

2017 Ratepayer Survey Results

Total Surveys Sent out = 190

Total Surveys Returned = 70

Return Percentage: 37%

Note:

Many of the suggestions contained within were ideas heard at the MD Public Meetings in 2015 and 2016. However, the topics contained within this survey were near identical from our December 2016 public meeting since we only had approximately 20 people attend that event.

We will continue to hold 2 ratepayer meetings each year and encourage everyone to attend.

With regards to grazing leases, it is important to repeat that there are no plans to sell any leases. However, as these 50+ quarters are our MD's most valuable asset, their future must be a topic in any serious discussion around long-term and contingency planning. A common theme amongst people on both sides of the topic agree that the MD must do something about leaseholders who do not adhere to their lease contracts; who overgraze the land; and especially, do not own cattle. These will now be the topics to address with regards to grazing leases.

Community Hall

61- Build a new Hall

5- Repair the existing Hall

1- Other

Administration Comments:

This is by far the largest majority of all the questions. Most people would like to see a new hall over repairs to the existing hall.

Grazing Leases

Topic A: Lease Contracts

35- Keep lease contracts the way they are.

17- Change the contract term to expire after a set-amount of time (i.e. 25 years). At which time, the lease would go back up for public auction.

12- Other

Administration Comments:

While the majority of 'Other' selections were in favor of either changing contracts or selling the lease land, there's still a fair majority in favor of keeping contracts the same.

Topic B: Oil/Gas Revenue Sharing

Should the MD continue to share 1/3 of this revenue?

41- Yes

21- No

3- Other

Administration Comments:

Clear majority believe that we should continue to share the 1/3 revenue with leaseholders. Some commentators asked about the meaning of the question. To clarify for some who asked questions, the MD brings in about \$31,000 per year in surface leases from oil and gas companies for having wells on MD land. The MD then shares 1/3 of this number (approx. \$10,500) with the leaseholder on that property.

Topic C: Misc. Questions

- 1) Should leaseholders be permitted to sell their lease on municipal land at any price they wish, or should this be capped to make it easier for new people to have access to MD land?

34- Yes, leaseholders should be able to sell their municipal lease at whatever price they wish.

24- No, the price should be managed to ensure others can have fair access to public land.

10- Other

Administration Comments:

As most of the 'Other' selections are in favor of either changing the terms of how lease are sold or selling the land in general, this question is fairly evenly split. But it is important to clarify that the MD has never followed Crown Lease Rules entirely. There have always been points of discrepancy between the two.

- 2) Should the MD ever consider selling these 57 quarter sections of land should the need arise? (i.e. Significant financial hardship/Risk of municipal dissolution)

35- Yes, if there is a need, the MD should look at selling some/all of this land.

24- No, do not sell the land,

5- Other

Administration Comments

A majority feel that selling MD lease land if the need arises is a reasonable course of action.

Roads and Weeds

Topic 1: Bladed/Back Trails

What do you think about maintaining these BACK trails?

26- It should be the MD's responsibility

6- It should be the farmer's responsibility

29- A cost sharing arrangement is most fair.

4- Other

Administration Comments:

A fair majority believe that fixing back trails shouldn't be the MD's responsibility alone. It is important to note that these back trails are often road allowances that are seeded or have a 2 wheel path. The MD has only maintained these when individual problems arose. However, in 2016, the precipitation caused a lot of problems to arise. We will add as many to our maintenance schedule as possible, but it will take several years to get through all of these.

Topic 2: Gravel Roads

Administration Comments

There were not a lot of serious complaints about our gravel roads. The biggest concern was washboard conditions and then complaints about individual stretches of road. It is clear that residents want the MD to be diligent on maintaining these roads and in responding to issues.

Topic 3: Weeds.

Administration Comments

This is an issue that many people care about and the majority opinion is that the MD needs to work harder on containing the spread of kochia and noxious weeds.

Topic 4: Misc. Questions

- 1) The MD plans on removing most oiled roads from the rural as they reach the end of their current life. Do you agree with this?

53- Yes

11- No

3- Other

Administration Comments

Large majority agree at getting rid of oil from the rural areas. However, many would like to see the road to the dam remain oiled.

- 2) Many sidewalks in the hamlet have fallen into disrepair. For safety reasons, the MD plans on beginning a sidewalk repair program in 2017 with funds from our current road program? Is this ok with you?

48- Yes

15-No

3- Other

Administration Comments

Strong majority are in favor of repairing sidewalks.

Misc. Topics

Topic 1: Oyen Doctor's Clinic

What is your opinion on this?

15- Fund our share for a new clinic via borrowing and property taxes

38- Explore renovations to the existing clinic

3- Other

Administration Comments

A strong majority is in favor of exploring renovations to the existing clinic. Many also commented on the need to do something to keep our doctor's here. One could infer that this means if renovations are not feasible, then financing a new clinic may be necessary.

Topic 2: MD Dam Upgrades

Administration Comments

A majority of people are in favor of upgrading and improving the Dam. There was more support for the smaller projects than the larger ones; however, the state of the current bathrooms was a common item for improvement.

Topic 3: Misc.

- 1) Would you like there to be a recycling drop off point for cardboard and paper in the hamlet?

35- Yes

14- No

10- Other

Administration Comments

A strong majority would like to see recycling options in the hamlet; however, a common theme is only if it is at minimal or no cost to the MD.

2) Signage is an often discussed issue. Please check the below statements if you agree with them:

27- Welcome sign and lighting at the Hwy 41 entrance to Acadia Valley

8- Improved signage in Acadia Valley

33- Repair and Replacement of rural road signs

Administration Comments

A strong interest in seeing repairs to rural road signs and a sign/lighting at the intersection of Hwy 41 and Acadia Valley; but neither has majority support from all respondents.

3) The MD currently provides an annual grant to the Chinook Applied Research Association (CARA) based in Oyen. Council would like to ask residents and ratepayers about their knowledge of CARA and the level to which they utilize its services:

14- Do not know anything and Do not use them

36- Understand what they do but do not use them

22- Understand what they do and make use of their services

Administration Comments

Most people do not use CARA's services, but a majority does understand what they do.

General Comments or Concerns

Administration Comments

There were no common themes from the general comments; rather a variety of complaints, suggestions, criticisms and compliments. Some of the recurring topics were:

- 2 people mentioned the unsightly property issue in Acadia Valley
- 3 people were concerned about dogs roaming free in the hamlet
- 2 people brought up that MD work hours.
- 2 people mentioned the fire hall office space. One was supported the current use and one was displeased of the lack of rent being charged to use it.
- 4 people brought up the need to get rid of the MD Peace Officer.
- 4 people mentioned their displeasure with the MD over the Tax Recovery land sale this summer