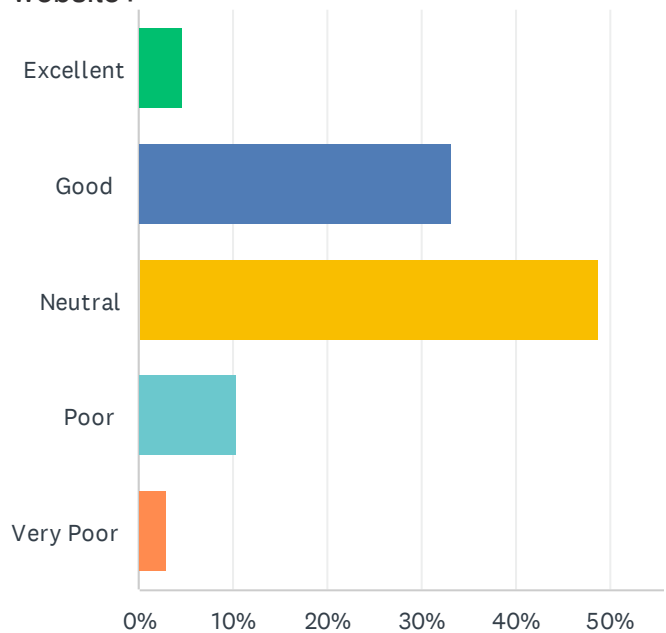
Most respondents rated their online experience as neutral to positive, with 11% expressing dissatisfaction or being very dissatisfied. Just over half of respondents felt neutral about the website’s usability, while 37.01% found it very easy or easy to use. Additionally, 86% rated the availability and accessibility of information on the City’s website as neutral to excellent. Only 1.4% reported encountering technical problems.

How would you rate the usability of the City’s website?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very Easy to Use	4.74% 73
Easy to Use	32.27% 497
Neutral	51.30% 790
Difficult to Use	9.61% 148
Very Difficult to Use	2.08% 32
TOTAL	1,540

How would you rate the availability and accessibility of information on the City’s website?



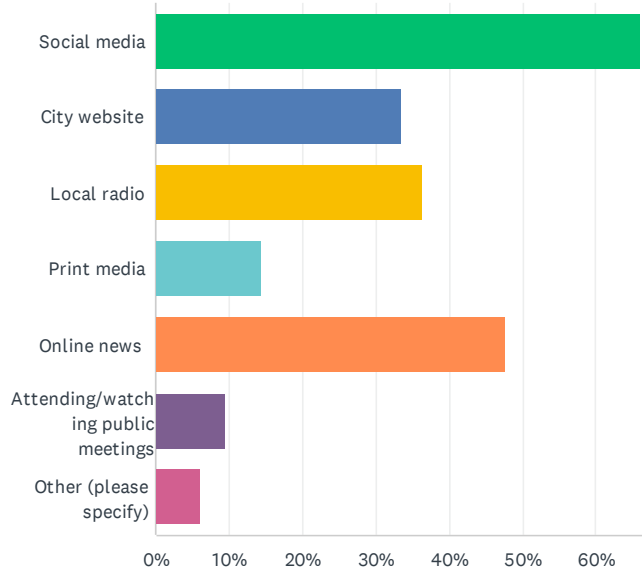
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Excellent	4.68% 72
Good	33.18% 510
Neutral	48.80% 750
Poor	10.41% 160
Very Poor	2.93% 45
TOTAL	1,537

Communications

Most respondents rely on social media (66.1%) and online news (47.8%) for information about the City, followed by local radio (36.4%) and the City website (33.5%). Print media and public meetings are less common sources, with 6.2% citing other sources like word of mouth.

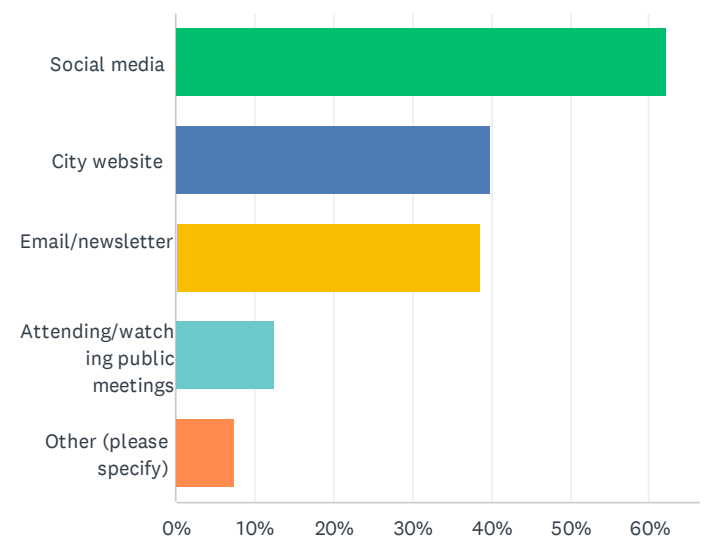
In the future, most respondents prefer receiving information from the City via social media (62.3%), followed by the City website (40%) and email/newsletters (38.6%).

What are your primary sources of information about the City?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Social media	66.12%	1,009
City website	33.49%	511
Local radio	36.37%	555
Print media	14.48%	221
Online news	47.84%	730
Attending/watching public meetings	9.63%	147
Other (please specify)	6.16%	94
Total Respondents: 1,526		

In the future how would you prefer to receive information from the City?



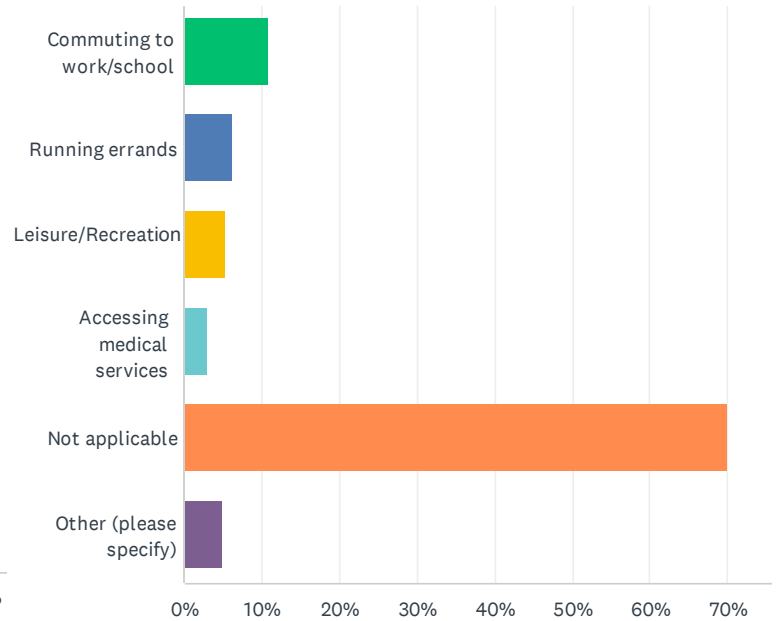
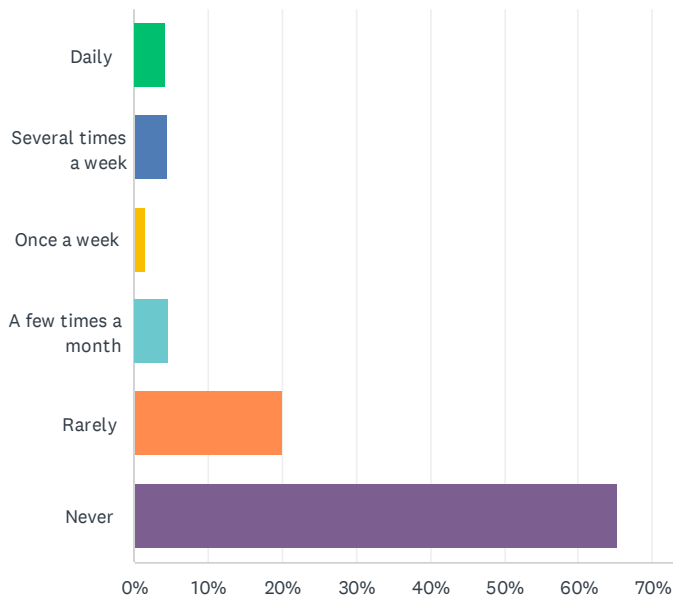
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Social media	62.31%	906
City website	39.96%	581
Email/newsletter	38.58%	561
Attending/watching public meetings	12.59%	183
Other (please specify)	7.50%	109
Total Respondents: 1,454		



Transit

The survey data reveals that a significant majority of respondents (65.2%) do not use North Bay Transit at all, and only a small portion use it frequently (daily or several times a week).

Commuting to work/school was cited as the primary reason by about 36% of those who use transit. Running errands and leisure/recreation are also common uses, followed by accessing medical services.

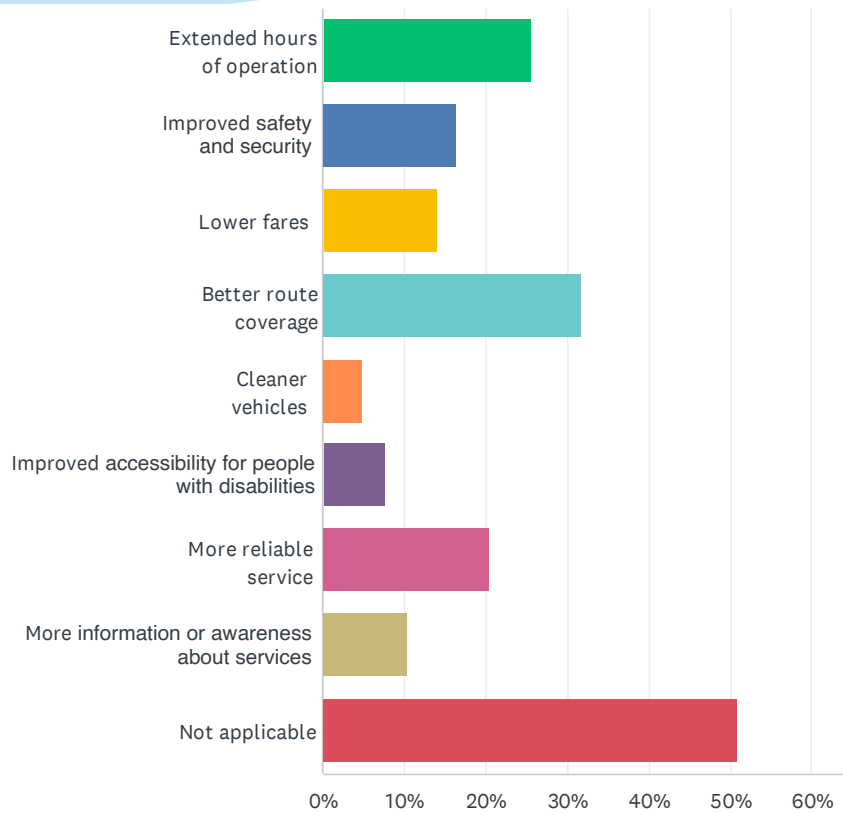


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Daily	4.33%	67
Several times a week	4.40%	68
Once a week	1.42%	22
A few times a month	4.59%	71
Rarely	20.10%	311
Never	65.16%	1,008
TOTAL		1,547

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Commuting to work/school	10.78%	158
Running errands	6.14%	90
Leisure/Recreation	5.25%	77
Accessing medical services	2.93%	43
Not applicable	69.99%	1,026
Other (please specify)	4.91%	72
TOTAL		1,466

Transit

Route coverage, hours of operation, and reliability, were cited as the top factors that would increase use of transit. Improved safety and security and lower fares ranked lower in comparison.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Extended hours of operation	25.64%	379
Improved safety and security	16.44%	243
Lower fares	14.07%	208
Better route coverage	31.66%	468
Cleaner vehicles	4.87%	72
Improved accessibility for people with disabilities	7.58%	112
More reliable service	20.50%	303
More information or awareness about services	10.35%	153
Not applicable	51.01%	754
Total Respondents: 1,478		

Conclusion

The results of the community survey provide valuable insights across various aspects of the City's operations.

While some findings affirm that existing plans and initiatives are aligned with community priorities, other results bring attention to areas that may require further analysis and consideration. This balanced perspective not only validates the City's ongoing efforts but also highlights opportunities for improvement and growth.

By coupling this survey with future surveys, the City can establish benchmarks and effectively track progress over time.

This ongoing engagement ensures that decision-making remains informed, adaptive, and reflective of the community's evolving needs and expectations. Together, these insights will guide the City in delivering services and initiatives that best serve its residents.

