

ANNUAL SURVEY 2019 FINAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2ND 2019

FROM THE CITIZEN SATISFACTION SURVEY

TOWNSHIP OF RUSSELL

ANNUAL SURVEY 2019 FINAL REPORT

In June 2019, the municipality launched its fourth edition of the annual citizen satisfaction survey.

The survey allows respondents to evaluate the delivery of our services and our overall performance, which assists the municipality in capturing the public perception and identifying areas of improvement as per the Customer Service Policy by-law #53-2013. The survey covered all of major services and departments.

The survey was open from June 10th until September 2nd, 2019. The opportunity to participate in the survey was advertised on social media, the newspaper, the outdoor LED screen, the lobby and front desk TV screens, and on our website.

The 2019 survey was completed 425 times. We received survey submissions from 69 respondents in French and 356 respondents in English.

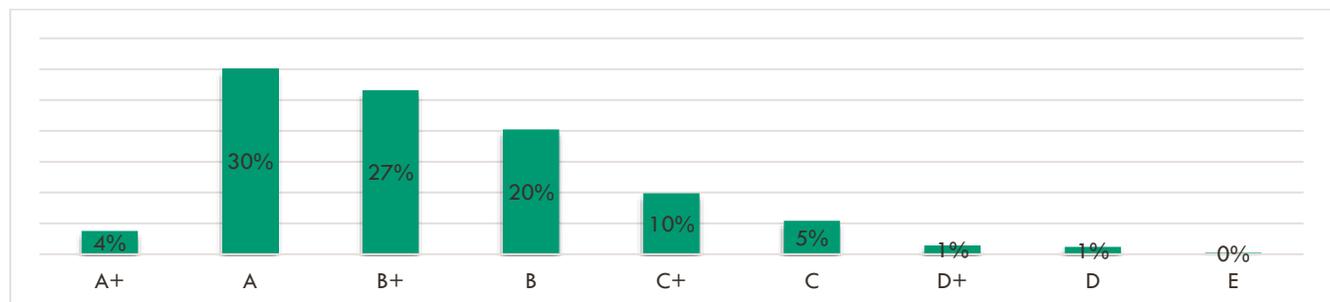
Note: All graph data in this report is rounded to the nearest percentage point.

Overall, 67% of respondents who have previously taken the annual survey say that the services have improved since the first survey in 2016.

GRADE THE MUNICIPALITY'S OVERALL PERFORMANCE

GRADE FOR 2019: **A**

The Township has received a grade of A for 2019. In comparison, the Township received a grade of B+ in 2018. 10.6% more respondents selected a Grade of A in 2019 than in 2018.



2019 KEY TRENDS & OBSERVATIONS

The key trends below identify the recurring themes observed throughout the survey. The trends observed derive from poll results from questions throughout the survey, in addition to 260 comments received from an open feedback question, which asked respondents to identify how they felt we could improve on our services. Each trend is followed by a *consideration*, which is a suggestion to help address the item.

Note: The key trends listed below are in no particular order.

1. ORGANICS COLLECTION / GREEN BIN | The survey indicated there is a very high demand among respondents for organics collection to be incorporated in the Public Works waste collections program.

Consideration(s):

- At this time, organics are not included in the Township of Russell's waste collection program.
- The administration included the option of organics in our waste collection tender earlier this year, as directed by Council on August 12th 2019. Council discussed the impact on the user-fee for organics during the 2020 Budget deliberations in October. As the implementation of organics into our waste collection would translate to an increase of \$100 in the user-fee, Council directed the administration not to proceed with organics at this time.
- Once more information is available from the provincial government on organics collection, the Township will review the item.

2. YARD WASTE | Respondents are seeking an increase of leaf and yard waste collections during the year, in addition to the municipality extending the hours of the GFL station for leaf and yard waste drop-offs.

Consideration(s):

- There has traditionally been two municipal yard waste collections throughout the year. Council approved an extra leaf and yard waste collection day in 2019, which means residents were provided 3 yard waste collections instead of 2. The final 2020 Budget includes 3 leaf and yard waste collections; one collection in the spring, and two collections in the fall.
- In regards to the hours at the GFL transfer station in Vars, the Township does not have jurisdiction to extend the hours of operating as it is a private business.
- Other than the comments requesting extended ours at the GFL station in Vars, other respondents seem unaware that the Township allows residents to bring leaf and yard waste to the GLF Transfer Station in Vars, free of charge. The Communications Department could collaborate with the Public Works department to determine if a promotional campaign could assist in reminding residents of this free service.

3. ROADS & SIDEWALKS | Based on the survey, 34% of respondents are unsatisfied with Road Maintenance in the Township. When asked how we could improve on our services, respondents expressed that a large number of roads in the Township of Russell are in terrible shape and are in need of renewal or maintenance, including main (county) roads.

Consideration(s):

- On October 7th 2019, the administration presented the *Road Condition Assessment Report (2019)* to Council, which provided a consultant's extensive review of the municipality's road system and recommendations for budget and road asset programming. The report identified an annual funding gap of \$1,200,000 to sustain our existing road network. The recommendations from the Road Condition Assessment Report have been included in the 2020 Budget to address this gap.
- An additional \$120,000 will be invested in our road infrastructure in 2020 for an estimated total of \$1,662,000 including government grants, through a dedicated 1% in the tax increase within the 2020 Budget as approved by Council.
- Many respondents expressed that they felt the Township needs to fix the main roads however many of these roads are owned and maintained by the United Counties of Prescott Russell. There seems to be a lack of knowledge for the two-tier ownership and responsibility of roads in our area. The Communications Department and Public Works Department could develop an informative campaign to distinguish ownership between municipal roads, county roads, and the differences in service levels between them.

4. RECREATION PROGRAMS | Respondents noted in the survey that there are a lack of variety in the recreation programs offered by the Township, especially for children ages 3 to 5 and activities in the evening for those who work during regular business hours. However, very few comments provided by respondents offered suggestions on what they would like to see differently in our recreation programs.

Consideration(s):

- The Parks and Recreation Department offer a seasonal program of activities three times a year. Seasonal program schedules are based on recurring classes, popular recreation trends, market demands and ability to recruit and maintain instructors.
- Although there is much effort into organizing programs and workshops each season, the Parks and Recreation Department have experienced issues with recruiting and retaining instructors for programs, as many instructors decide to begin offering the activity as a private business. As the Township has focused on providing niche programming options for its residents (i.e. non-competing with the volunteer/private sector), this reduces the number of programs the municipality can offer.
- To get a high-level sense of what programs could be of interest to residents, a short informal questionnaire was published online earlier in the fall. Respondents were looking for activities such as yoga, horticultural classes, photography sessions, painting classes, and teen life skills (e.g. budgeting), in addition to many activities that are already part of the recreation programs. Parks & Recreation will organize the next seasonal program while keeping in mind the suggestions provided by respondents in the informal questionnaire.

5. RECREATION COMPLEX | Respondents expressed a demand for a full sports complex, including and indoor pool facility and arena(s).

Consideration(s):

- A consultant's report was presented at the Special Council Meeting of August 20th 2019 to discuss the future recreation complex at 150 Sportsplex Road. The report provided various amenity combinations for a recreation complex, including options for a pool, arena(s), and more.
- As per Council's direction on August 20th 2019, the administration is in the process of applying for a government grant for up to 75% of funding towards a facility to include all possible amenities in the consultant's report (pool, arenas, etc). Council and the administration are hopeful about a successful grant application to deliver a full-scope recreation complex, while a non-successful application or reduced funding would bring Council to deliberate amenity priorities, facility combinations, and financial strategies before moving forward.
- Is it important to note that many respondents completed this survey a number of weeks before the Special Council Meeting to discuss the Recreation Complex on August 20th 2019. As it is possible that residents were not aware that the planning process had already been underway, the many requests in the survey for a recreation complex attests that the recreation complex should be a Township priority.
- The Communications Department will continue to provide respondents with updates on the project as it moves forward. At this time, there is a page on the website dedicated to the Recreation Complex Project that will get updated with more resources, reports and information as they become available.

6. DAYCARE | Respondents requested that the Township increase the number of spaces open in the daycares, since many are on a waitlist for over a year in advance.

Consideration(s):

- Municipal daycare is currently offered for ages 0-4 and ages 4-12 years of age.
- Our preschool daycare has a permit for a maximum of 36 children. We added 4 spots for infants from January to March 2018. This is the maximum number of spots allowed for preschool daycare in the current facility, based on the Ministry of Education's regulations for childcare.
- Our before and after schoolcare has a permit for 155 children at the La Croisée facility and 168 children at the St-Jean facility. There are currently 24 and 9 open spots at these facilities (respectively), however there is not enough demand to warrant opening any new groups to fill these remaining spots. The municipality must respect the Ministry of Education's regulations in regards to spots and facility space.
- The administration understands that parents are discouraged, as we receive calls almost daily due to the limited private daycare alternatives in the area.

7. EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES | The existing recreation facilities, including the Embrun and Russell arenas, outdoor centennial pool, community centers and bowling hall, could be improved with renovations and updates. Respondents identified the necessity to upkeep these facilities to ensure they do not fall into disrepair.

○ **Consideration(s):**

- In the 2019 Budget, there were multiple small renovations approved for the Embrun Arena, Embrun Community Centre, Bowling Hall, Russell Arena, Marionville Community Centre, Keith M. Boyd Museum, and Library.

- The administration will continue to work on improving our municipal facilities to ensure they are presentable and used by the public.

8. BY-LAWS | Respondents indicated that they are looking for stricter and consistent enforcement of municipal by-laws, including those related to parking violations, property standards, and fines for pet owners who do not pick up their dog waste.

Consideration(s):

- The administration will be conducting a Public Safety and Enforcement Level of Service review to identify priorities, degree of intervention (what is expected, when, and how), and areas of improvement between 2019-2022, as identified in the Strategic Plan. Once completed, a report with recommendations will be presented to Council.

9. PET CONTROL | A trend in the survey were requests for increased pet control, specifically for the creation of a by-law for cats similar to the current by-law for dogs. Respondents expressed that many cats tend to roam freely in the area, causing a nuisance to the community.

Consideration(s):

- The Township's Animal Control By-Law 2018-062 currently addresses rabies, euthanization, and prohibited animals and in regards to cats, it does not impose annual registration or household limits as the By-Law does with dogs. As per Council's direction during the approval for the Animal Care and Control By-Law 2018-062 in December 2018, the administration will not increase regulations or implement fines for roaming cats (see report PIC 15B-2018).
- It is important to note that increased regulations towards cats could result in a large rat problem from developing in our Township, similar to what we have seen take place in other cities and municipalities. Cats can assist in controlling rodent population.

10. WEBSITE | Respondents say that the Township of Russell's website is currently complicated to navigate, making them frustrated when trying to find the information they are looking for.

Consideration(s):

- The content on our current website is organized by About, Resident, Business, Visitor, Town Hall, and Contact. Since much of the content overlaps between these categories, the Communications Department acknowledges that the main menu can be difficult to navigate and search.
- As per item 2019-157 in the 2019 Business Plan, the Communications Department is in the process of restructuring the website to improve user experience. The new menu structure will seek to be more intuitive so respondents may easily find the content they are looking for. Council has approved funding in the 2020 Budget to improve the website.

11. PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS | Respondents feel disappointed in the frequency and length of the consultation periods, and feel that the Township limits public engagement opportunities on various items.

Consideration(s):

- The Township offers a variety of methods for public engagement opportunities including in-person sessions and online to ensure all demographics have access to these opportunities. The public engagement meetings and opportunities are posted through a variety of mediums, including newspaper ads, posts on our social media pages, notices on our outdoor LED screen and on our front lobby televisions at Town Hall, and more.
- Some public consultation periods, especially for public meetings and comment periods for planning applications, have provincially set regulations that the Township must follow. The Township could look at how to incorporate more information about timelines and expectations when advertising new public engagement opportunities, to provide residents with reasonable expectations and reduce misunderstandings surrounding the public consultation process. For example, the creation of informational videos on planning applications could be added to our video library and combined with regular posting on social media, it could assist with educating residents on what to expect from the Township and how to share their feedback within the consultation process.
- The Communications Department could also work to identify how the Township could incorporate more public engagement opportunities into our communication with residents. This could be considered in the development of the Corporate Communication Policy & Guidelines, item 2019-139 in the Business Plan.

12. SOCIAL MEDIA | Content on social media managed by the Township could improve with regular messages about day-to-day topics about our services, tips, reminders, and general notifications about various programs across all departments

Consideration(s):

- There are currently various day-to-day reminders about our programs and services that are published regularly on our social media pages, which tend to get minimal traction especially when compared to news or project updates.
- The Communications Department could work with each Department to review the current social media content for our programs and services to find new content or determine what current content should be promoted differently or more frequently.

13. BUSINESSES (EXISTING) | There is a sentiment that the Township focuses too heavily on new businesses, leaving insufficient attention and support for existing businesses in the Township of Russell.

Consideration(s):

- The Economic Development Department delivers the Community Improvement Program (CIP), which can provide existing businesses in the project areas with grants up to \$10,000 to improve their façade, signage, accessibility, parking, and more. The Economic Development Department actively promotes this program, including the use of targeted mail and reminders for eligible recipients.

- The Communications Department could work with Economic Development to determine if there are any alternative marketing approaches to encourage eligible businesses to apply for the program.
- The Economic Development Department also produces a Business Profile every month, which helps promote existing businesses in the Township. The Business Profile is posted on our social media platforms, on our website, and the in the local newspaper.
- The Economic Development also holds a “Lunch and Learn” event for existing business 3 times a year, which provides these businesses with the opportunity to learn about various business-related topics. Topics from the 2019 Lunch and Learn sessions thus far included *How to Write and Update a Business Plan*, *Understanding Paid Traffic and Social Media*, and *Employment Recruitment Services*.

14. BUSINESSES (NEW FOOD & RETAIL) | Respondents are seeking healthier family dining and grocery options in the area instead of fast-food chains that they have recently seen approved, in addition to recognized retail brands. The survey comments displayed a misconception among respondents that the Township has complete influence over which businesses choose to establish themselves in our municipality.

Consideration(s):

- The Township, in reality, has no jurisdiction over which retailers or service businesses ultimately chose to invest in our area. The Township has control over the use of the land, not the franchise or the brand. In order to attract businesses that are in-demand, the Economic Development Department uses promotional materials and investment strategies as identified in the Economic Development Strategic Plan (2017). The Communication, Economic Development and Planning Development Departments could create a promotional campaign to address the misconception about the process of attracting new businesses and clarifying the roles and limitations of the municipality in economic development.
- The Economic Development Department has recently created a Community Portfolio package and a Township ‘Townfolio’ data tool, both of which promote the strengths of the Township of Russell towards potential investors and developers. There is also the Retail Market Demand study completed earlier this year, which assists our Economic Development department in their recruitment strategy of in-demand businesses. The Community Portfolio, Townfolio service tool, and the Retail Market Demand study are available on our website. The Economic Development Department can continue actively working their strategies, including these tools, to encourage the investment of in-demand businesses in the Township and evaluate any new sectors and strategies that may be available.

15. TRANSIT | Respondents suggested that they would be more likely to use Russell Transpo if the schedule were more generous. There was also a few comments suggesting an interest in a local public transit system within the Township of Russell.

Consideration(s):

- Since 2008, Russell Transpo has offered a commuting service from Embrun and Russell to Ottawa and Hull, running during weekday peak periods. There are currently four options for both the morning and afternoon commutes.

- The recent *Township of Russell Transit Feasibility Study* (2018) indicated that the Township's existing commuter Russell Transpo service is well used, with the supply (service levels) being well-matched to the existing demand.
- Without an increase in ridership, adding additional trips would represent additional taxation and user fee funding, which is not being considered by Council at this time.
- In regards to the request for local public transit, the United Counties of Prescott-Russell recently launched PR Transpo, an inter-municipal public transport that is set to have routes within the Township of Russell. The success of the PR Transpo pilot project can indicate to the Township whether a local bus service is truly in demand.

15. UPPER TIER AND LOWER TIER GOVERNMENTS | Comments from respondents suggest a lack of knowledge or confusion on the upper-tier and lower-tier government model between the United Counties of Prescott-Russell (UCPR) and the Township of Russell, in addition to the respective roles and responsibilities thereof.

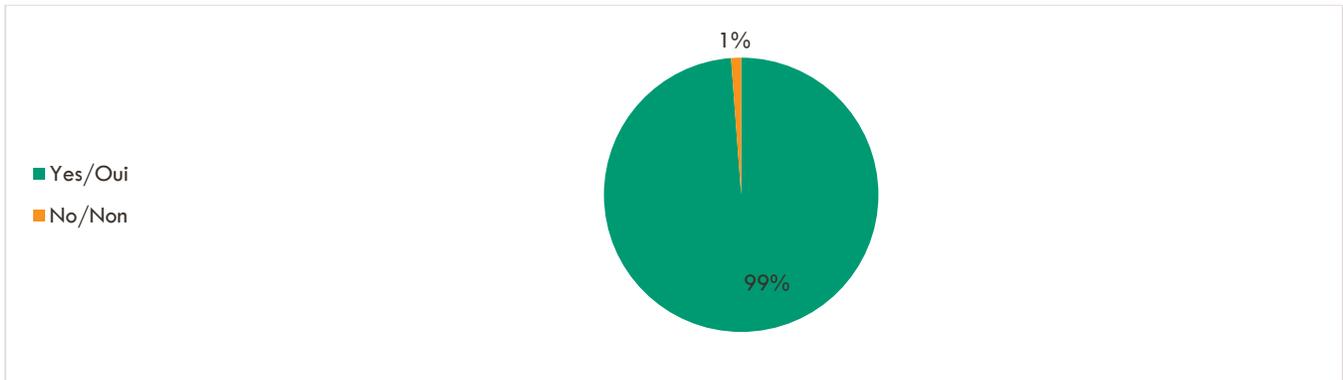
Consideration(s):

- Many new residents may come from a single-tier government, (for example, the City of Ottawa), where services and programs are not delivered by two different bodies of government.
- This lack of knowledge mainly affects the perception of high taxes, paramedic services, road maintenance, and winter control on roads. The municipality carries the responsibility of collecting taxes from residents; however, their tax dollars are divided between our municipality (approximately 36%), the school boards (approximately 20%) and the UCPR (approximately 44%). Residents often have the understanding that all tax dollars collected are for the exclusive use by the municipality, without knowing about the existence of the regional government and that the large portion of tax dollars it receives for the services they provide.

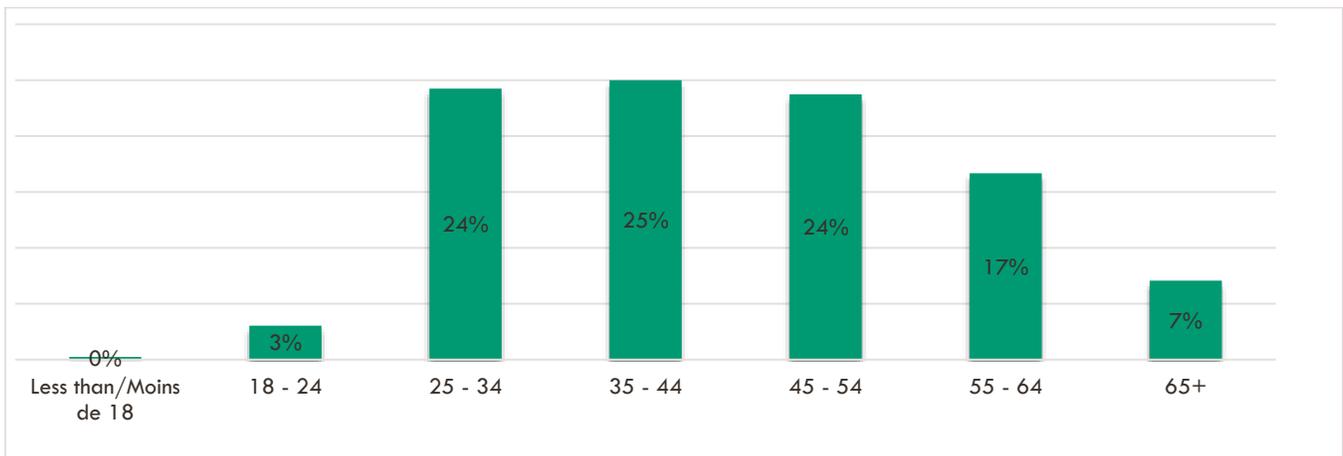
SCREENING QUESTIONS

These screening questions were developed to validate their participation in the survey, get to know the responders and to understand who is more likely to complete the survey.

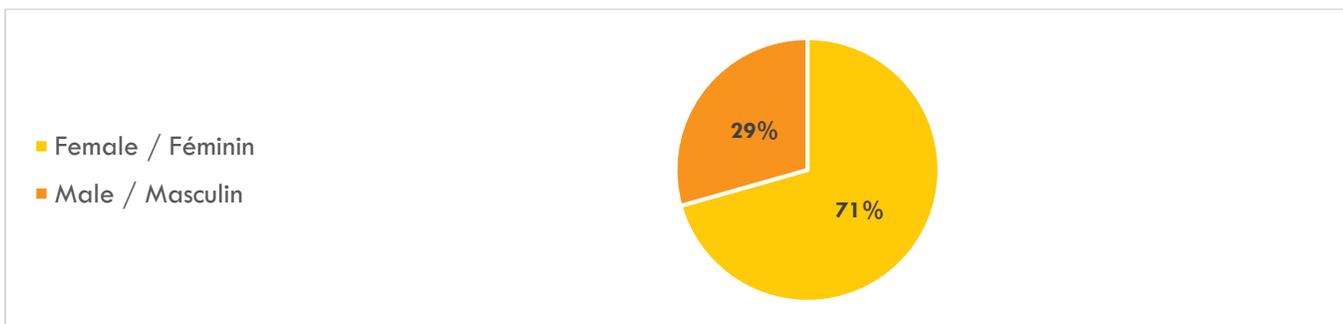
ARE YOU A RESIDENT OF THE TOWNSHIP OF RUSSELL?



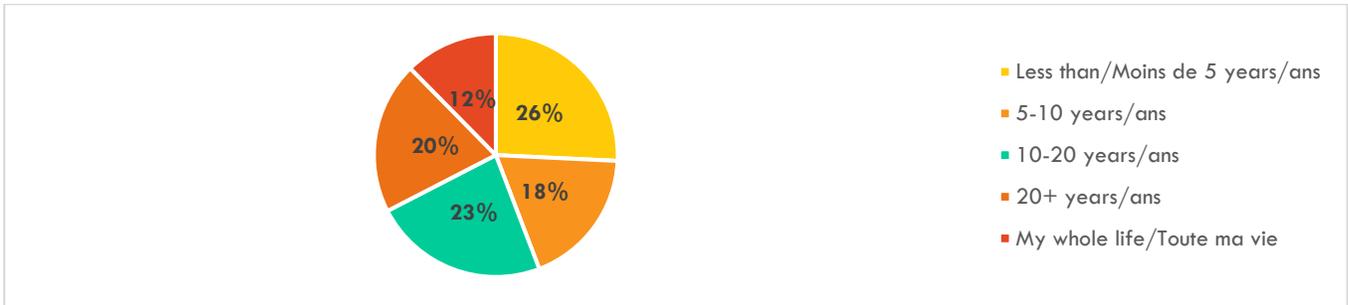
WHAT IS YOUR AGE?



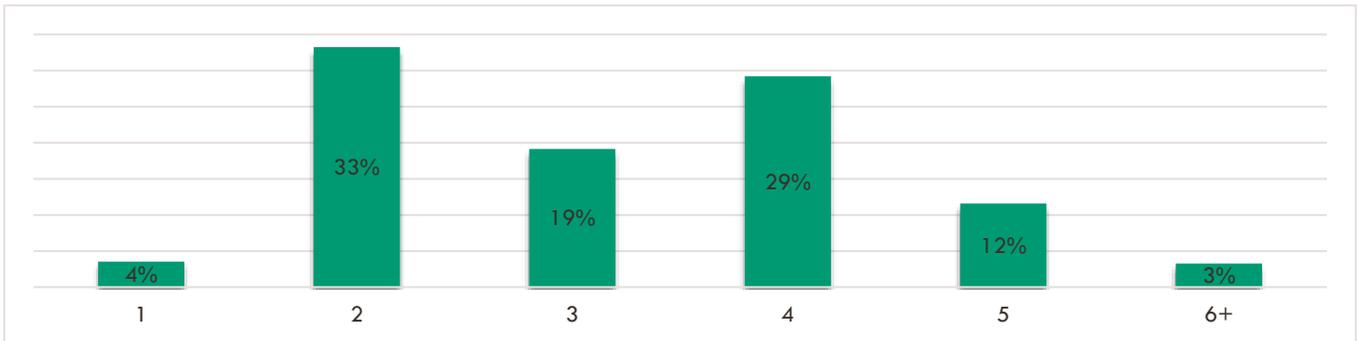
WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?



HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN RUSSELL TOWNSHIP?



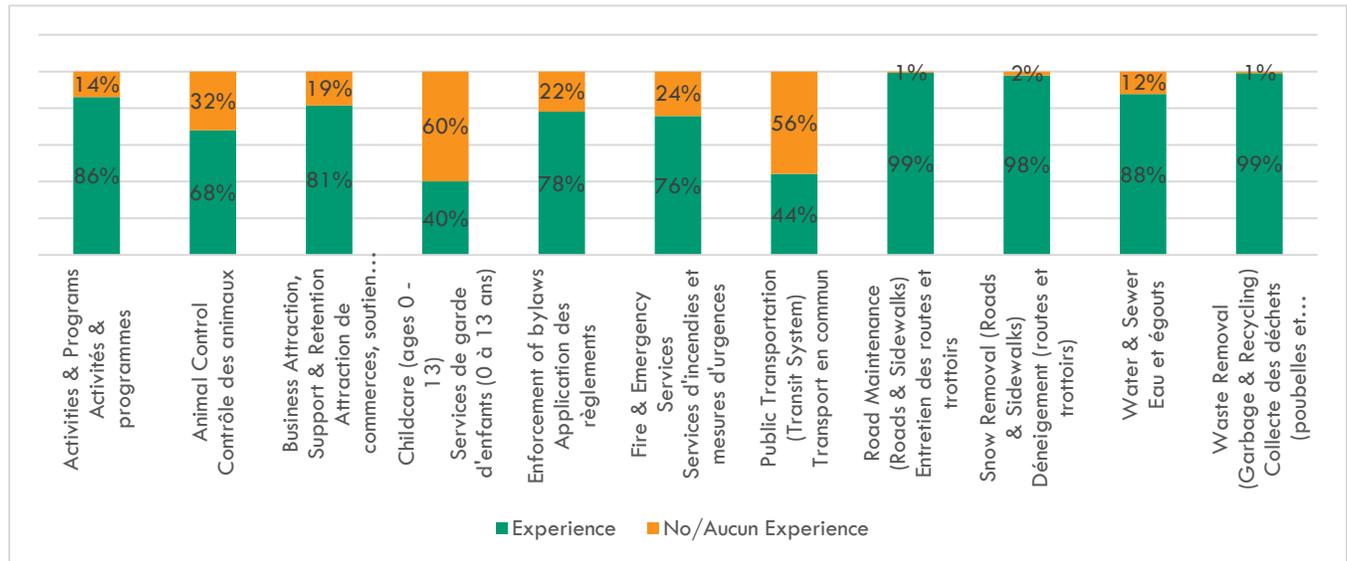
HOW MANY PEOPLE LIVE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?



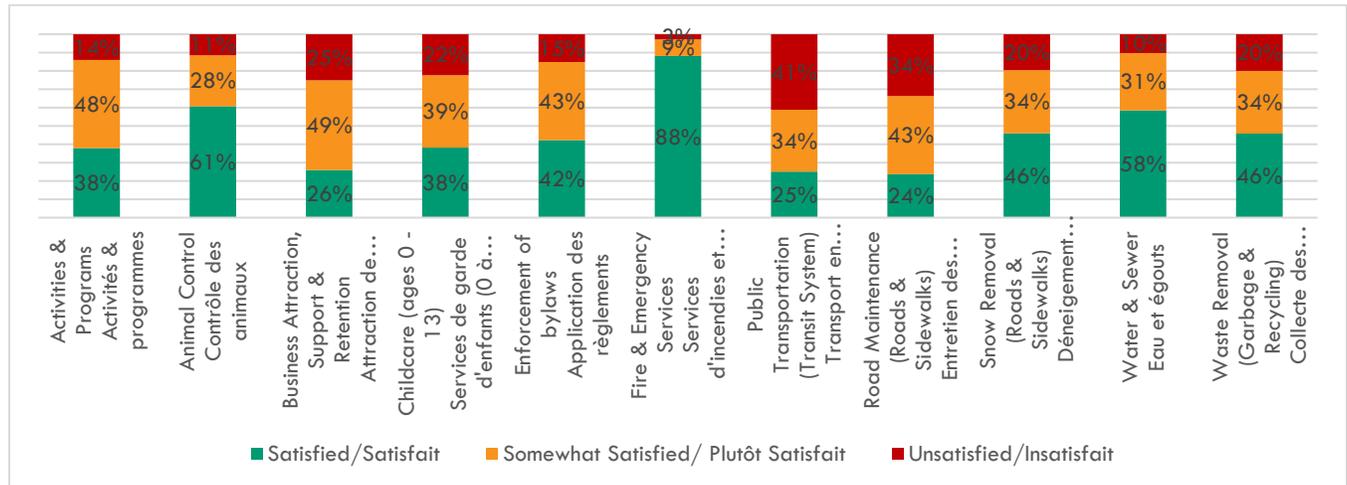
SERVICE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE SERVICES THAT THE MUNICIPALITY OFFERS?

Graph a) % of experience with services

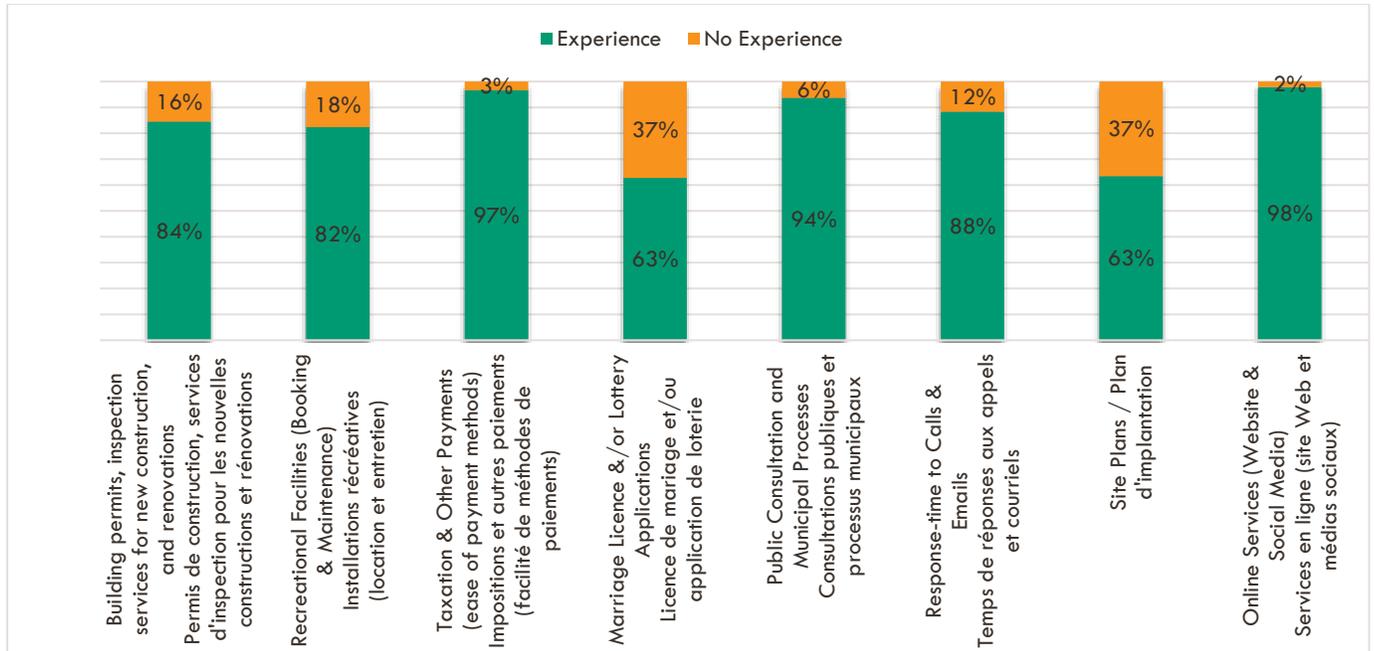


Graph b) % of satisfaction amongst those that have had an experience with services.

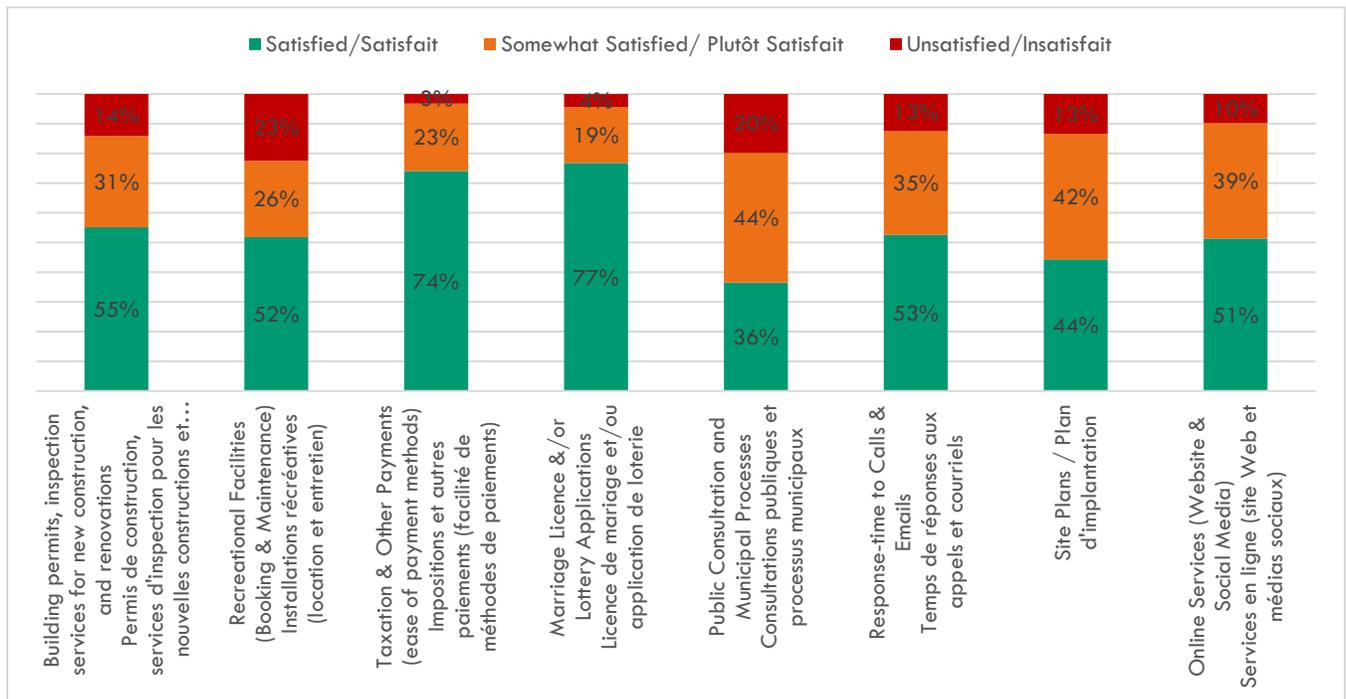


HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THESE ADMINISTRATIVE MUNICIPAL SERVICES?

Graph a) % of experience with administrative services

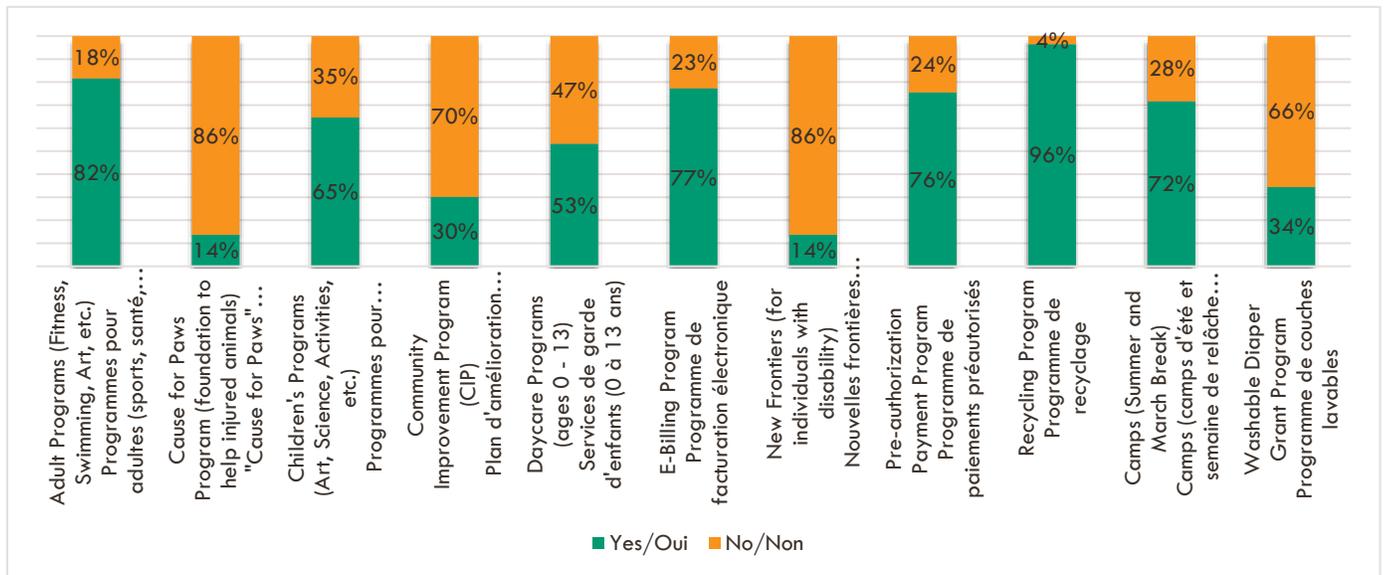


Graph b) % of satisfaction amongst those that have had an experience with services.



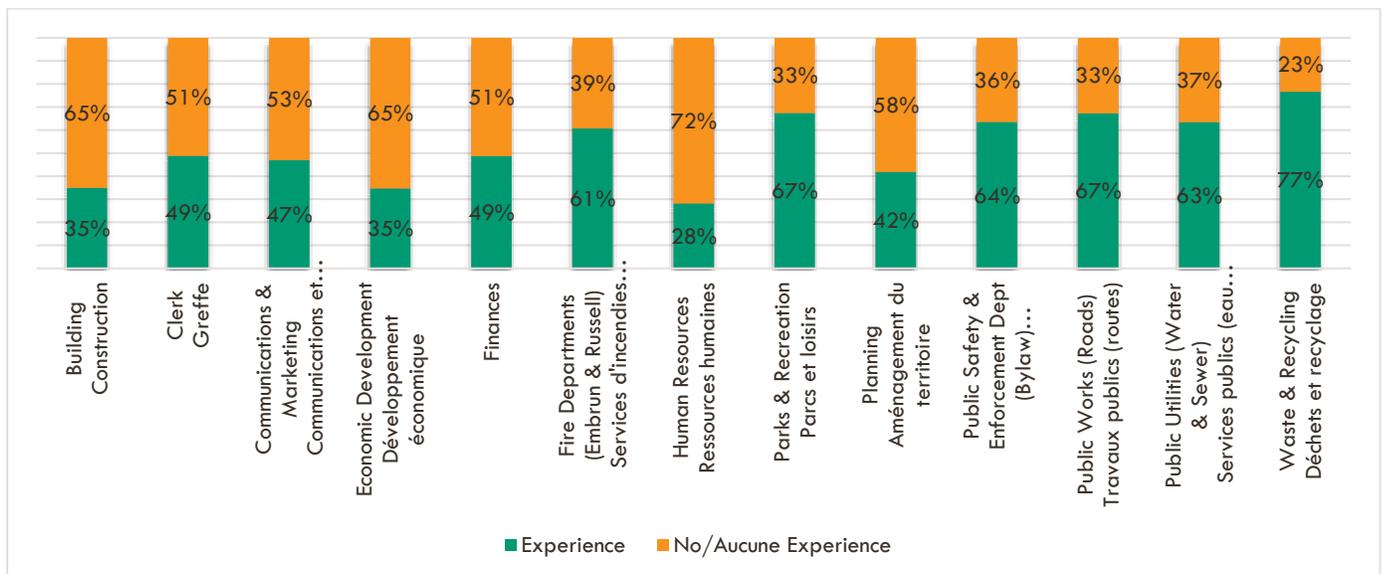
ARE YOU AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING MUNICIPAL PROGRAMS?

This question will help us evaluate and guide our promotion initiatives.

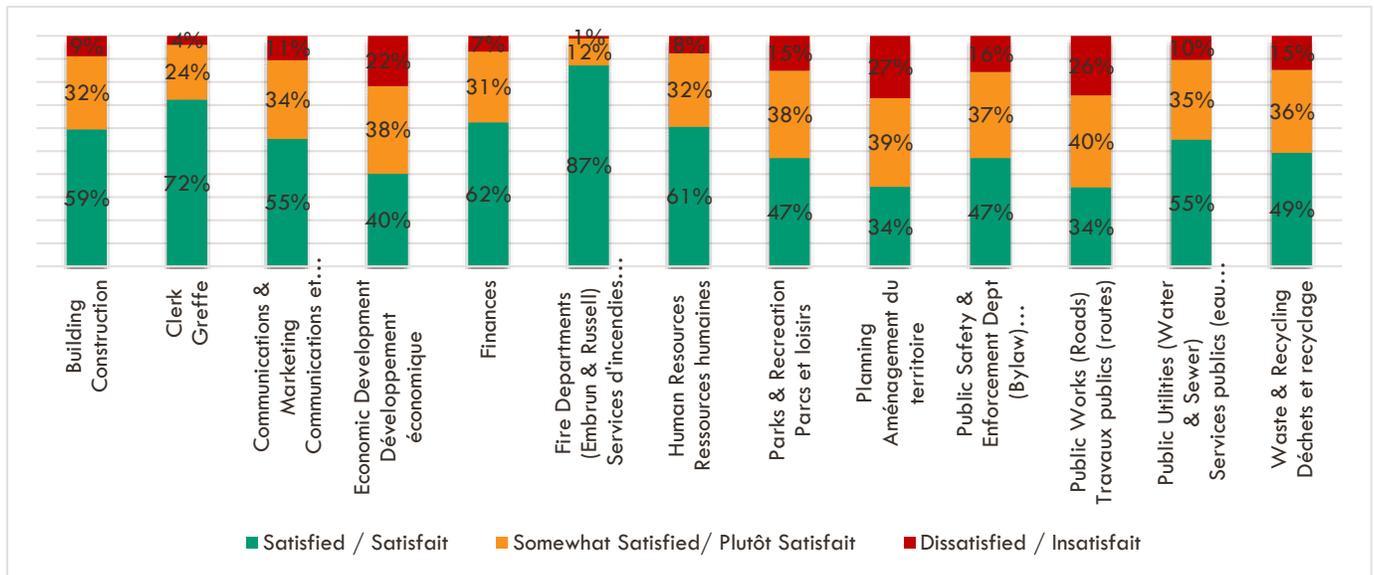


HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING DEPARTMENTS?

Graph a) % of experience with services.



Graph b) % of satisfaction amongst those that have had an experience with services.



WHAT RETAILER COULD YOU ENVISION ESTABLISHING ITSELF IN THE TOWNSHIP OF RUSSELL?

were asked this question in order to see their vision for the Township's future. Below are some of the popular answers, in no particular order.

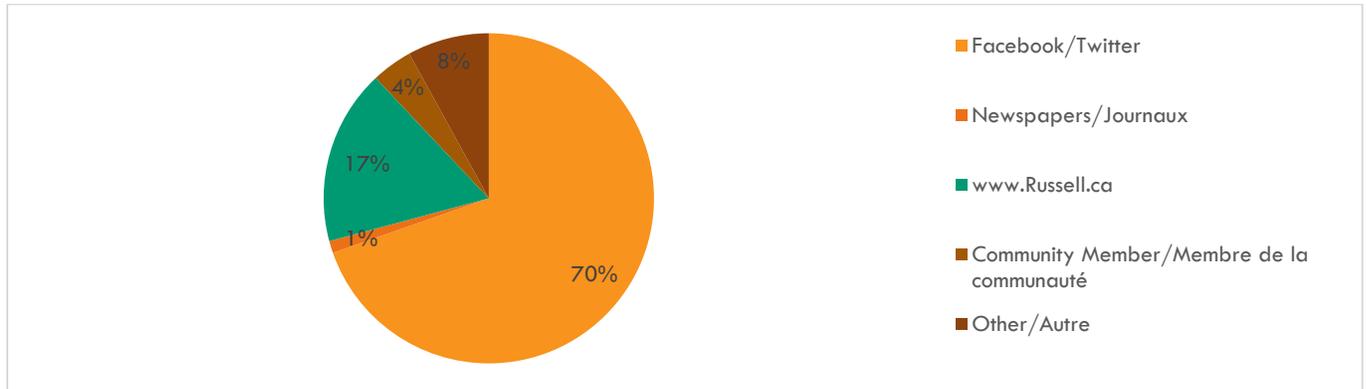
- Supercenters (Walmart, Costco, Canadian Tire)
- Recognized food chains/family dining (St. Hubert, Moxies, Kelsey's)
- New Grocery Stores (Farmboy)
- Retail Brands (Winners, Old Navy)
- Note: A few comments suggested focusing solely on small independently owned businesses.

HOW STRONGLY WOULD YOU RECOMMEND MOVING TO RUSSELL TOWNSHIP?

Respondents would recommend moving to Russell Township 0.2% more than what we saw in the 2018 survey.



HOW HAVE YOU BEEN MADE AWARE OUR ANNUAL REPORT CARD?



HAVE YOU COMPLETED A RUSSELL TOWNSHIP ANNUAL REPORT CARD BEFORE?



DO YOU THINK OUR SERVICES HAVE IMPROVED SINCE THE FIRST SURVEY IN 2016?

This was a follow-up question to only those who said they had completed an annual Township survey before.

