

**To:** The Mayor and Councilors, Bowen Island Municipality  
**From:** Finance Review Task Force  
**Date:** September 10, 2012

**Subject:** **Bowen Island Municipality Householder Survey 2012**

The Bowen Island Householder Survey was conducted over the period May 25 to July 3, 2012 by means of Survey Monkey online survey software, with hard copy manual forms available at BIM offices and the Library.

The Survey was prepared and administered by members of the Finance Review Task Force with input from BIM staff at no cost to the taxpayer other than a \$120 software upgrade required to assist in interpretation of results.

The purpose of the Survey was to gather input from full and part-time residents, and non-resident property owners, regarding their opinions of the services available on Bowen Island and the competing demands for their tax dollars. The ultimate aim was to ensure that public priorities are identified and considered in the preparation of the BIM Five Year Financial Plan for 2013 / 2017.

One survey per household was requested with the software settings restricting more than one submission per IP address. All responses are anonymous and results are available in group form only.

The Survey was based on a professionally designed survey conducted by the Municipality of Saanich. The questions and format were adapted to Bowen purposes, with a significant reduction in the total number of questions asked, as well as the addition of certain new questions such as #'s 11, 12 and 13 which relate to preferences on the expenditure of local tax dollars.

The Survey results will be made publicly available on the BIM website in the standard format provided by the Survey Monkey software. While there are numerous analyses of the data possible using the software, the output format does not always lend itself to convenient interpretation. Notable deficiencies include an inability to “rank” results by sorting them from highest to lowest or vice versa, and the poor quality of graphs. The analysis that follows uses exactly the same data but is presented in more easily understandable graphs with commentary outlining the major findings that may be drawn from them.

The commentary is intended to summarize community preferences for BIM Council, management and staff as input to the Core Service Review currently underway, and for consideration during the preparation of the 2013 budget.

A total of 732 responses were received, representing 1,444 adults and 404 children. 633 of these responses were from full-time residents, representing the views of 47% of the 1,345 “*private dwellings occupied by the usual residents*” reported in the 2011 Census Profile from Statistics Canada. They may therefore be considered statistically meaningful, though imperfect due to the element of “self-selection” in Survey completion as opposed to a more statistically desirable random sample.

The Survey responses included 661 voluntary comments from respondents covering a very broad range of opinions, suggestions and comments. The most frequently occurring words are presented in the Wordle on the report cover. These will be grouped, analysed, and referred to Council or Staff as appropriate at a later date.

Original signed by

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Michael Cornelissen

Chair

Original signed by

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Steve Bellringer

Vice Chair



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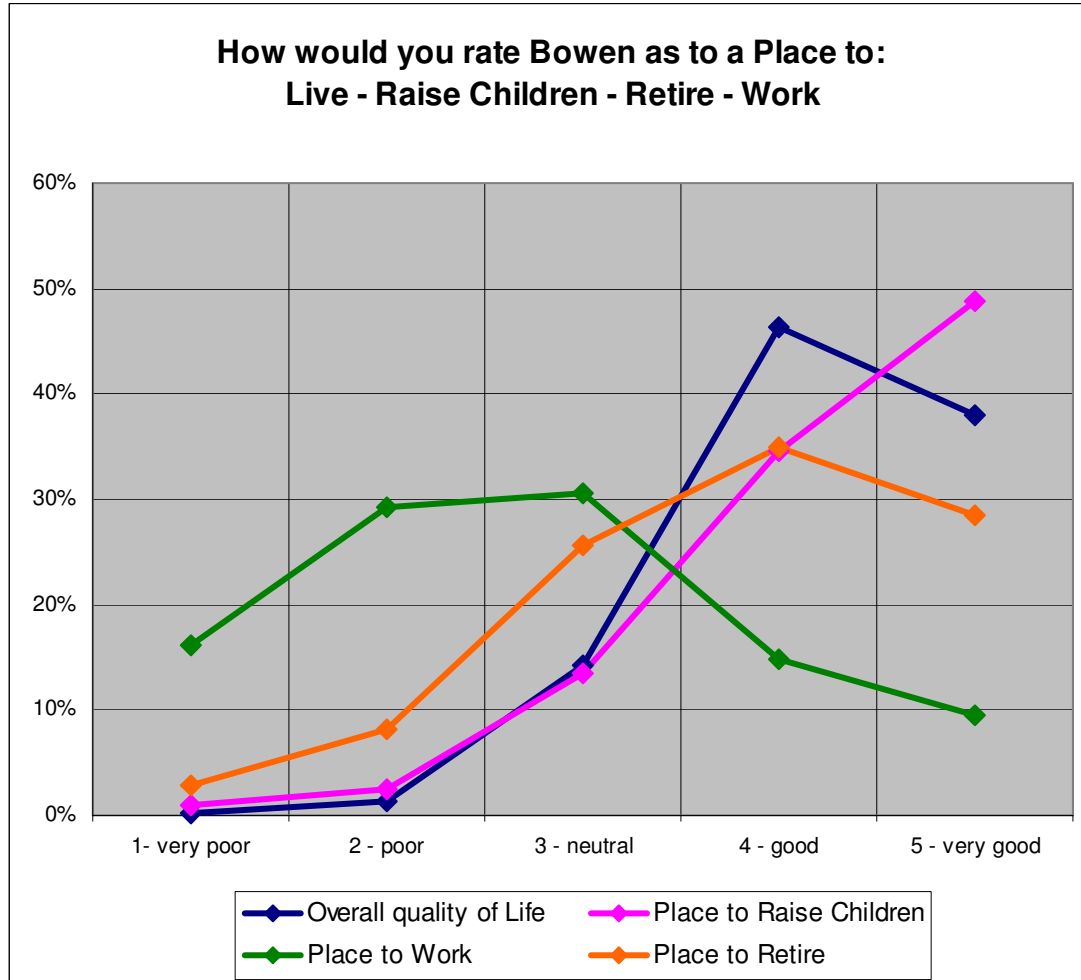
## **Bowen Island Householder Survey – 2012**

### **Summary of Key Findings**

1. Islanders rate Bowen highly for overall quality of life and as a place to raise children. Bowen rates less highly as a place to retire, and poorly as a place to work. (p. 2)
2. A very low (15%) level of satisfaction is registered with Youth programs, which is of note because almost 50% respondents rank these as Important. (p. 6)
3. While Ambulance Services rank highest in Importance (90%), they receive a markedly lower rating of 56% in Satisfaction. (p. 8)
4. Low levels of Satisfaction are registered for Planning & Development. (p. 10)
5. Recycling (BIRD) receives the highest rating (90%) in Importance and Satisfaction, a testament to this self-funded organization and its volunteers. (p. 11-12)
6. Regarding municipal taxes, the clear message from respondents is that close to 50% want to maintain services with unchanged or reduced taxes and user fees, while around 30% want improved services only if funded by higher user fees. Less than 20% are prepared to pay higher taxes for improved services. (p. 14)
7. Most respondents want to maintain major municipal services at current levels. However, those wanting to discontinue/reduce Community Grants, Property Tax Exemptions, Bylaw Enforcement, and Planning Costs, outweigh those wishing to increase them by factors ranging from 2 to 4 times. The converse is true for services related to Parks, Beaches and Trails. (p. 15)
8. More than 50% of respondents believe they receive little or no value for taxes collected on behalf of Translink and, particularly, Islands Trust. (p. 16)
9. The four top preferences for the disposition of a \$100 tax increase for Municipal capital projects are: a Multi-purpose Community Centre (\$22), Ferry Marshalling (\$20), Environmental Protection & Enhancement (\$19), and Snug Cove Development (\$18). Of note is that a single-purpose Performing Arts Facility or New Municipal Hall both rank amongst the 4 least popular choices. (p. 17)
10. The preferred ways of learning about Municipal Issues are via the BIM website, the Undercurrent, and e-mail. (p. 20)
11. The preferred means of providing input to Council are Public Opinion Surveys such as this one (66%), followed by Open Houses (46%), then e-mail. (p. 21)

### Q 1 - Q4 – Respondents' Profile

1. On a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), please check the box that comes closest to your opinion for each of the following questions:



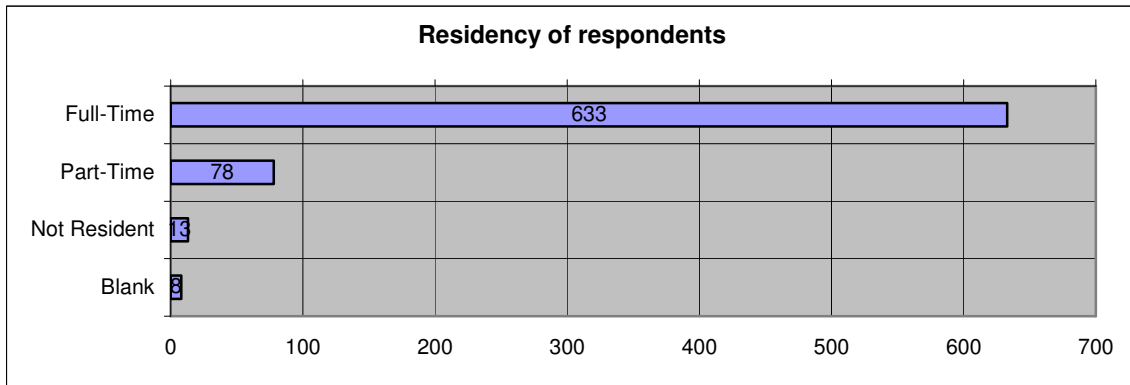
**Comment:**

Bowen rates best as a place to raise children, then for quality of life.

It rates less attractively as a place to retire, and poorly as a place to work, likely due to a lack of work opportunities rather than environment or surroundings.

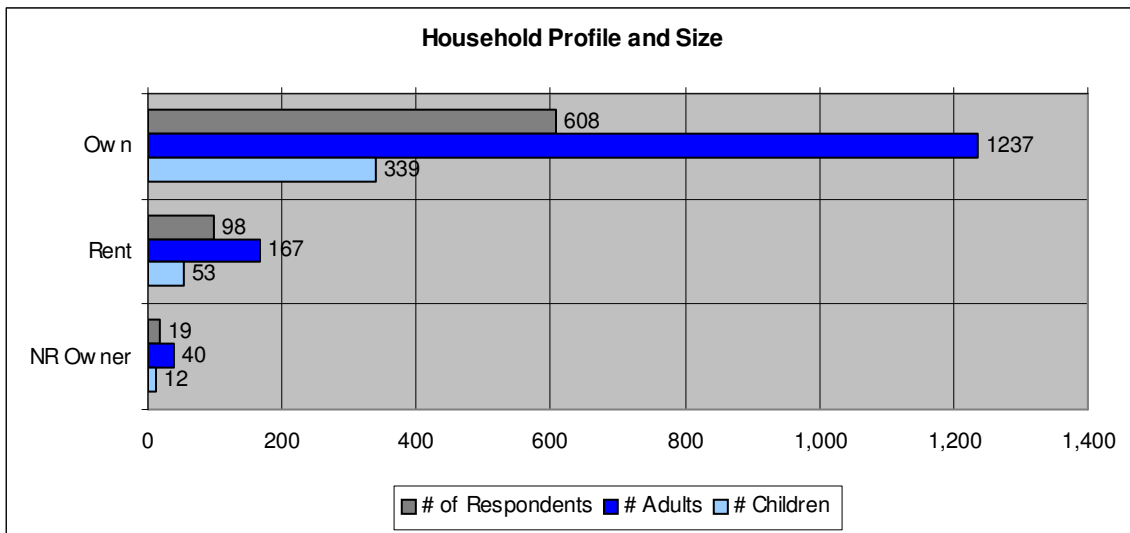
This last rating may serve as an issue for the recently constituted Economic Development Advisory Committee.

2. Please indicate your residency status.



3. Please indicate whether you Own, Rent or are a Non-resident Owner, and,

4. Please indicate your household size.



Comment:

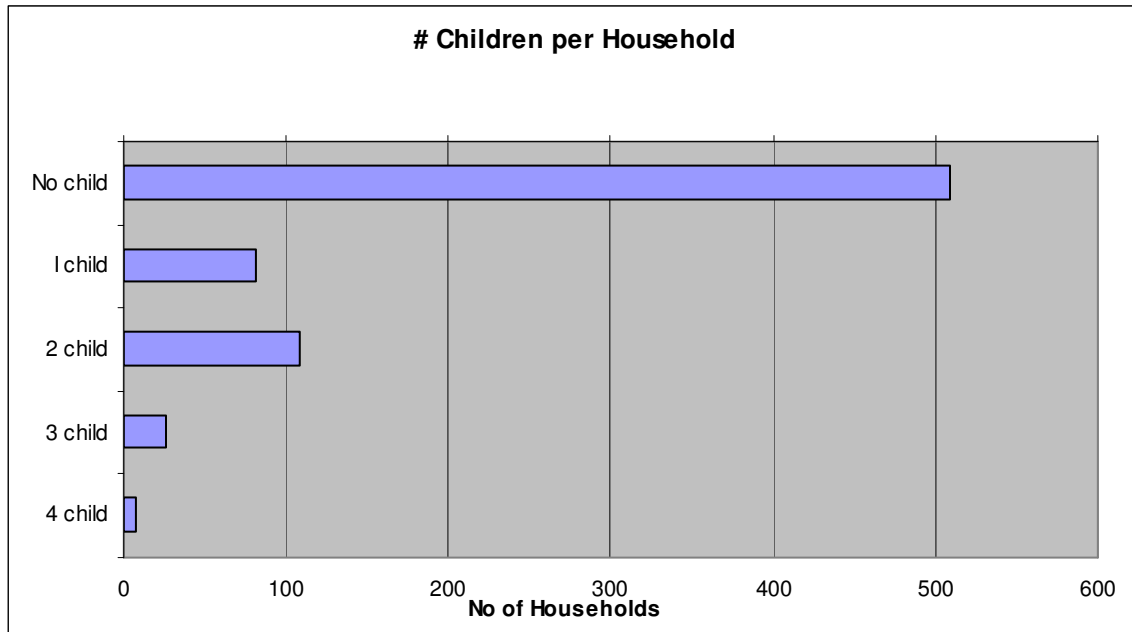
The survey respondents represent:

48% of the usually resident adult population (1,242 out of total 2,600).

44% of the usually resident under age 20 population (352 out of total 805).

Plus 218 part-time, and 34 non-resident adults and children.

*(23% of Bowen's population is under age 20 compared to 21.6% for GVRD.)*

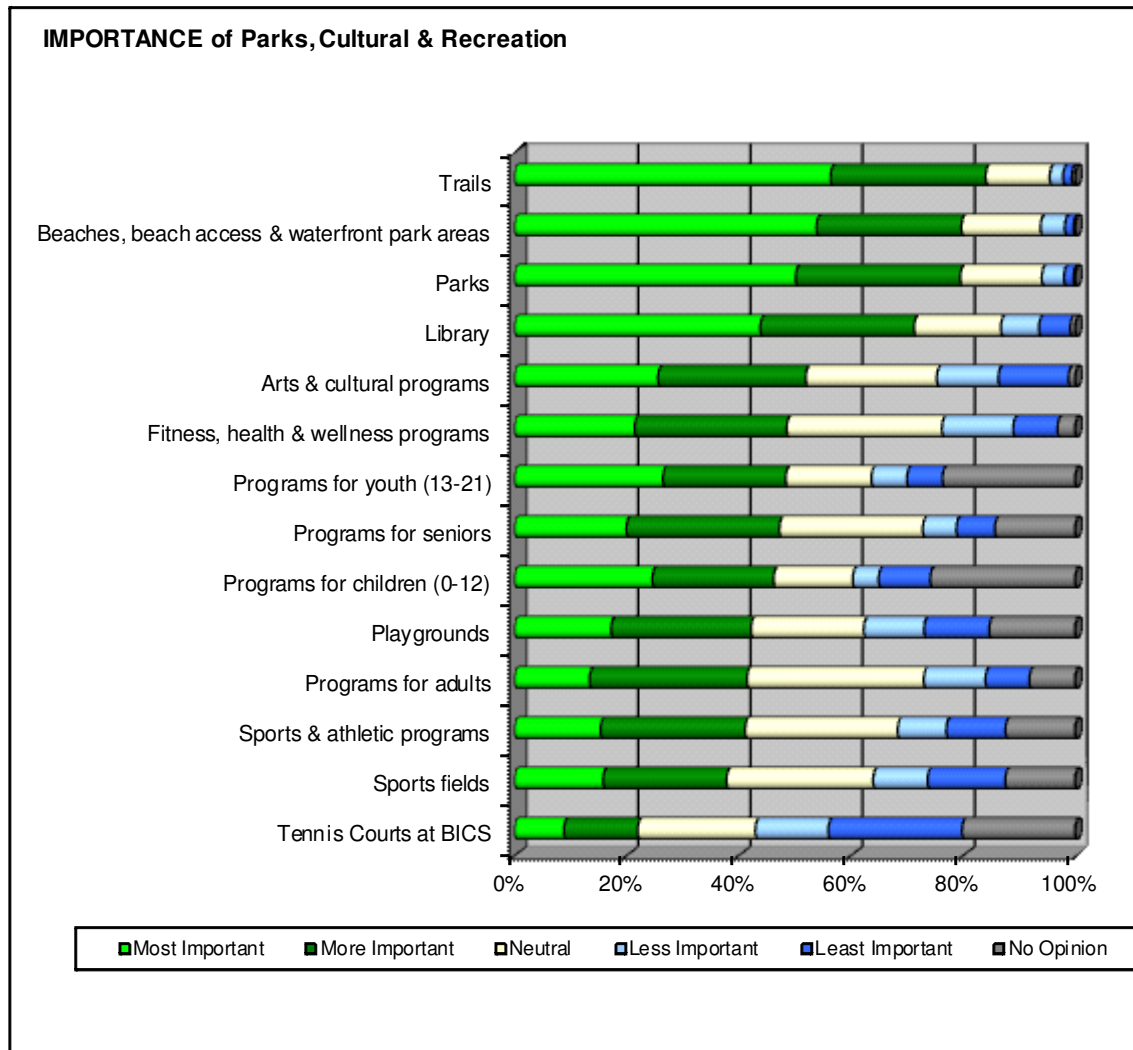


Household Composition		# of Adults per Household	
2 adults with children	193	1 adult	96
1 adult with children	9	2 adults	533
Households with no children	530	More than 2 adults	65
		Blank	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>732</b>



## Q5 – Parks, Cultural & Recreation Services

Please rate **Importance** and **Satisfaction** from 1 (least) to 5 (most).



Comment:

*This is the first chart with multiple ratings. For this, and subsequent charts, readers are invited to compare, for each category, the sum of the two positive ratings with the sum of the two negative ratings to assist their understanding of the results.*

Close to 80% of respondents rated Bowen's trails, beaches, waterfronts, and parks as Important, followed by the Library at 71%, then Arts & Cultural programs at 52%.

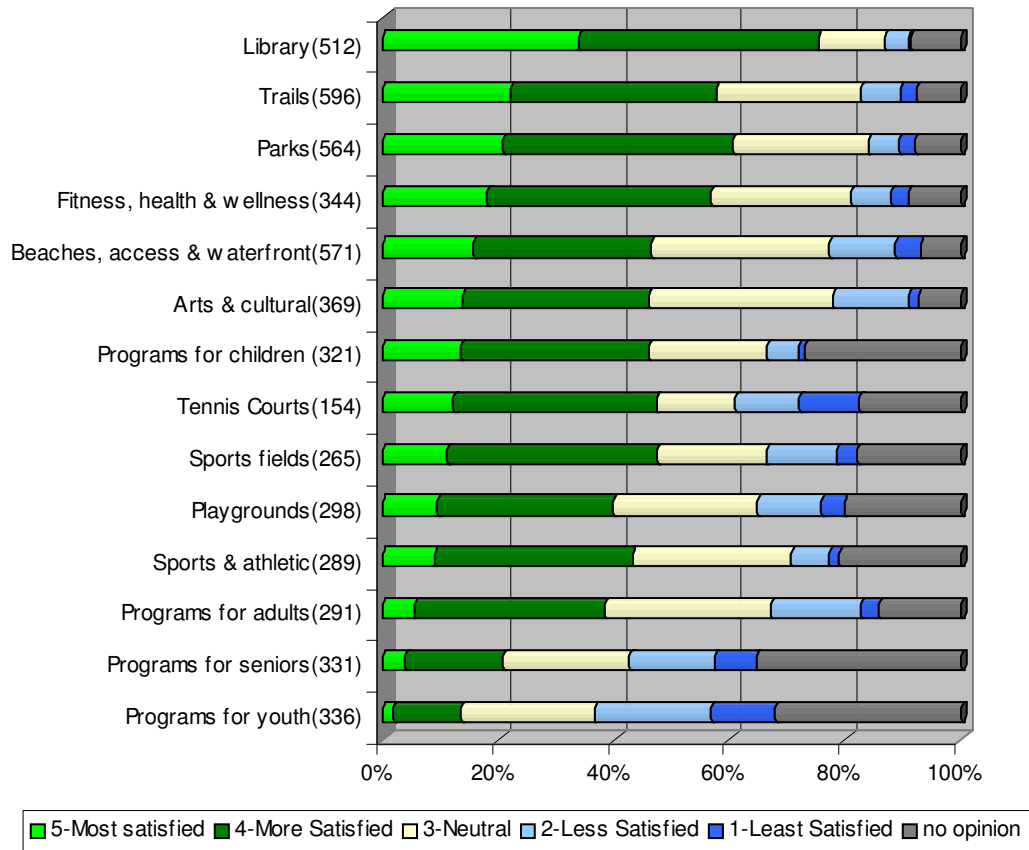
Importance of Youth, Senior and Children's programs were ranked around 47%.

Playgrounds, Adult, and Sports/athletic programs ranked around 42%.

The high number of "No Opinion" for age-related categories such as programs for children (0-12), is self-explanatory.

## Parks, Cultural & Recreation

### SATISFACTION - of those ranking programs as most or more important



*(The number of respondents rating each program above as Most or More Important is shown in parentheses.)*

#### Comment:

In measures of Satisfaction with programs, the Library ranks highest with a 75% rating.

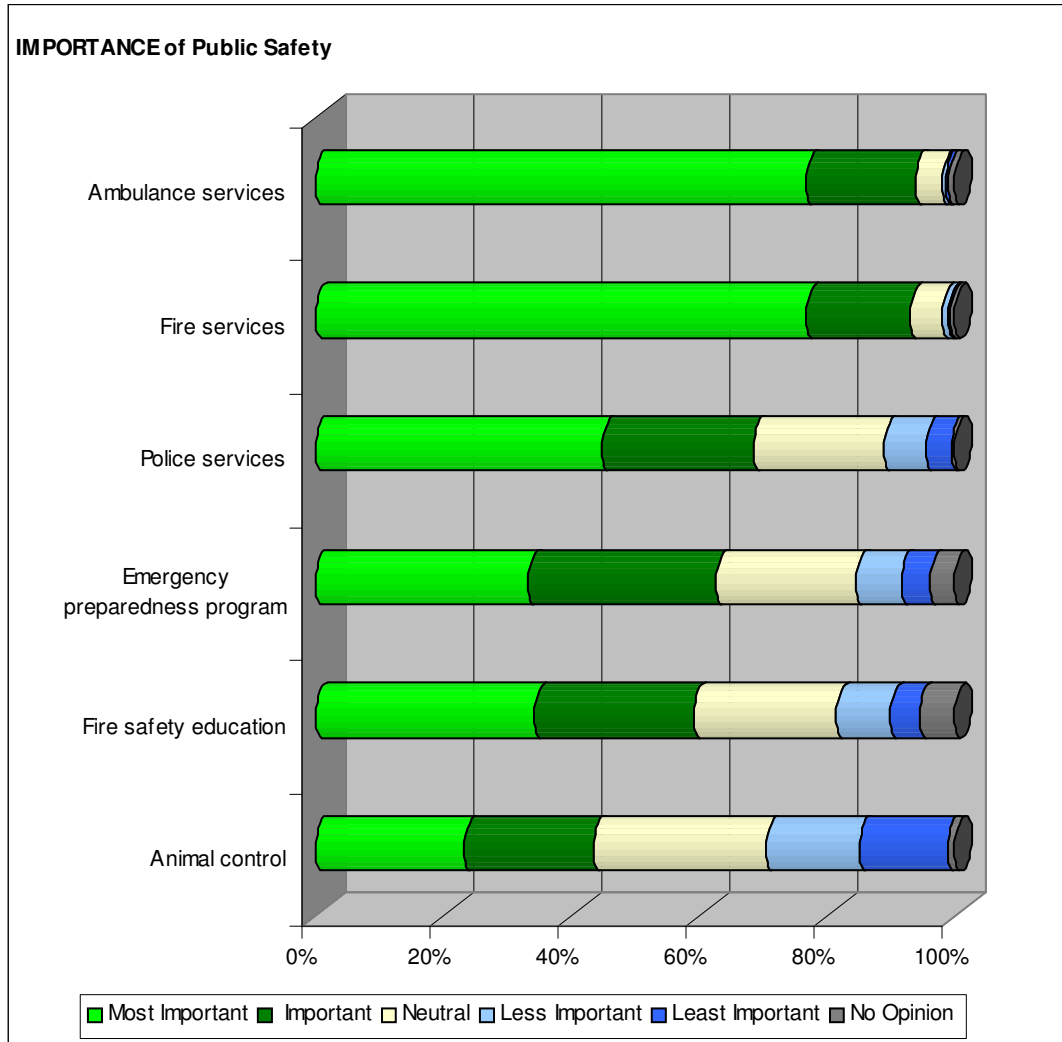
Trails, Parks and Fitness rank over 50% with Beaches and Arts/Cultural falling to 45%.

Adult programs are rated at 38%, and programs for Seniors below 20%.

A very low level of Satisfaction (15%) is registered for Youth programs. This, coupled with a 31% Dissatisfaction rating, is of note because 47% of respondents rank Youth Programs as Most or More Important.

## Q6 – Public Safety

Please rate **Importance** and **Satisfaction** from 1 (least) to 5 (most).

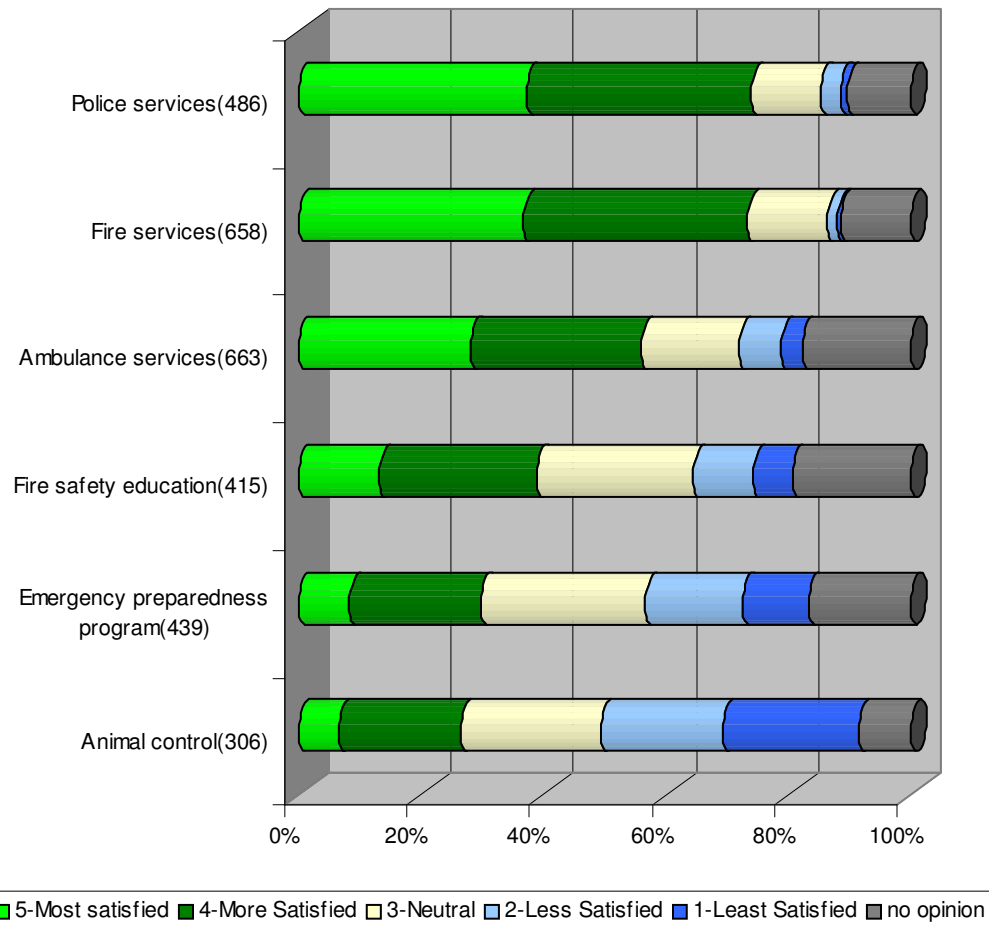


Comment:

Ratings are self-evident.

## Public Safety

### SATISFACTION of those ranking programs as Important or Most Important



*(The number of respondents rating each program above as Most or More Important is shown in parentheses.)*

#### Comment:

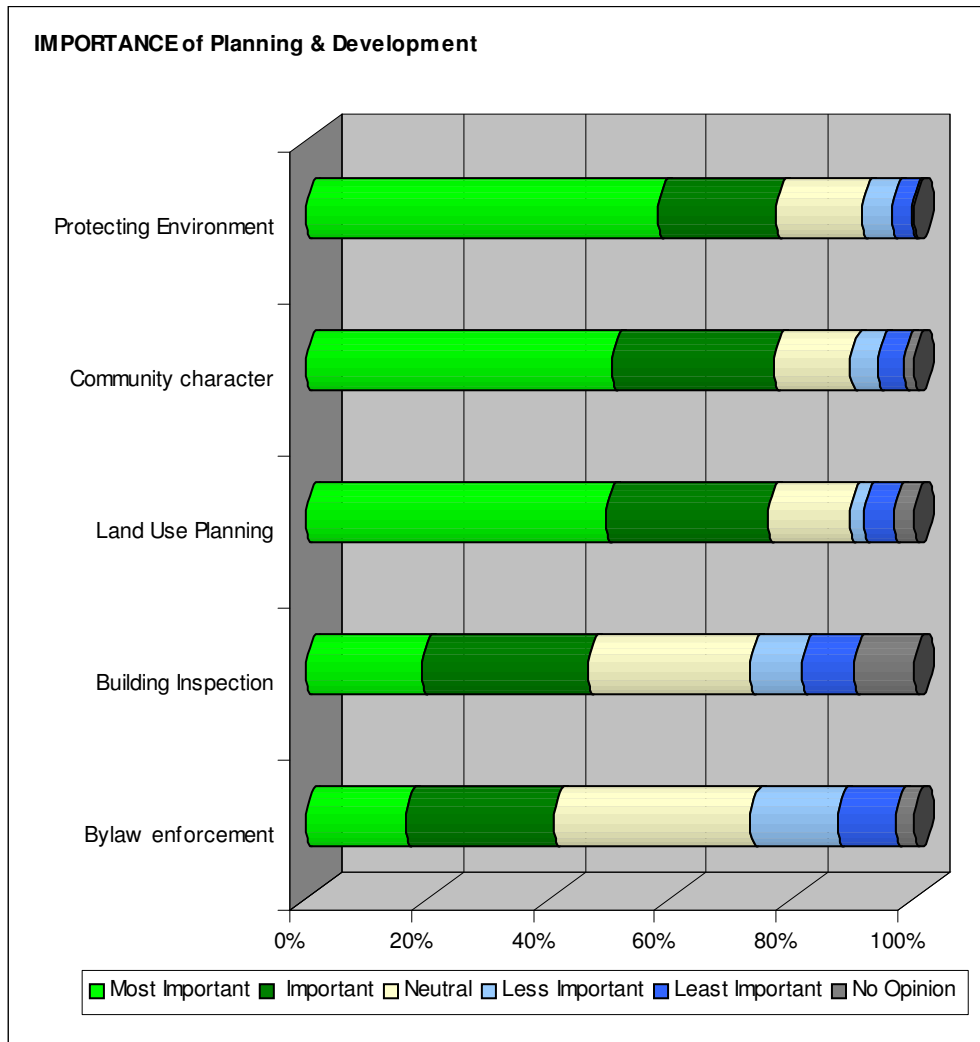
Police and Fire Services receive a 75% Satisfaction rating.

Ambulance Services, which rank highest in Importance, receive a markedly lower Satisfaction rating of 56%.

Fire Safety Education ranks at 40% and Emergency Preparedness at 30% Satisfaction.

### Q7 – Planning & Development

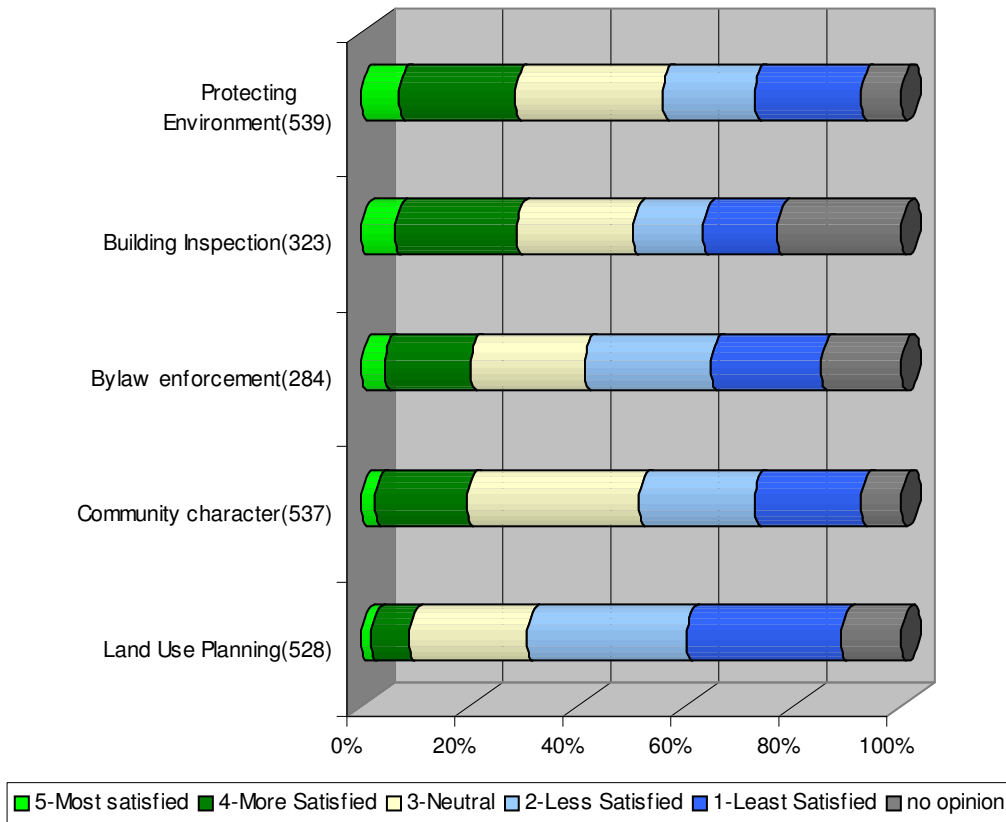
Please rate **Importance** and **Satisfaction** from 1 (least) to 5 (most).



Comment:

Ratings are self-evident.

**Planning & Development**  
**SATISFACTION of those ranking programs as Important or Most Important**



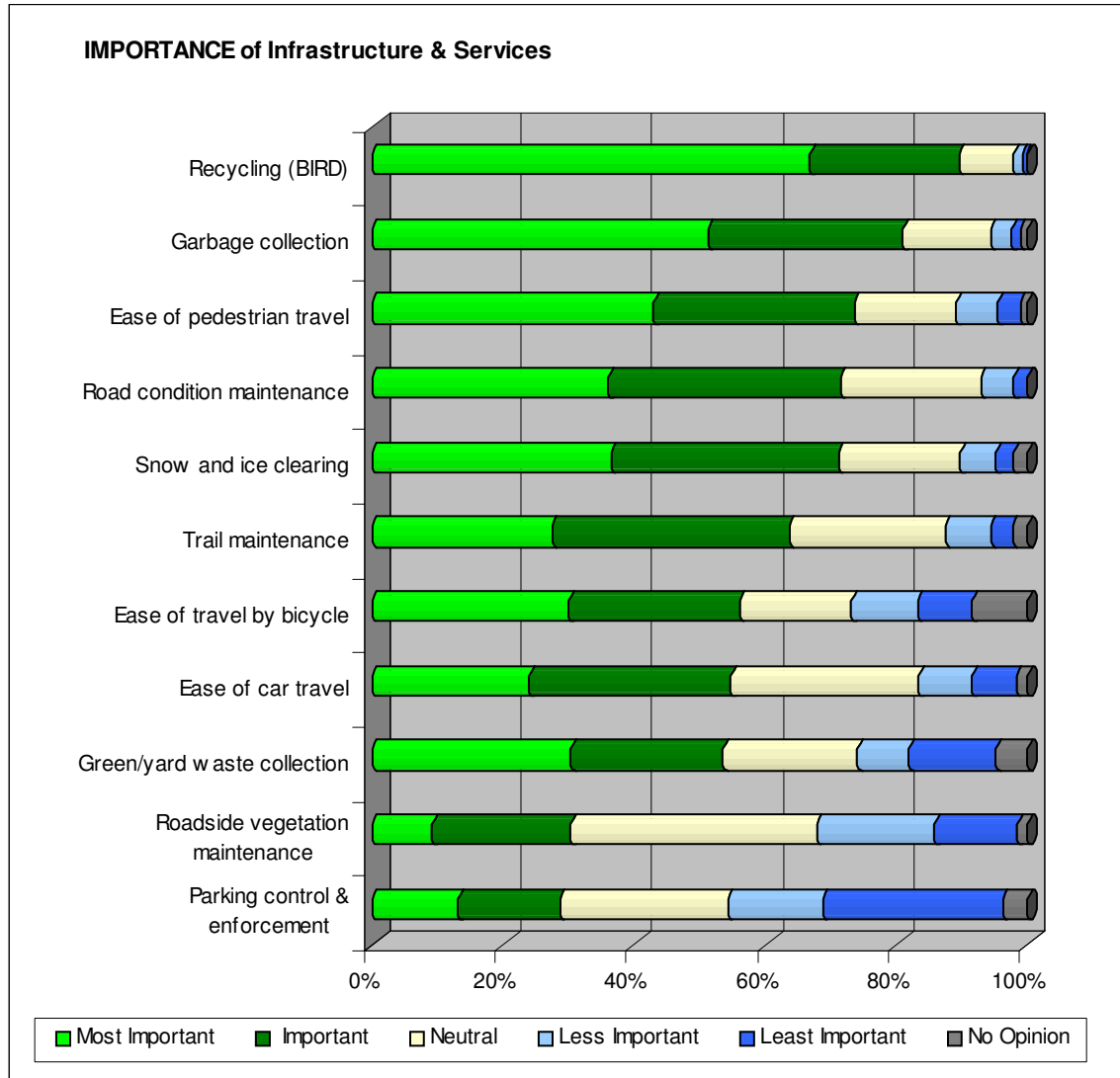
*(The number of respondents rating each program above as Most or More Important is shown in parentheses.)*

**Comment:**

The ratings are self-evident, though it is important to note that the levels of satisfaction all below 25%, are well below those of all other services provided by BIM.

## **Q8 – Municipal Infrastructure & Services**

Please rate **Importance** and **Satisfaction** from 1 (least) to 5 (most)

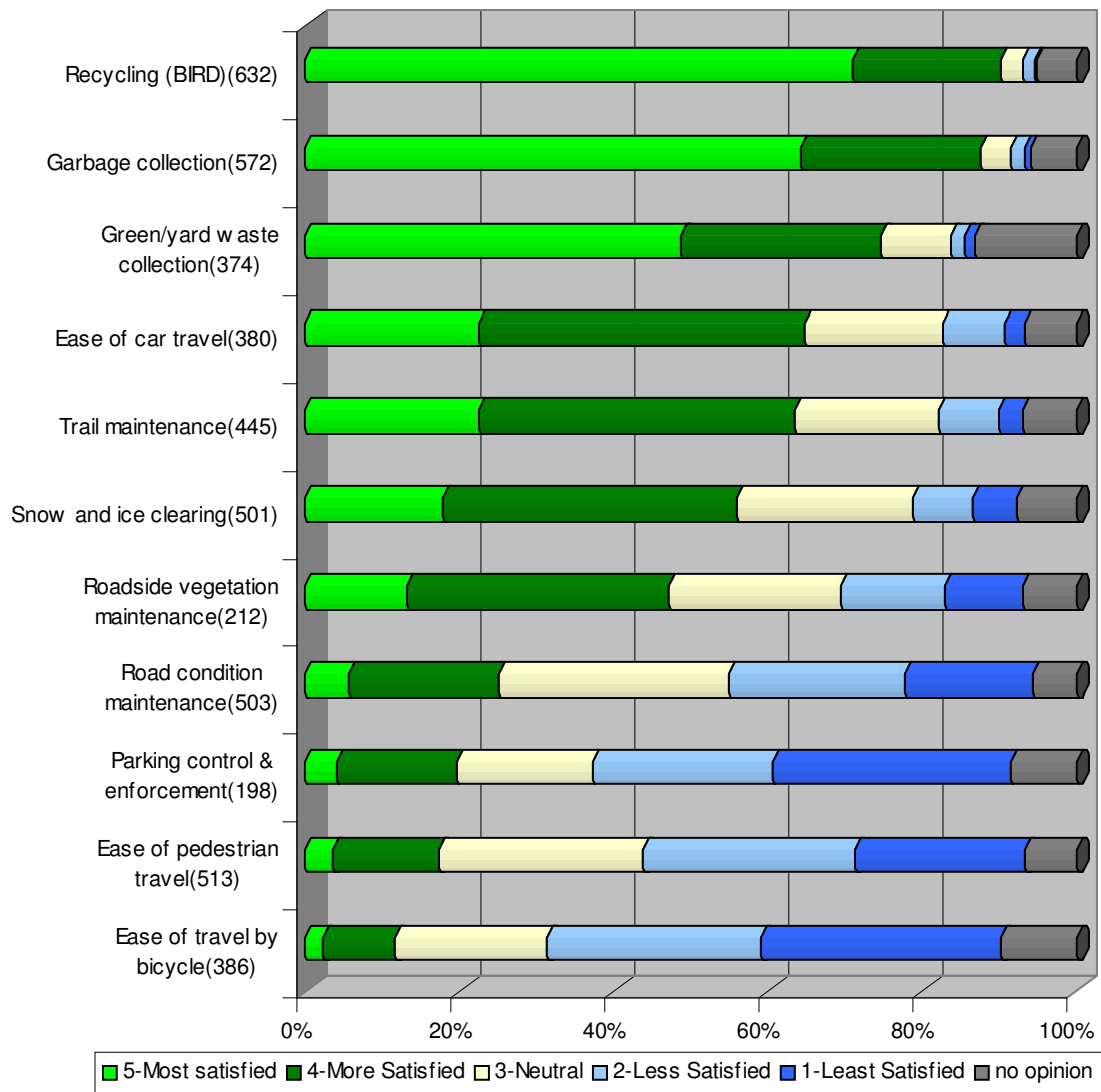


Comment:

Ratings are self-evident.

## Infrastructure & Services

### SATISFACTION of those ranking services as Important or Most Important



*(The number of respondents rating each service above as Most or More Important is shown in parentheses.)*

#### Comment:

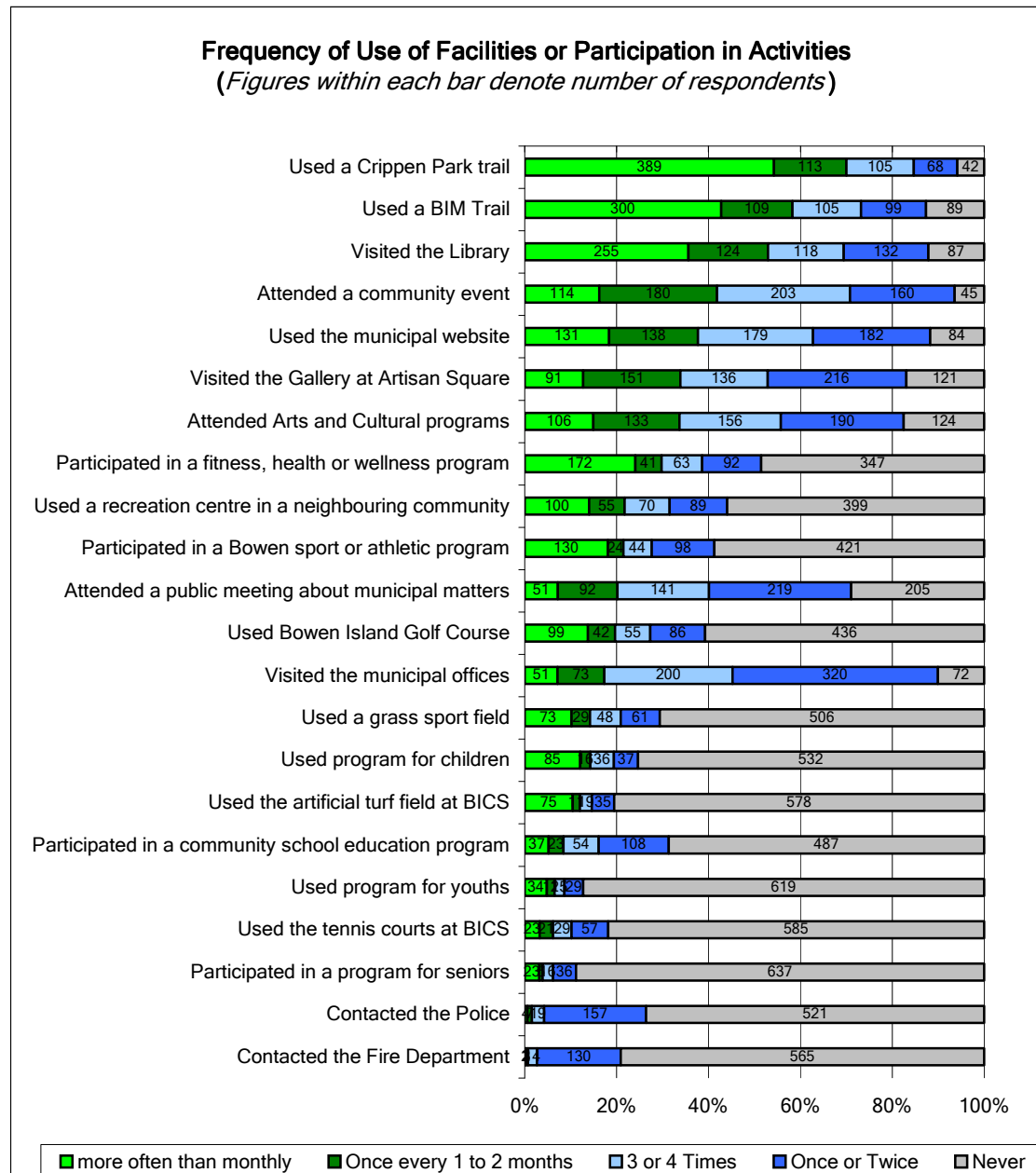
The 90% Satisfaction rating for BIRD Recycling is a testament to this self-funded organization and its volunteers.

Only 9% of respondents rate Ease of Pedestrian Travel with Satisfaction compared to 70% rating it as Important. Trails seem not to be regarded as Pedestrian Travel, as evidenced in Q 5 where Trails receive a high Importance and Satisfaction ranking.



### Q9 – Frequency of Use of Facilities or Participation in Activities

In the past 12 months, how often did you or a member of your family attend a facility or participate in any of the following activities? Please check the ranking that most closely applies.

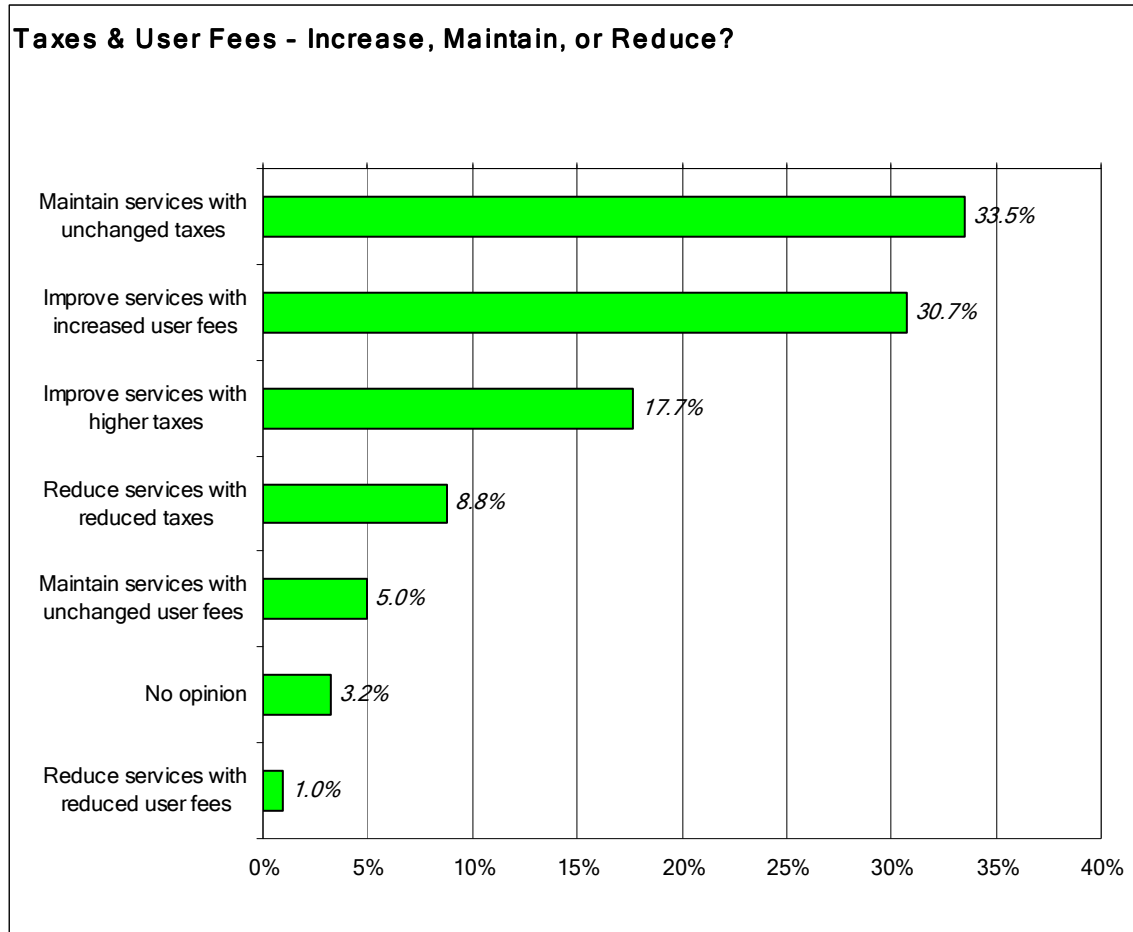


Comment:

These responses can be further analysed between households with and without children to assist in service delivery considerations.

### **Q10 – Taxes & User Fees – Increase, Maintain, or Reduce?**

If faced with the following realistic choices regarding municipal services, what would you prefer Council to do? Please check only one box indicating your preferred choice.



#### **Comment:**

The clear message from respondents is:

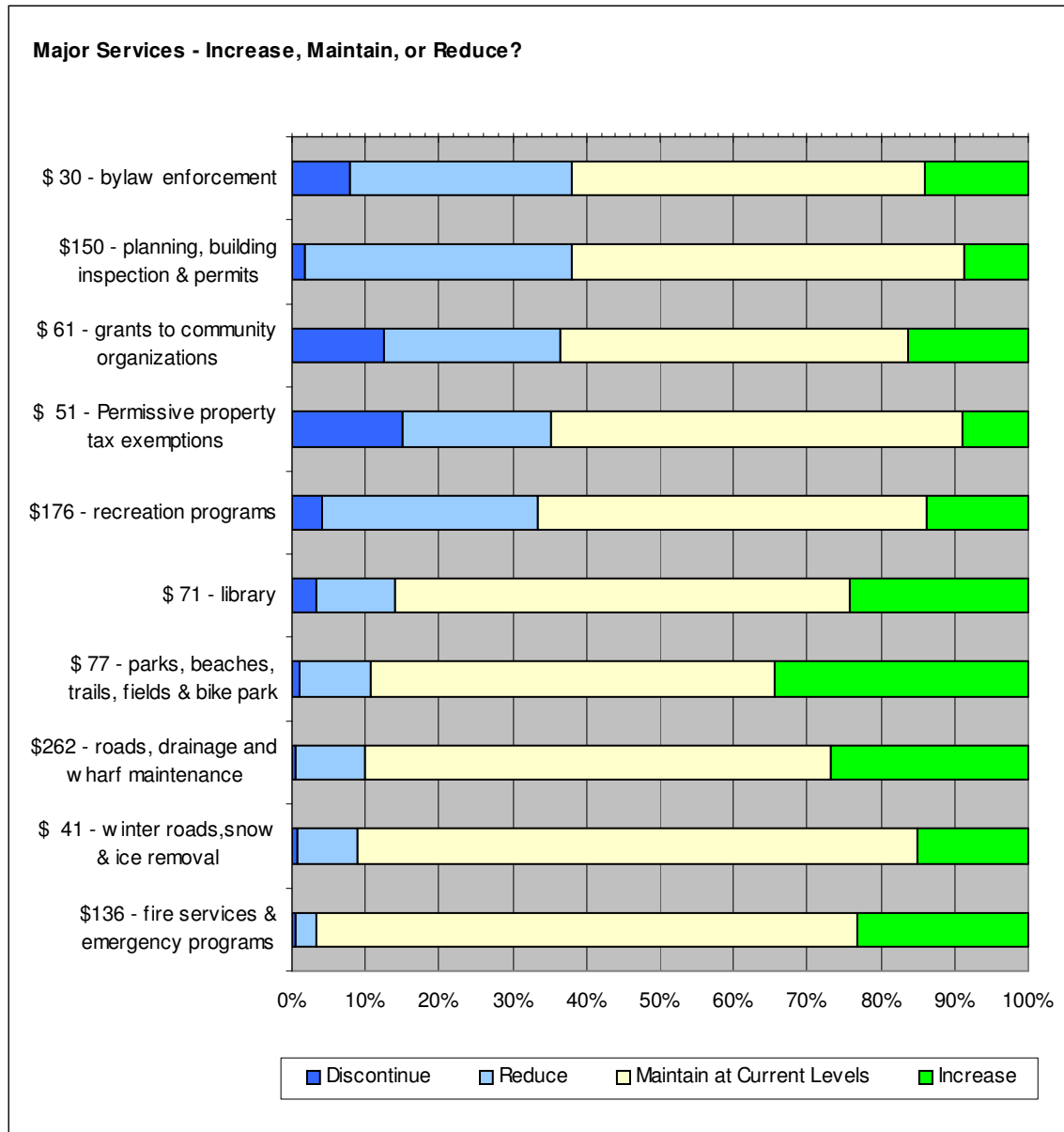
47% wish to maintain services with unchanged or reduced taxes and user fees.

31% wish to improve services, but only with increased user fees.

18% are prepared to pay higher taxes for improved services.

### Q11 - Major Services - Increase, Maintain, or Reduce?

Listed below is the average cost per property of some of the major services provided by the municipality. Please check the box that most closely matches your preference.



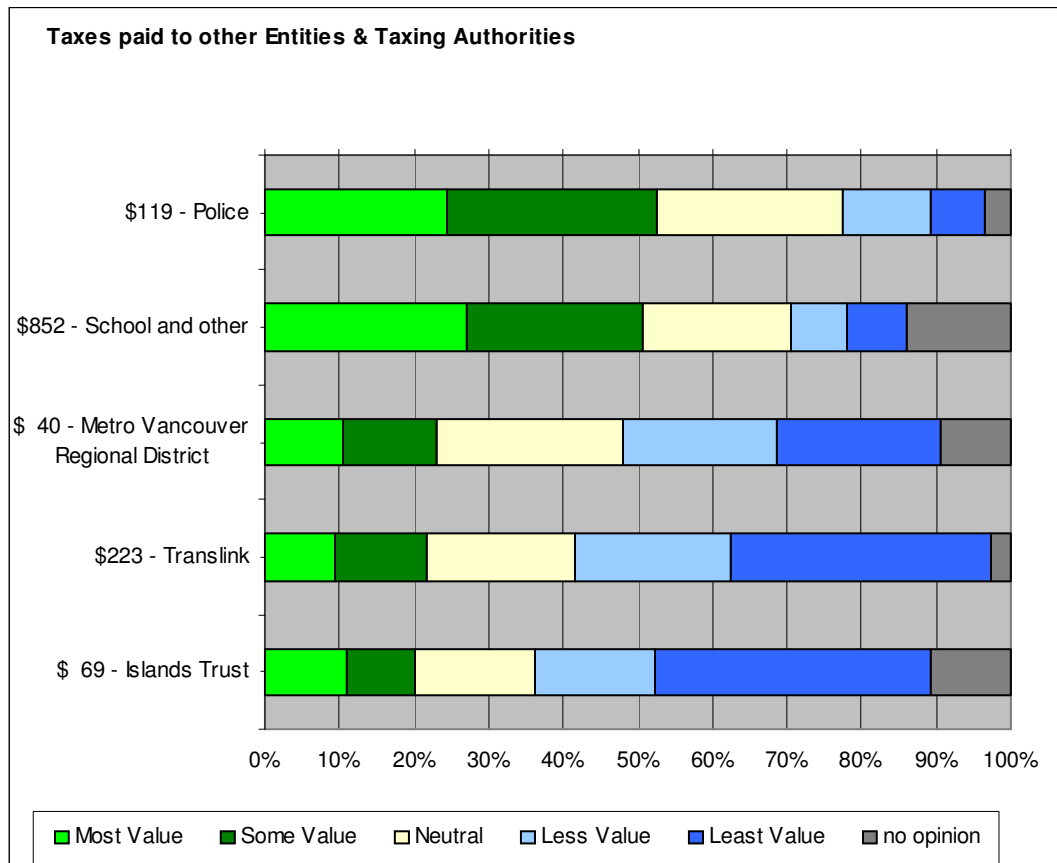
Most respondents wish to maintain the above services at current levels.

Those wishing to discontinue/reduce bylaw enforcement, planning costs, community grants and property tax exemptions, outweigh those wishing to increase them, by factors ranging from 2 to 4 times.

An equally clear sentiment is expressed for increasing services related to parks, beaches, trails and fields as opposed to reducing or discontinuing those.

### **Q12 – Taxes paid to other Entities & Taxing Authorities**

Approximately 43% of the average tax bill comprises taxes collected by BIM on behalf of other entities and taxing authorities. Please indicate whether you think you receive good value for these taxes on a scale of 1 (least value) to 5 (most value).



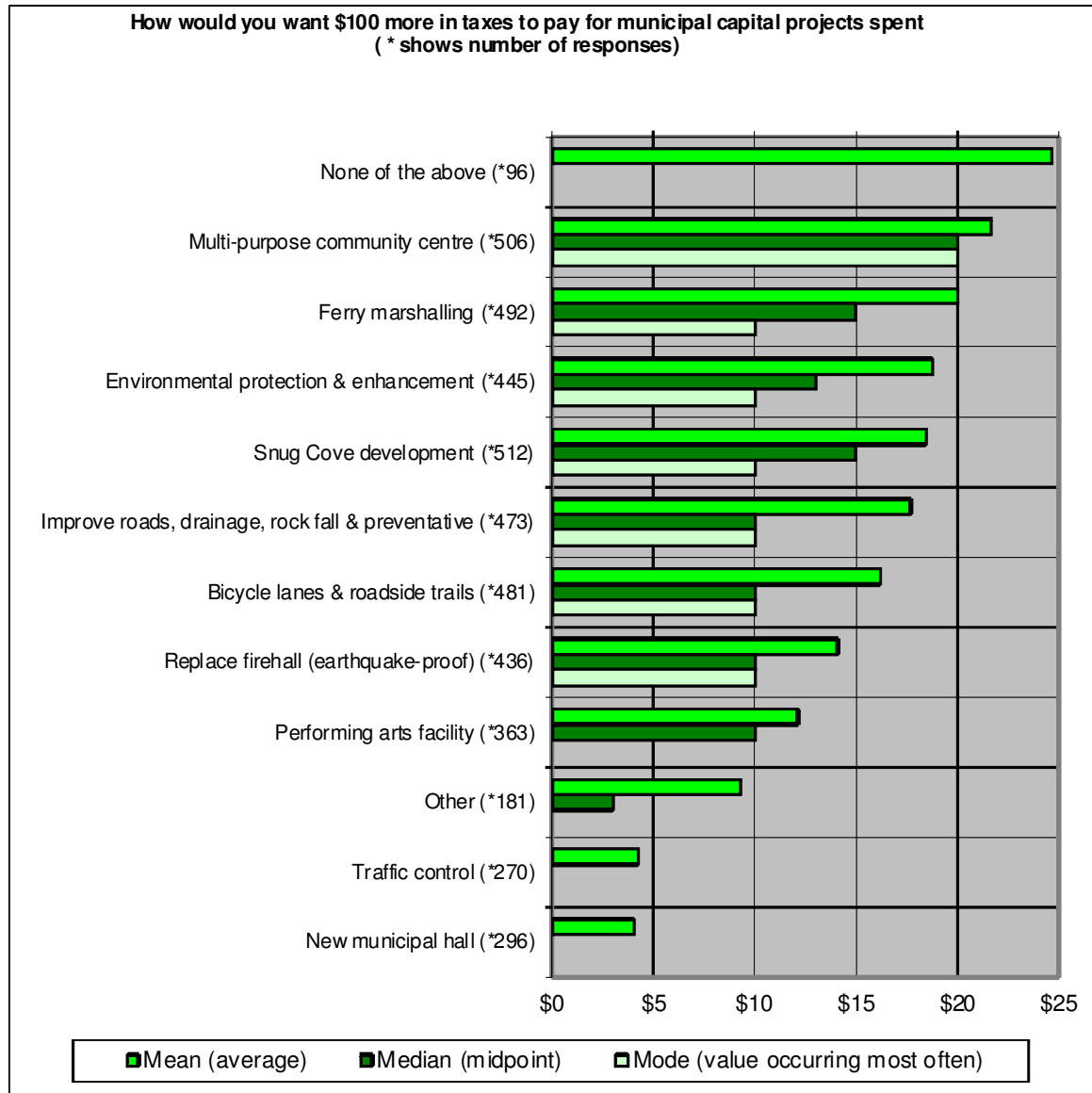
**Comment:**

More than half the respondents regard taxes collected on behalf of Police and Schools as valuable.

Conversely, more than half the respondents regard taxes collected on behalf of Translink, and Islands Trust as having little or no value.

### Q13 – How would you spend an additional \$100 in taxes for Capital Projects?

Imagine you were asked to pay \$100 more in taxes to pay for municipal capital projects. How would you want it spent? Please divide the \$100 amongst the listed capital projects according to your preference.



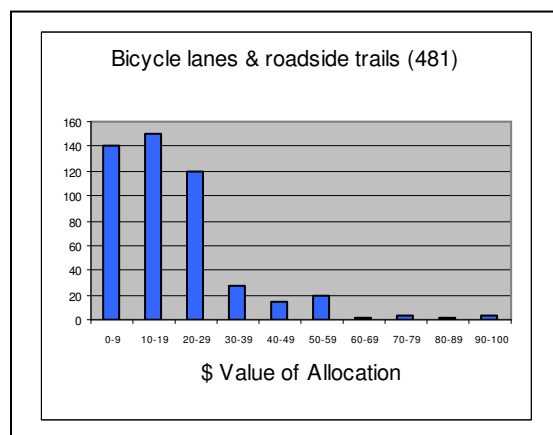
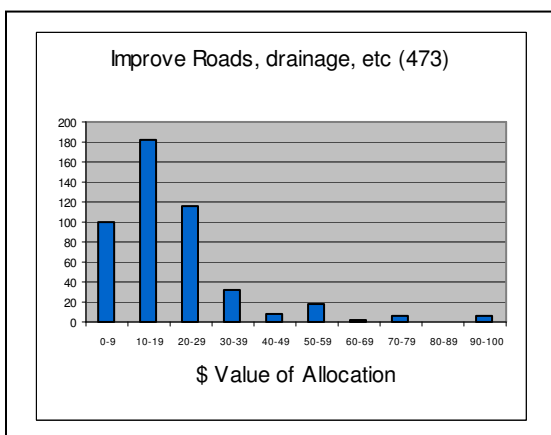
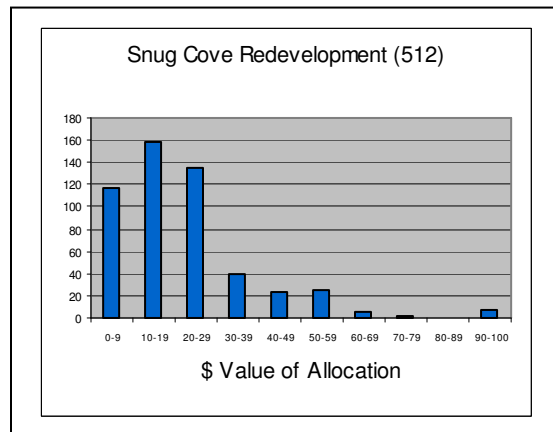
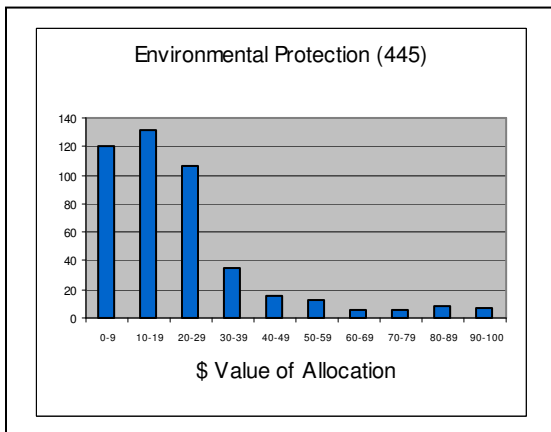
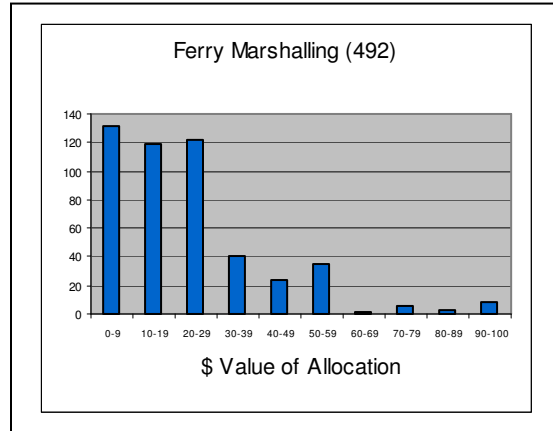
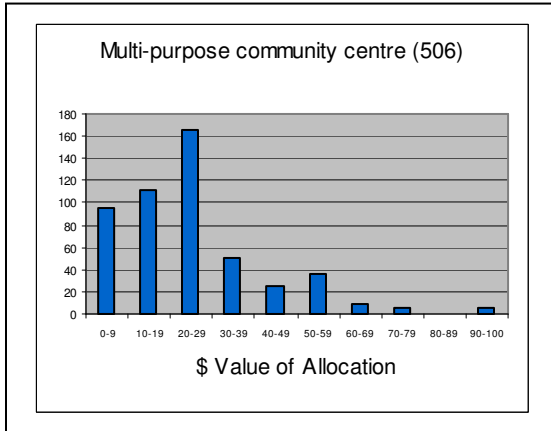
Similarity between Mean, Median and Mode values shows a high degree of consistency between responses; e.g. Multi-purpose community centre.

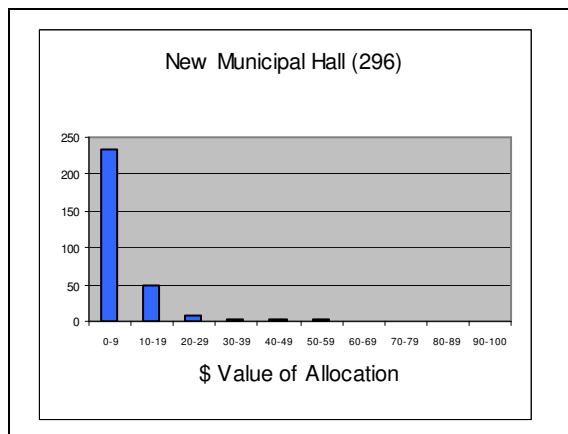
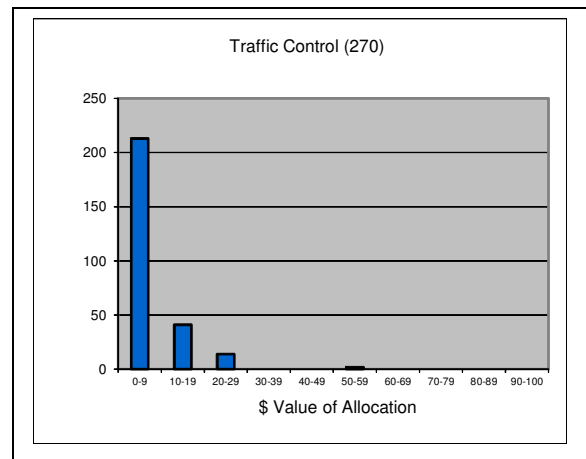
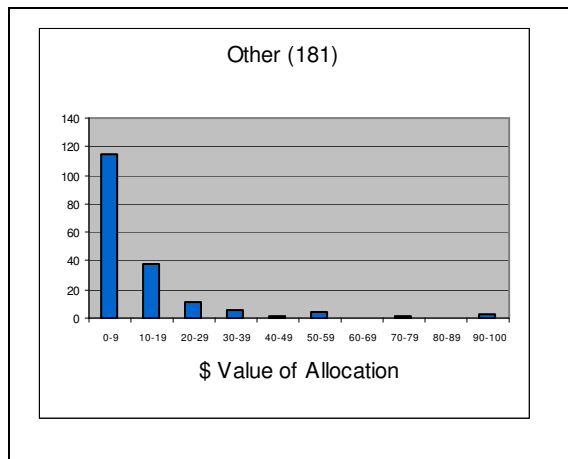
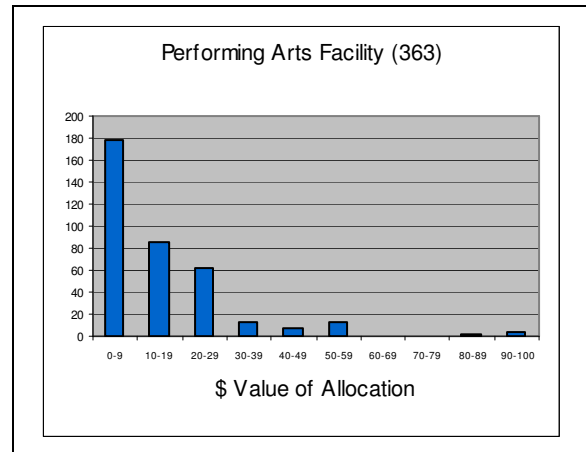
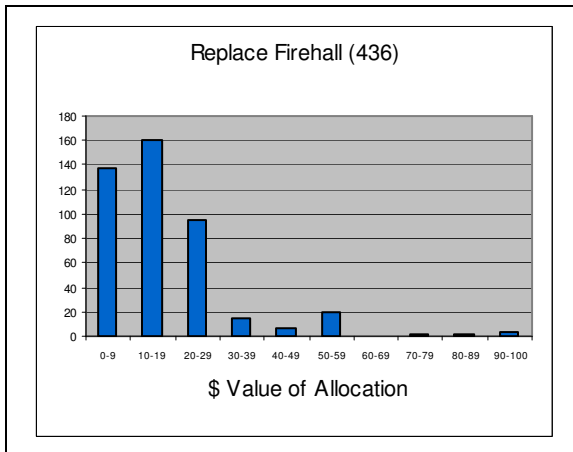
Divergence between these measures, such as Environmental Protection, means there is a wider range of responses: i.e. some very high vs. some very low.

A single-purpose Performing Arts Facility or New Municipal Hall both rank very low.

The following charts illustrate how dollar value allocations are clustered and distributed.

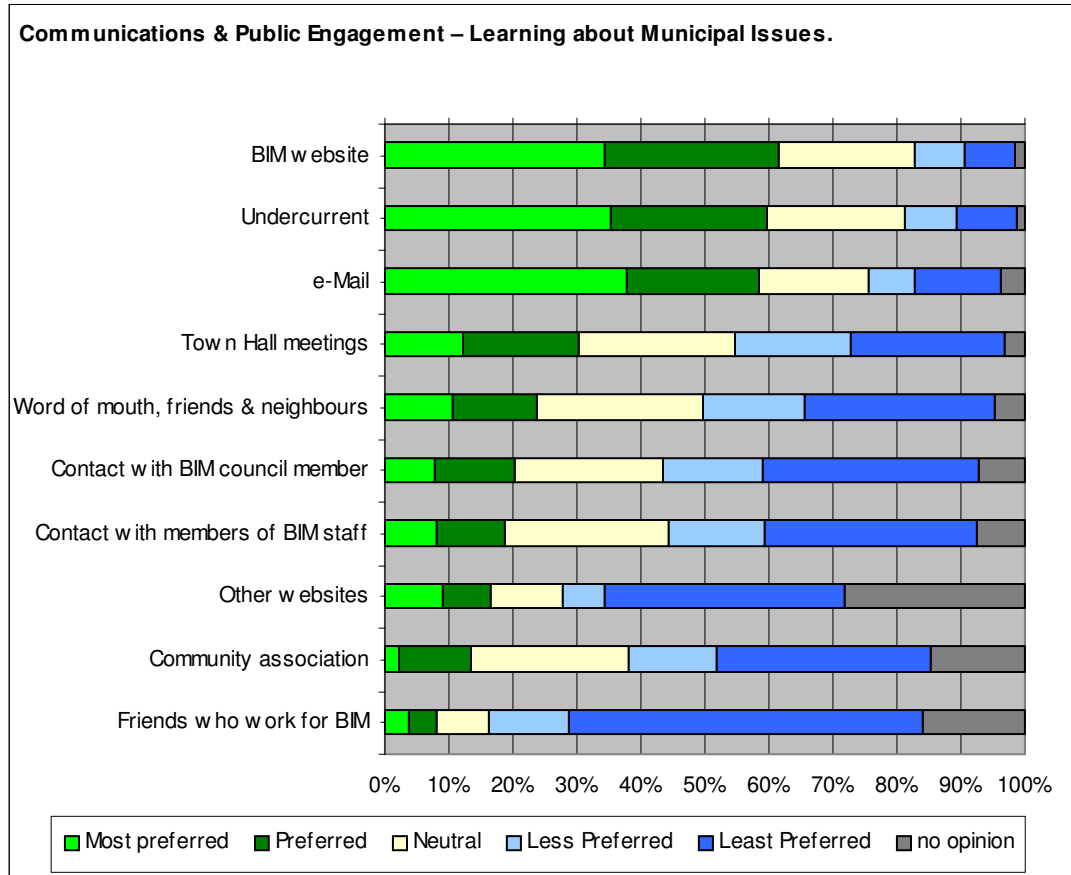
*(Number of respondents is shown in parentheses)*





#### **Q14 – Communications & Public Engagement – Learning about Municipal Issues**

Please identify your preferred way of learning about municipal issues. Please rate your Preference from 1 (least preferred) to 5 (most preferred).



#### **Comment:**

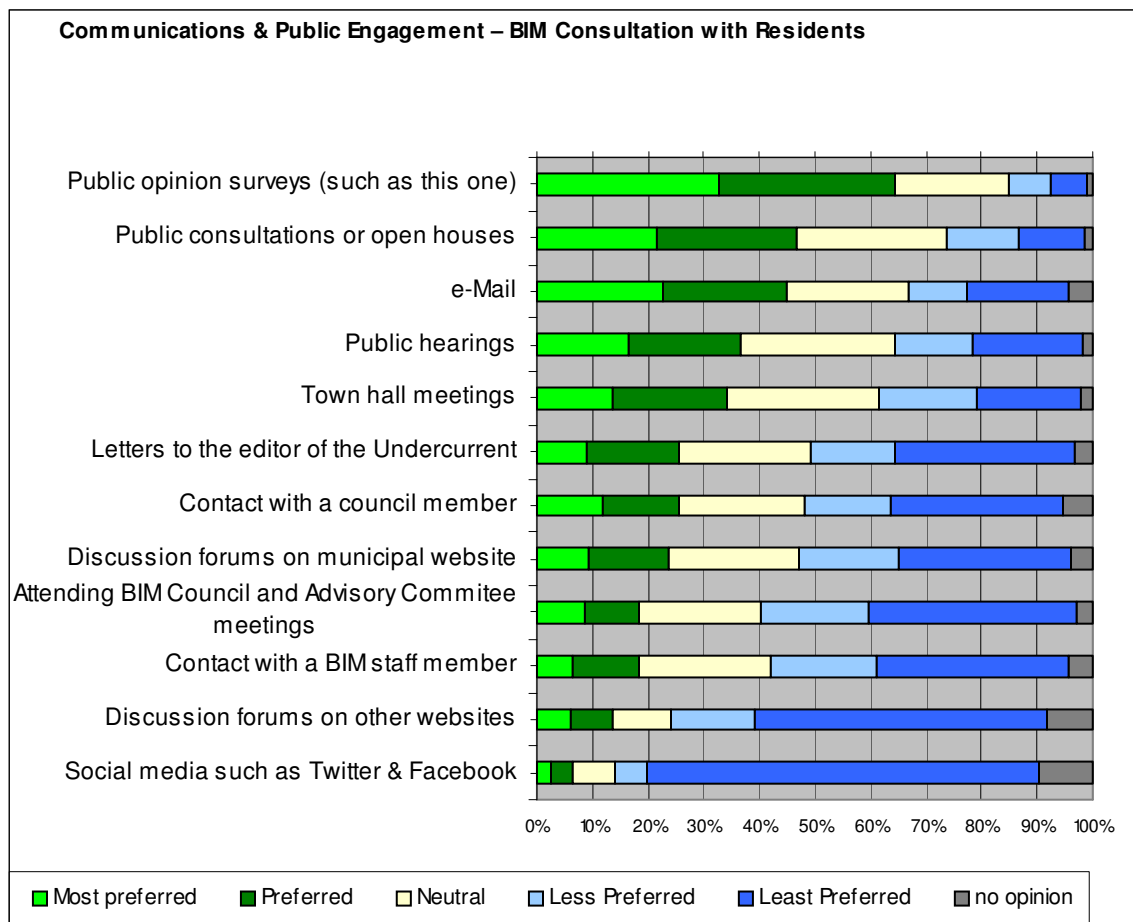
These responses show a strong preference for learning about Municipal Issues via the BIM website, e-mail, and the Undercurrent.

Town Hall meetings attract only a 30% preference, while Community Associations and Other Websites have less than a 20% preference.



### **Q15 – Communications & Public Engagement – BIM Consultation with Residents**

There are a number of different ways BIM can consult with residents on important local issues. Please rate your level of preference for providing your input to Council through following methods. Please rate your Preference from 1 (least preferred) to 5 (most preferred).



**Comment:**

This chart shows a strong (66%) preference for Surveys such as this one, which is encouraging as a low-cost means of communication.

Public consultation via Open Houses is the second preference at 46%, followed by low-cost e-mail.

Costly Public Hearings and Town Hall Meetings attract only 33% preference, whereas Social Media has virtually no support at all.