



Richmondites don't seem to care about Metro Van survey

ALAN CAMPBELL / RICHMOND NEWS
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They've reached out through various mediums and even changed the language to breach ethnic barriers but still Richmondites seem apathetic towards the 2012 Metro Vancouver Urban Futures Survey.

Perhaps it's the name alone of the survey that's turning people away from a document that could play a massive role in shaping everyone's future.

Whatever it is, the people of Richmond are not engaging and, since the survey kicked off at the beginning of the year, have the lowest participation rate in the region.

It's so low in fact that the number so far doesn't even register in terms of statistical relevance.

Which is alarming Metro Vancouver, which will use the survey to help plan the region's future for decades to come.

Some of the municipalities have well exceeded the minimum for statistical relevance, said Colleen Hardwick, an urban geographer and CEO of Placespeak, the online consultation firm conducting the survey.

For whatever reason, (Richmond) has been lagging well behind. They're not the only one, but we can't figure out why.

We wondered if it was an ethnic issue, so we went onto Fairchild Radio in June (to address the Asian community) and we translated the survey into traditional and simplified Chinese.

Hardwick said they noticed a little difference in the numbers after their attempts, but not nearly enough to get things moving.

She explained that the survey is just too important for people to sidestep and hoped Richmondites would engage before the survey closes at the end of the year.

This will provide us with the data to inform people on a whole range of policy initiatives for years to come, said Hardwick.

It will allow us to compare also how attitudes have changed over the decades.

One thing that should spark people into action is the subject of the Massey Tunnel, often the bane of Richmondites' lives when they decide to head south.

Each (city) has something that affects people every day and the Massey Tunnel would be that thing for Richmond, Hardwick added.

We're now into the fourth quarter of the year and it's starting to get really urgent. This survey is super important for future generations of planners.

This is the third chapter of the survey, which was first conducted in 1973. It helped set the region on its path toward environmental protection, planning, protection of open space and a transit-oriented transportation system.

In 1990, the survey was updated. Once again, concerns over air and water pollution topped the list. Policy makers responded with AirCare, upgrades to wastewater treatment plants, and a doubling of the regions parkland.

To take the survey, Metro Vancouver residents must first verify their home address by registering with PlaceSpeak. The survey takes approximately 22 minutes to complete and can be found at www.placespeak.com/urbanfuturessurvey.com.

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