



Survey Summary

Created May 17, 2024

Overview

Staff used Chat GPT to help identify themes across the 190 responses but validated the AI tool's work to ensure nuance, tone, and accuracy. The responses share several commonalities and cover many of the concerns heard through other community engagement inputs and surveys, such as concerns about safety, homelessness, affordable housing, accountability, managing growth, the economy, and more.

Q1. What are the most important challenges and opportunities facing the City of Vancouver that the new City Manager would need to help the Council address?

Summary: Responses reflect the diverse range of challenges and opportunities facing Vancouver, encompassing familiar issues of safety, homelessness, and the economy.

Homelessness/Social Services/Crime: The issue of homelessness and its associated challenges, such as crime, drug addiction, and safety concerns, continues to be a major theme. The need for effective support programs was mentioned. Some respondents emphasized the importance of humane treatment for the homeless population and the need for effective and comprehensive solutions.

Infrastructure and Urban Development: There is a focus on infrastructure maintenance and improvement, including road repairs, utility management, and preserving natural resources and wildlife habitats.

Affordable Housing: Concerns about affordable housing persist, with calls for measures to cap living costs, hold landlords accountable, and support low-income residents.

Government Accountability and Efficiency: Several respondents emphasized the importance of government accountability, efficient resource management, and avoiding unnecessary projects and policies.

Public Safety: Better enforcement of laws, and improved public safety measures, including hiring more police officers and firefighters.

Urban Planning and Sustainability: Respondents highlighted the need for sustainable urban planning, including measures to promote walkability, green spaces, and environmentally friendly transportation options.

Economic Development and Growth Management: Managing growth effectively, attracting new businesses, and supporting economic development while preserving the city's character were mentioned as important priorities.

Healthcare and Social Services: Some respondents mentioned the need for access to healthcare, mental health services, and support for vulnerable populations, including the homeless and those struggling with addiction.

Government Leadership and Management: There were comments regarding the importance of strong leadership from city officials, including the city manager, in managing the city's affairs and addressing its challenges. The importance of effective governance, fiscal responsibility, and community engagement in addressing city challenges was highlighted.

Civic Engagement and Community Inclusivity: Encouraging civic engagement, promoting inclusivity, and listening to the diverse voices within the community were highlighted as important principles for effective governance.

Q2. What skills and experiences are the most critical for a new City Manager to succeed in Vancouver?

Summary: Overall, the ideal candidate for the city manager position is expected to possess a combination of leadership, communication, fiscal management, problem-solving, and community engagement skills, along with relevant experience in city government and a commitment to equity and innovation.

Leadership: Emphasizing qualities such as empathy, strategic thinking, and effective decision-making.

Experience: Seeking candidates with experience in managing similar-sized cities or communities, preferably with knowledge of the city manager-council governance model.

Communication and Collaboration: Highlighting the importance of effective communication, inclusivity, and collaboration with diverse stakeholders.

Financial Management: Prioritizing budgeting, fiscal responsibility, and financial planning skills to address the city's diverse needs.

Resource Management and Problem-Solving: The ability to solve resource problems effectively without creating new ones is highlighted. This includes skills in budgeting, cost control, and managing rapid development needs.

Community Engagement: Valuing candidates who can engage with the community, listen to feedback, and advocate for the city's interests.

Problem-Solving and Innovation: Candidates who can creatively address challenges, drive change, and implement effective solutions.

Understanding Local Issues: Candidates familiar with local culture, housing issues, homelessness, and other community-specific challenges.

Ethical Leadership: Valuing traits such as transparency, honesty, and integrity in decision-making and conduct.

Experience in Public Service: Prior experience in public service, city administration, or related fields is seen as beneficial.

Adaptability and Flexibility: Candidates who can adapt to changing circumstances, manage transitions, and lead during times of growth or decline.

Vision and Strategic Planning: The ability to develop a strategic vision for the city, anticipate future challenges, and plan for long-term benefits is emphasized.

Negotiation and Collaboration: Experience negotiating with various governmental bodies, private industry, and neighboring jurisdictions is essential. Collaboration and building partnerships are seen as key to success.

Q3. What management and leadership attributes should the next City Manager have?

Summary: *These themes highlight the multifaceted nature of management skills required for effective leadership as the City Manager, encompassing communication, collaboration, integrity, empathy, strategic planning, and financial management, among others.*

Effective Communication: Clear, concise, and transparent communication skills are essential for conveying plans, strategies, and decisions to stakeholders, including city staff, elected officials, and the public.

Integrity and Common Sense: The City Manager should demonstrate integrity, honesty, and ethical decision-making, coupled with practical, common-sense approaches to problem-solving and leadership and the courage to do what is right, even when faced with difficult decisions or opposition.

Visionary Leadership: A visionary leader is able to develop and communicate a long-term vision for the city while also inspiring and mobilizing others toward shared goals and objectives. Being forward-thinking, innovative, and willing to embrace new ideas and solutions to address complex challenges facing the city.

Collaborative Approach: A collaborative leadership style that values input from diverse stakeholders, fosters teamwork, and promotes inclusive decision-making processes. Works collaboratively with city employees and fosters a culture of service and accountability.

Strategic Planning and Decision-Making: Strong strategic planning skills, coupled with the ability to make sound decisions based on thorough research, analysis, and consideration of all available options.

Fiscal Responsibility: Experience managing budgets, financial resources, and spending restraint, with a focus on fiscal responsibility and sustainability to ensure efficient and effective resource use.

Engagement and Inclusivity: An inclusive leader who actively engages with city employees, elected officials, and community members, listens to diverse perspectives, and values inclusivity.

Assertiveness and Resolve: The ability to assertively lead, make tough decisions, and stand firm on principles, without being swayed by external pressures or special interests.

Transparency and Accountability: Commitment to transparency, accountability, and open communication with elected officials, city staff, and the public, including delivering both good and bad news with clarity and honesty.

Community Focus and Empathy: The ability to listen to the needs of the community, particularly the vulnerable populations, and consider their perspectives and concerns when making decisions. Leading with a focus on serving the needs of the community and city employees, supporting work-life balance, and creating a respectful and supportive workplace culture.

Delegation: Setting clear goals while also effectively delegating tasks and responsibilities to qualified staff members.

Accountability and Transparency: Holding oneself and others accountable for their actions, promoting transparency in decision-making processes, and providing regular updates to stakeholders.

Leadership Development and Team Building: Supporting the professional development of city employees, building strong teams, and fostering a collaborative and inclusive work environment.

Q4. How would you like the City Manager to interact with the community?

Summary: *These themes highlight the importance of open, inclusive, and collaborative interaction between the City Manager and the community, emphasizing accessibility, responsiveness, transparency, empathy, and partnership. Some recognized the role's behind-the-scenes nature.*

Accessibility and Engagement: Respondents value a City Manager who is accessible and actively engages with the community. They expect the City Manager to attend community events, forums, and meetings to connect with residents directly.

Listening and Responsiveness: There is a strong emphasis on the City Manager's ability to listen to the concerns, suggestions, and feedback of community members and respond appropriately. Respondents appreciate a City Manager who prioritizes community input and incorporates it into decision-making processes.

Inclusivity and Diversity: Inclusivity and diversity are important considerations in community interactions. Respondents expect the City Manager to engage with all segments of the community, including marginalized groups, and to ensure that diverse perspectives are represented in decision-making processes.

Empathy and Understanding: Respondents appreciate a City Manager who demonstrates empathy, understanding, and compassion towards community members, particularly those facing challenges or hardships. They value a leader who genuinely cares about the well-being of the community.

Accountability and Action: Accountability is key, with respondents expecting the City Manager to follow through on commitments made to the community and take action to address community concerns and issues in a timely manner.

Collaboration and Partnership: Collaboration with community organizations, businesses, and stakeholders is seen as essential for effective community interaction. Respondents expect the

City Manager to work collaboratively with various groups to address community needs and achieve common goals.

Empowerment and Participation: Respondents want the City Manager to empower community members to participate in decision-making processes and actively involve them in shaping the future of the city. They value opportunities for meaningful engagement and participation in city affairs.

Transparency and Honesty: Transparency and honesty are crucial aspects of interaction. Respondents expect the City Manager to communicate openly, provide honest answers, and address concerns or issues transparently.

Adaptability and Innovation: Respondents suggest adapting engagement strategies to meet the community's diverse needs. They emphasize the importance of innovative approaches, such as virtual meetings, social media, and community surveys, to effectively reach different demographics.

Q5. Is there anything else you would like the City Council to consider when selecting the next City Manager?

Summary: Similar themes from the previous answers were mentioned: staying focused on priorities and possessing a mix of leadership and technical skills.

Vision for the Future: The new city manager should have a forward-thinking mindset, focused on long-term goals and the overall improvement of the city.

Capability and Experience: It's crucial to hire someone capable of doing the job effectively and with a track record of success in similar-sized municipalities.

Community Engagement and Listening Skills: The ability to listen to constituents, prioritize their needs over special interest groups, and be transparent and honest about decisions was highlighted.

Residency Requirement: Some residents suggested that the city manager should be a resident, while others emphasized the importance of local knowledge.

Focus on Key Issues: Priorities such as addressing homelessness, public safety, environmental sustainability, and supporting small businesses were mentioned repeatedly.

Leadership Qualities: Traits like integrity, compassion, approachability, and the ability to inspire and lead were emphasized.

Political Neutrality: Residents expressed a desire for a non-political city manager who can work across party lines and focus on the needs of all citizens.

Representation and Diversity: Many constituents emphasized the importance of racial equity and diversity, suggesting that the council consider candidates of color or from marginalized communities.

Adaptability and Learning Curve: While some preferred a local candidate for their familiarity with the area, others stressed the importance of finding the best person for the job, even if from outside the region.

Stability and Longevity: Residents hope for a city manager who will stay long-term and not use the position as a stepping stone to the next position.

Support for Staff and Collaboration: The new city manager should be able to build strong relationships with city staff, collaborate effectively with departments, and empower employees.