

Service Level Survey 2022 – Final Results (July 2022)

Introduction

In April 2022, *the Service Level and Operational Highlights – 2022 Budget* document was published and reviewed by Lamont County Council. Decisions for the budget were made based on the *2030 Strategic Plan*, which outlines the six goals that guide this and its priorities related to service level delivery.

To achieve community engagement and input, the 2022 Service Level Survey was developed and made available to residents for input from May 2 to June 30. Council reviewed and approved the survey content at the April 26 COTW. The survey was advertised on the Lamontcounty.ca website, shared on social media, advertised in the Lamont Leader, promoted at the June 21 Service Level Discussions Open House event, sent as an Advisory to local media, and available in print and digital formats at the Lamont County Administration and Public Works/ASB buildings. Including media coverage, opportunity for completion approximately reached ~15,000 people, with some receiving the unpaid advertising through multiple mediums, including the 3,000 monthly website visitors and 6,500 social media followers. Completion of the survey was at individual discretion.

While the survey was based on questions commonly used by municipalities, it was not a scientific survey, in that respondents could choose which questions they answered or skipped at their discretion. The survey was distributed using Survey Monkey and was used in place of a professional research company.

Purpose

This survey is used as a starting point for discussions related to future budget and service level planning. The feedback and comments from this survey are considered an important part of the public engagement process – as it relates directly to Lamont County’s Public Participation policy (6100.22) the goal of which is responsible, transparent and well-informed decision-making. Additionally, public engagement aligns with goal number three of the Strategic Plan to continue on the path of accountability and transparency to the community – a key direction from the *Municipal Government Act* (Section 216.1).

General Review

- A majority of the respondents live in (rural) Lamont County (a respondent-mix across all ages between 25-80) and a total of 110 respondents (some completed the full survey, and some answered only specific questions/provided comments).
 - o Respondents aged 35 to 64 composed 54.8% of the responses, while those 65 years and older comprised 11%, and those 25 to 34 made up for 24.7% of remaining responses.
 - o Of the respondents, 38.8% work fulltime, 24% are in the Farming Industry and 9.3% are retired.

- A majority of respondents understand and support an increase or maintenance of tax rates to effectively increase service levels and ensure long-term fiscal sustainability. Very few respondents wanted decreased levels of service or removal of specific service areas.
- Some comments were however, related to Towns/Villages (different municipalities within Lamont County) and Government-maintained roadways (highways)—which are not under the County’s mandate/jurisdiction.
- Respondents rated the value of County services as approximately 4.2/10 (average) the median (middle) score is approximately 5.5 and the mode (most frequent) score is 7. While the mode score of 7 is encouraging, in aggregate this identifies areas of improvement, but also shows many service needs are being addressed.

Key Questions

There are two key questions in the survey pertaining to what residents want to see for the future: questions 5 and 21.

- A. Question 5 asked **What is most important to you as Lamont County plans for the future, as it relates to our 2030 Strategic Plan and Goals?**

Of the 110 participants in the survey 96 responded and 14 skipped this question. The top two ranked answers were:

1. Ensure long-term fiscal sustainability - and making financial decisions today to ensure a healthy financial position in the future (may result in tax updates and service level changes to ensure finances for the future).
2. Increase service levels (snow removal, gravel, roads, etc.) at the expense of increased taxes.

With the bottom two questions:

5. Prepare and react to changes in the economy (spend more during "good times" and cut services during "recovery times").
6. Don't know/prefer not to answer.

- B. Question 21 asked **Now that you have completed this survey and are aware of the programs and services, please rank what you feel is most valuable to Lamont County from most important to least?**

Of the 110 participants in the survey 69 responded and 41 skipped this question. The top three ranked answers were:

1. Regular Road Maintenance (gravel, abatement, etc.).
2. Winter Maintenance (roads).
3. Community Policing and Rural Crime Prevention.

The bottom three ranked answers were:

- 10. Animal Control (beavers, rodents, wild boar, etc.).
- 11. Private Winter Maintenance (regular flags, senior flags and medically fragile).
- 12. Celebrating our rich history and identity.

Ranking does not necessarily mean that respondents want the services removed or modified – it is a ranking based on the options and service level priorities provided in the survey, and represents only the opinions of those that responded to the survey.

The full version of the survey, as presented to Council (with full charts and comments), is available here: lamontcounty.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/?preview=17471.

Priorities ranked* (69 responses):

* Categories are ranked based on the preference across all items. The percentage below shows the frequency each item was identified as one of the **top three** options by importance.

Q21 Now that you have completed this survey and are aware of the programs and services, please rank what you feel is most valuable to Lamont County from most important to least.

Numbers ranked top 3 (as per cent):

