



Town of Castle Rock

Agenda Memorandum

Agenda Date: 12/15/2020

Item #: 8. **File #:** ID 2020-133

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of Town Council

Through: David L. Corliss, Town Manager

From: Kristin Read, Assistant Town Manager

Update: 2021 Community Survey Process

Executive Summary

In every odd-numbered year since 2011, the Town has completed resident and business surveys to gauge these groups' perceptions about Town services and issues. The same firm, now known as ComEngage, has conducted these surveys on the Town's behalf since 2015. Using the same vendor provides consistency of approach and allows the Town to best trend its performance year-over-year.

Staff has begun working with ComEngage, formerly known as Northwest Research Group, to prepare for the 2021 community survey. Internal meetings are being held to fine-tune what questions are presently valuable for the Town's knowledge. On January 15, staff and the consultant will present Council with draft surveys for feedback. If any Councilmembers wish for a more detailed review of past and planned survey practices, staff recommends they request an individual meeting ahead of this discussion.

Current planning calls for the surveys to be finalized soon after the Council discussion so they can be administered from mid-February to mid-March. That schedule will allow for a review of survey results with Council on April 6. This timing purposefully provides the results well ahead of the Town's annual budget process so that any priorities that emerge can be evaluated and prioritized.

Discussion

Conducting community surveys is a common practice within Douglas County. The County has surveyed residents at least every other year since 2006, and our neighboring communities of Lone Tree and Parker also survey their communities every few years.

The Town's survey provides a scientific way to gauge sentiments within the community. It asks for opinions about Town services, quality of life, key community issues and more. Data collected is compared to that from past years, and movements in opinions are explored. The results can show where service delivery is perceived to be lacking, where issues of equity may be worth considering - through cross-tabulations by a number of demographics including election districts - and where

educational campaigns should be targeted.

The Town's contract with ComEngage allows for a resident survey of up to 30 minutes. The scientific resident survey will be administered by phone and online, by invitation only and with password-protected access. Responses from sampled residents will be monitored to ensure a broad cross-section of Town residents is included. A supplemental survey will be offered in addition to the scientific study, to give the entire community the opportunity to participate. The resident survey is planned to include questions in these areas:

- General questions about the quality of life and quality and value of services in Town and a question regarding whether the Town is headed in the right direction; these will be used to compare Castle Rock to communities across the country, including other high-growth communities
- Questions regarding Castle Rock as a place to live, including asking about important issues - like possible solutions for funding public safety needs in the long term - as well as regarding how well the Town keeps residents informed, and how likely residents are to recommend Castle Rock as a place to work, raise children, retire and do business
- Evaluations of specific aspects of Town services including Police, Fire/EMS, Roads/Public Works, Water and Parks and Recreation
- Thoughts on the Town's strategic priorities, how growth in Castle Rock should be managed and regarding community character
- Demographics and other general information

Residents in 8,000 households will be invited to participate, and at least 400 surveys will be completed, yielding a maximum error of ± 4.9 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. Results will be weighted as necessary to match Castle Rock's population in terms of age, income and other key demographics.

The Town's contract with ComEngage also includes two months of an online community in which resident survey respondents will be asked to discuss various issues, and opinions expressed in the survey, in greater detail. This is similar to a process undertaken following the 2017 survey. Up to four topics can be explored over two months; these will be determined by examining survey results. As an example, following the 2017 survey, the topics explored were: value of services; growth; community character; parks priorities; and water planning. The Town retains the option to explore additional topics for an added cost. Results from this process may lag the overall survey slightly but are expected to be available by the end of April.

The business survey, meanwhile, will be about 10 minutes long and is expected to focus on these areas:

- Issues affecting business in Town, including financial health of businesses in light of the COVID-19 pandemic

- The quality and value of the services the Town provides to businesses in Town, as well as how growth is managed in Town
- General sentiments regarding whether the Town is headed in the right direction and whether respondents would recommend doing business in Castle Rock
- Demographics and other general information

Every licensed business located in the Town will be invited to complete the survey. Based on past participation levels, about 150 businesses are expected to be surveyed, producing a maximum error of ± 7.6 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. Town staff works with community partners from the Castle Rock Chamber and Economic Development Council in determining what questions are best to recommend for the business survey.

Staff looks forward to discussing the survey drafts with Council next month and is available between now and then for more detailed conversations as desired.

Budget Impact

The Town's contract with ComEngage is for up to \$72,900. The Town Manager's Office 2021 budget includes \$70,000 for this project. The minor additional amount, if incurred, can be absorbed within existing appropriations.