

AUGUSTA TOWNSHIP

REPORT NUMBER: 2023-087
REPORT TO COUNCIL: September 11, 2023
RE: Communication Survey Results
AUTHOR: Vikki Werner-Mackeler, Deputy Clerk

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council accept this report for information and provide any direction required to staff.

PURPOSE:

One of Council's strategic priorities this term was to "develop and execute a corporate communications strategy to enhance current resources utilized to keep public and staff informed of issues, events, and activities". It was determined that the first step in this process would be to create a communication survey to gauge how residents currently feel we are doing in this area. This survey also served as the second project for the township's new community engagement webpage.

BACKGROUND:

The survey was posted on the community engagement webpage from June 29, 2023 until July 24, 2023. It was advertised on the main page of the website by way of a banner at the top of the page and as a Public Notice, both of which had direct links to the project page. It was posted on Facebook on June 29, July 11, July 21 and July 24, 2023 and was advertised as our Facebook page's cover photo. The township office had a poster advertising the survey on the bulletin board and it was mentioned on the electronic sign in front of the office. The survey was available online, however paper copies were also printed and available at the township office.

ANALYSIS:

A total of 20 people participated in the online survey. 19 of which were residents.

The majority of the participants were between the ages of 50-64 (8) followed by 30-49 (6), 65+ (5) and 18-29 (1).

Of those surveyed, most feel somewhat informed of what is happening within the township but are very split as to whether or not we do a good job communicating information. Those that agree and disagree are evenly split with nearly as many people choosing a neutral stance on the subject.

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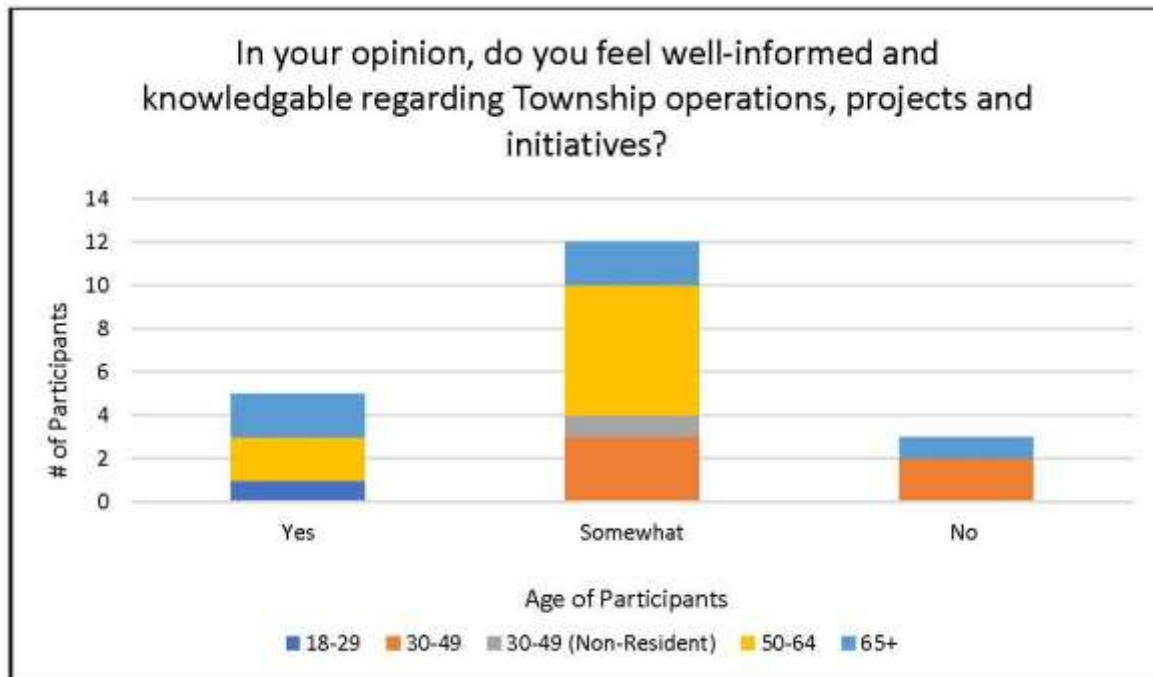
Most of the respondents read and like the Quarterly newsletter with most preferring to receive their information in that format. They also use/prefer Facebook followed by our website.

As for meeting agendas and minutes, most residents either do not read them or do so only sometimes. Those that do are mostly in the 50+ age category. Residents were fairly evenly split on whether or not they knew we live stream Council meetings with those that did know stating that they do not watch them live, but a few have watched the recordings after the fact.

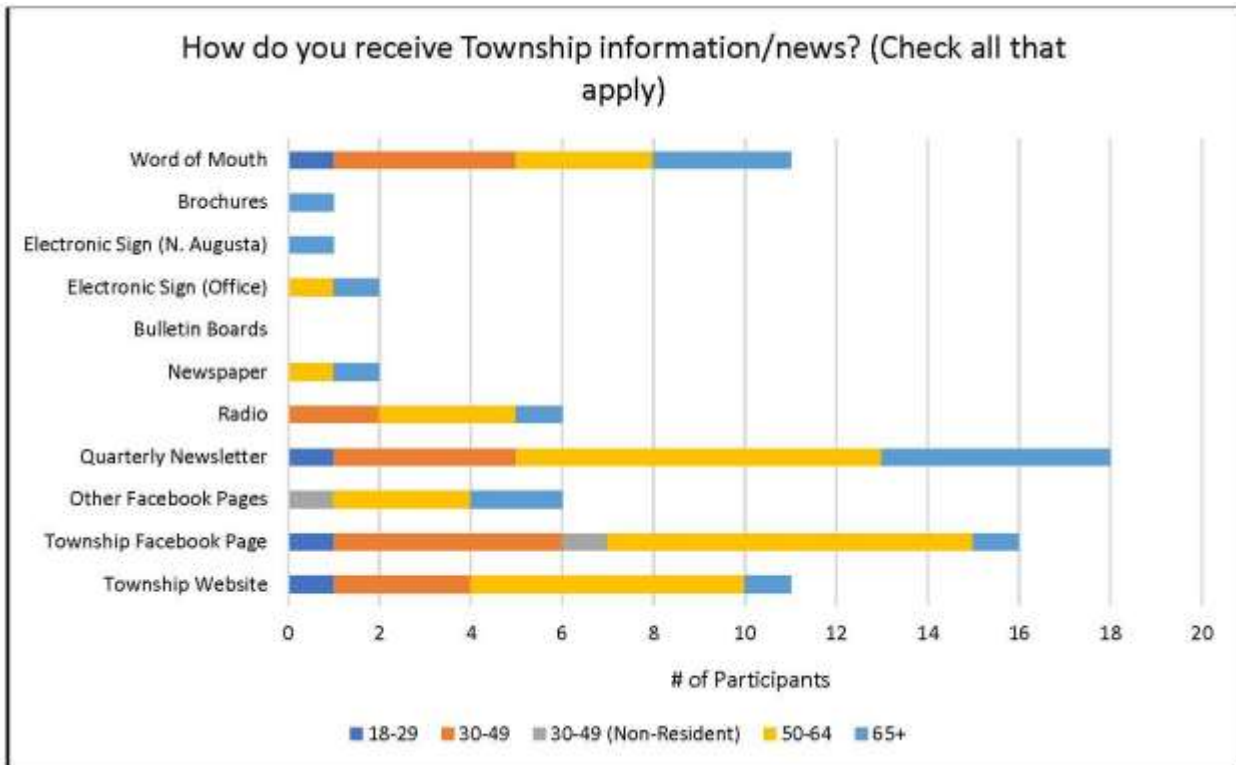
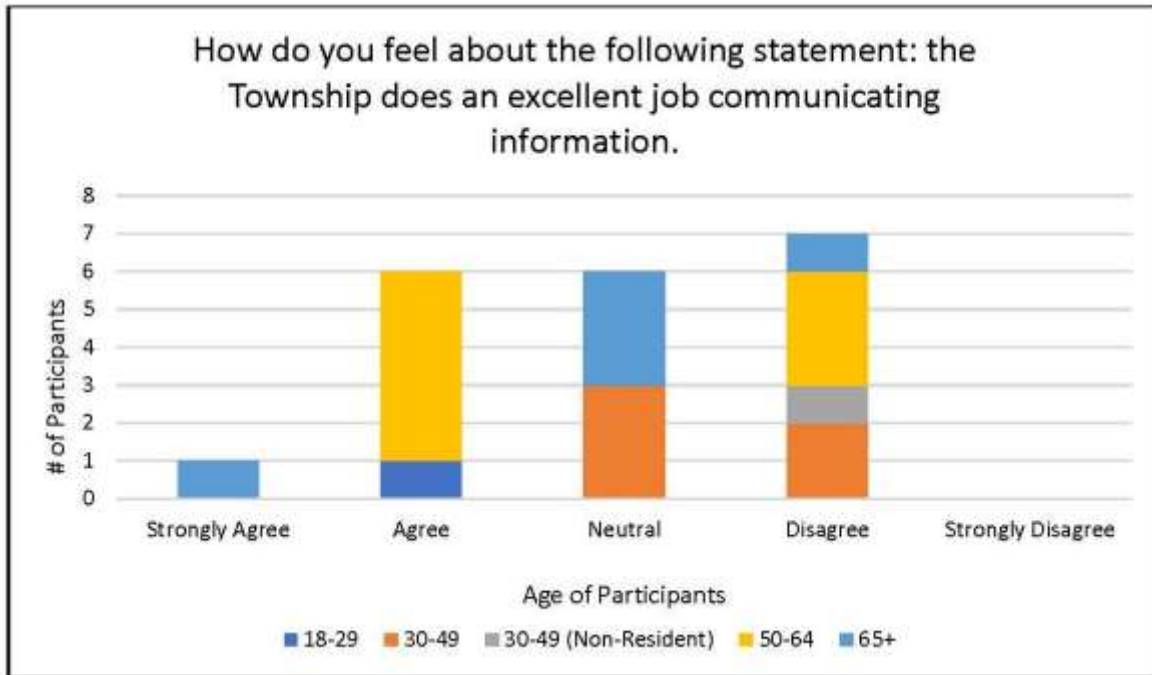
Although it was not asked if they read the newspaper, the newspaper appears to be the least utilized form of communication by respondents. They do, however, listen to the local radio stations, with the majority listening to Moose FM (Prescott), Bounce (Brockville) and Move (Brockville).

The Township appears to be heading in the right direction when it comes to communication. Promoting the use of and educating residents on how our agendas and minutes coexist may be of some benefit. Now that we are somewhat more comfortable with our live streaming process, it may also be beneficial to advertise this service on a more regular basis.

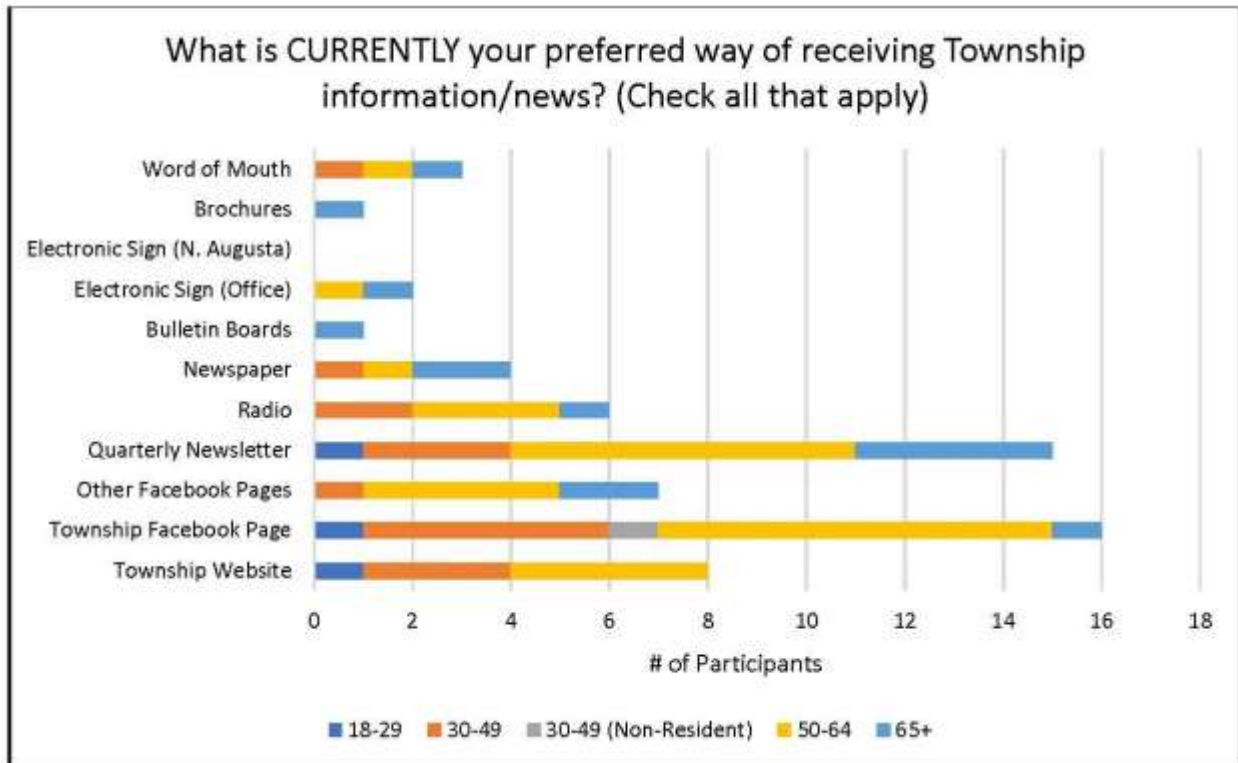
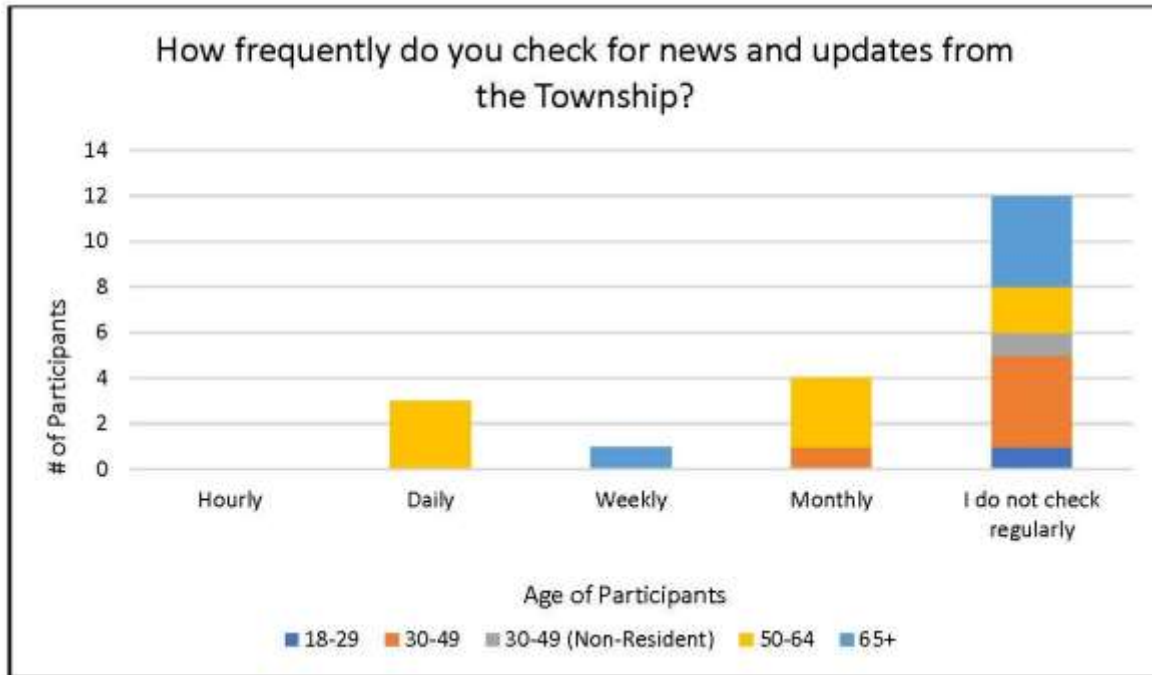
RESULTS:



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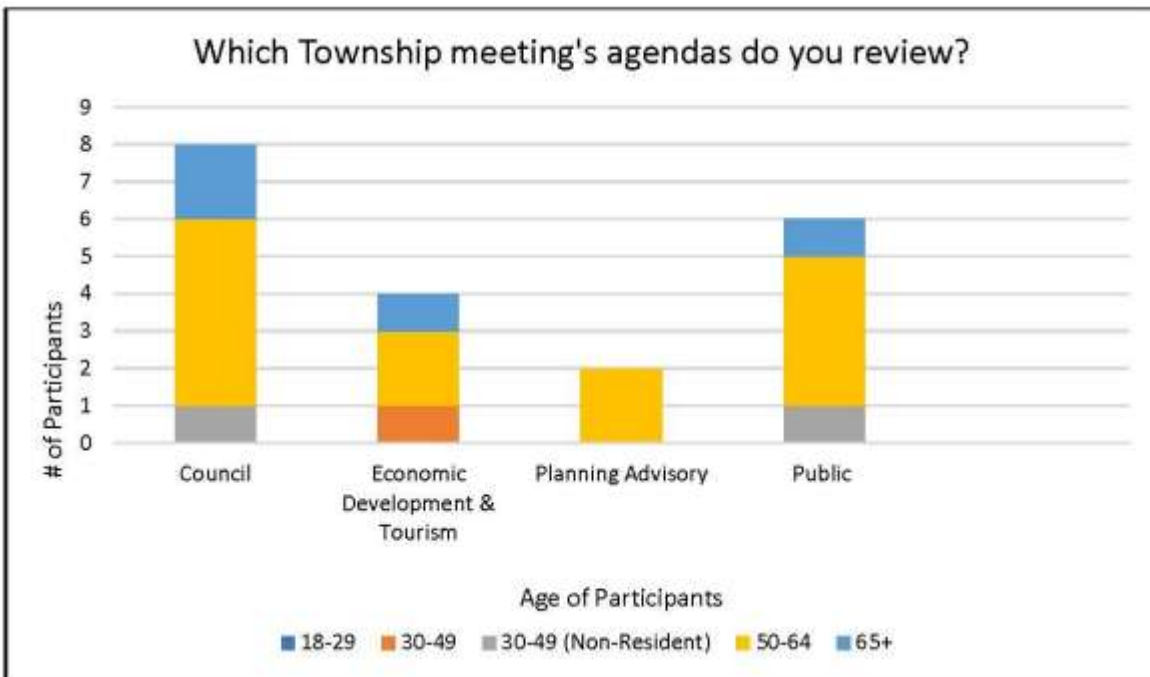
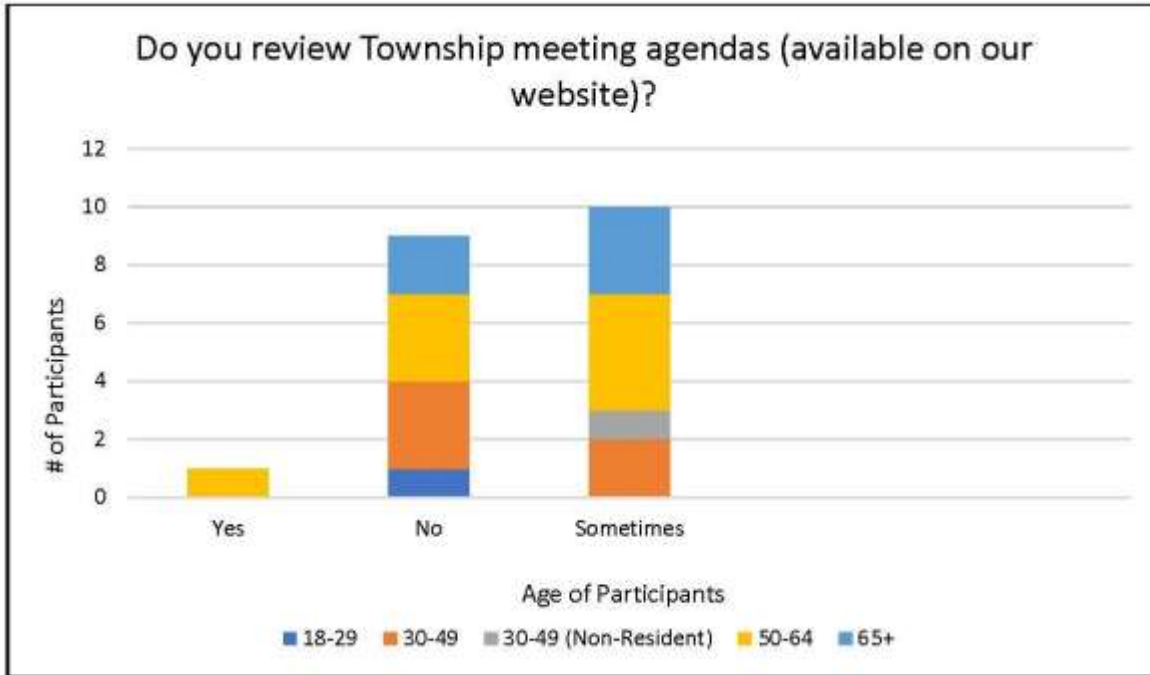


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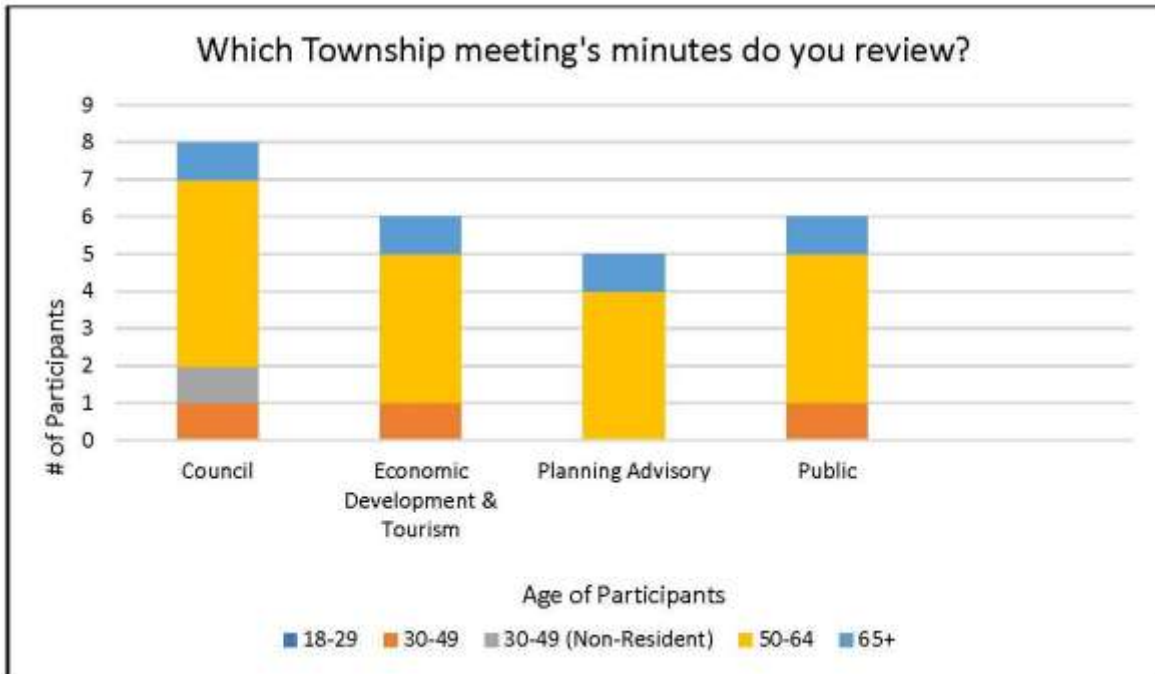
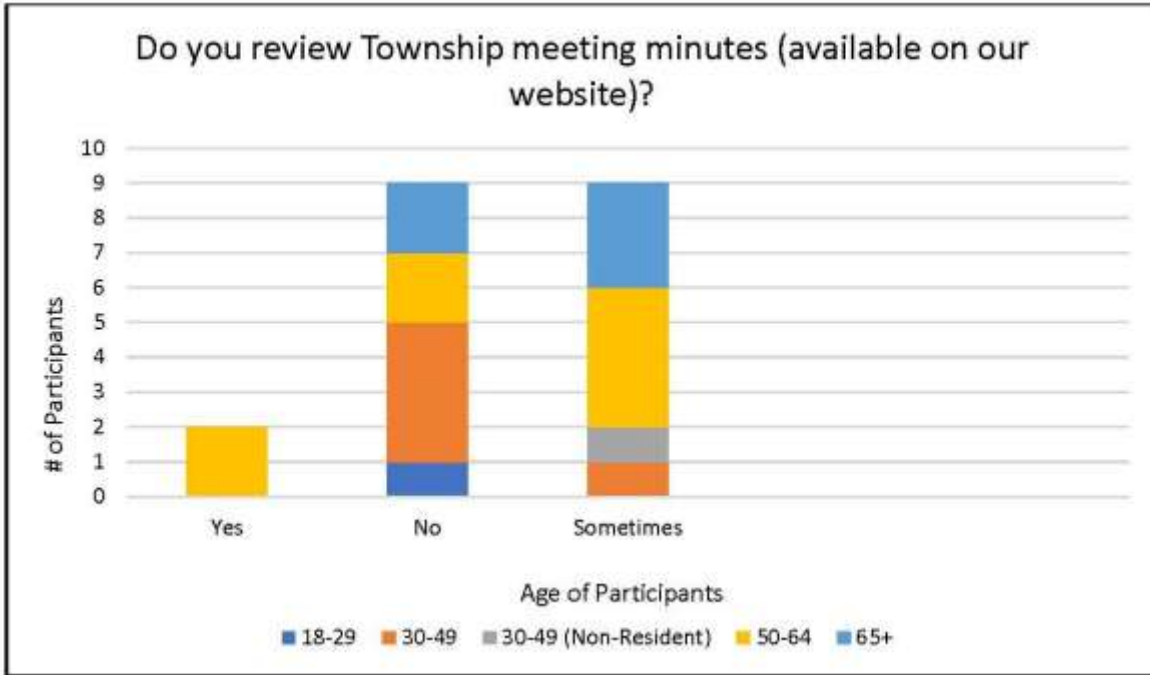


The survey then asked participants what other ways they would like to receive information other than what has been mentioned. Only 4 answered the question. Of the replies, one suggested emails or a newspaper delivered to their mailbox and another suggested having a section on our website where residents could post questions for all to see, and the appropriate staff could reply. They also suggested that our Facebook page be more interactive.

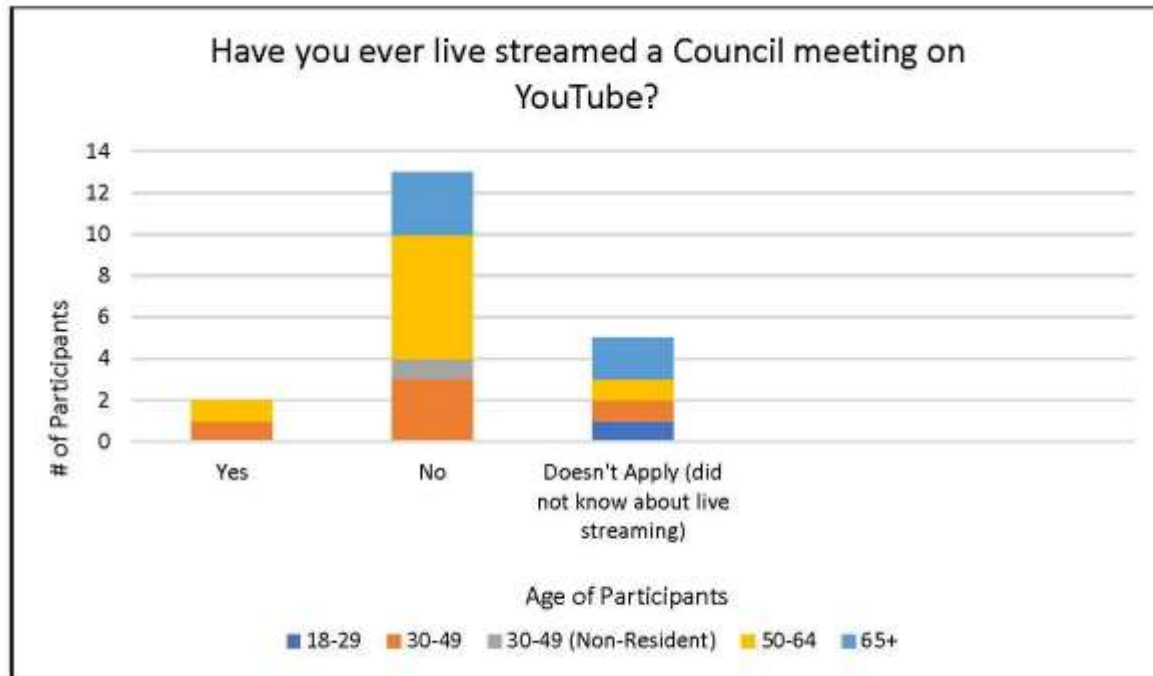
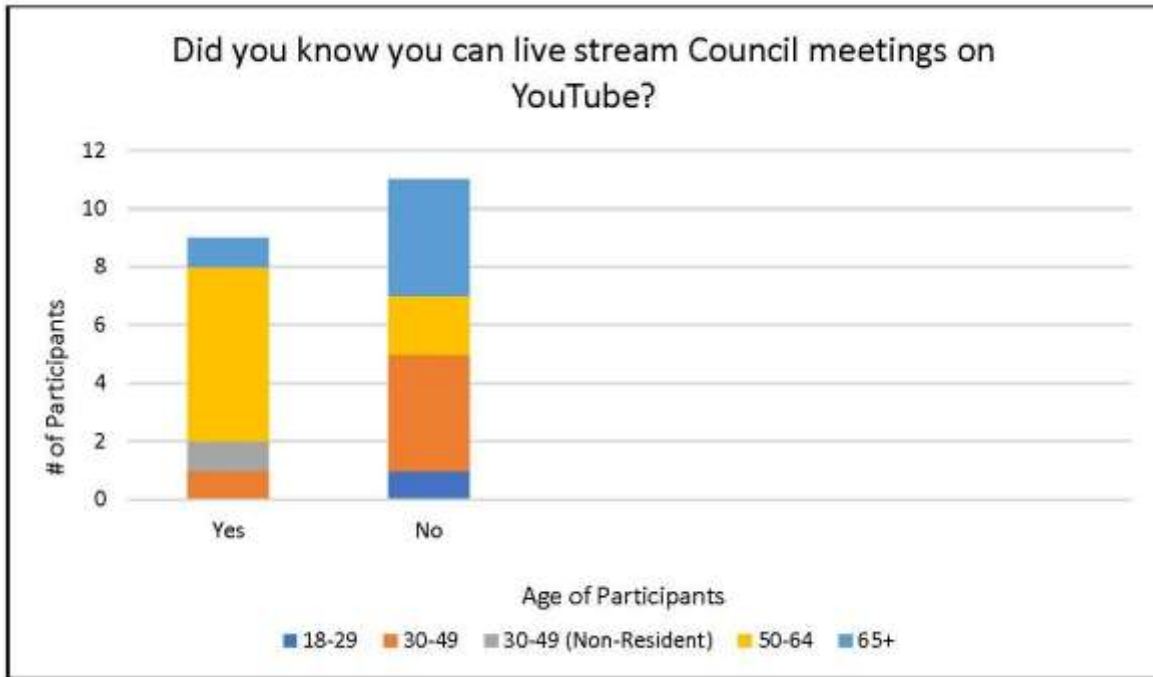
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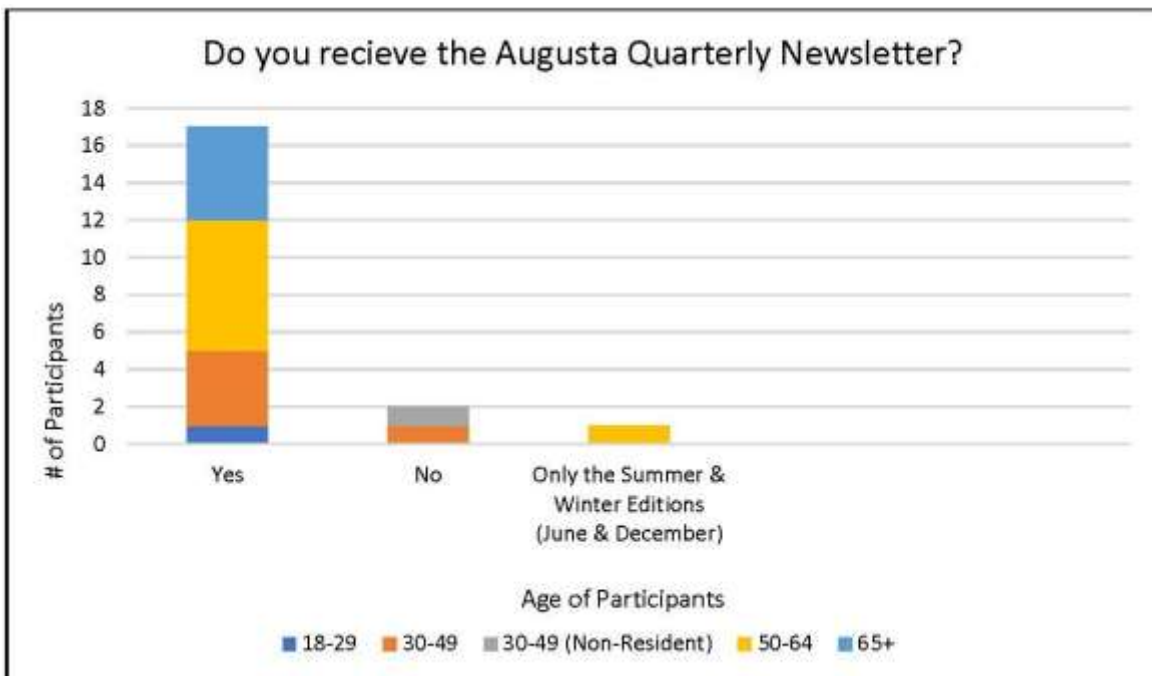
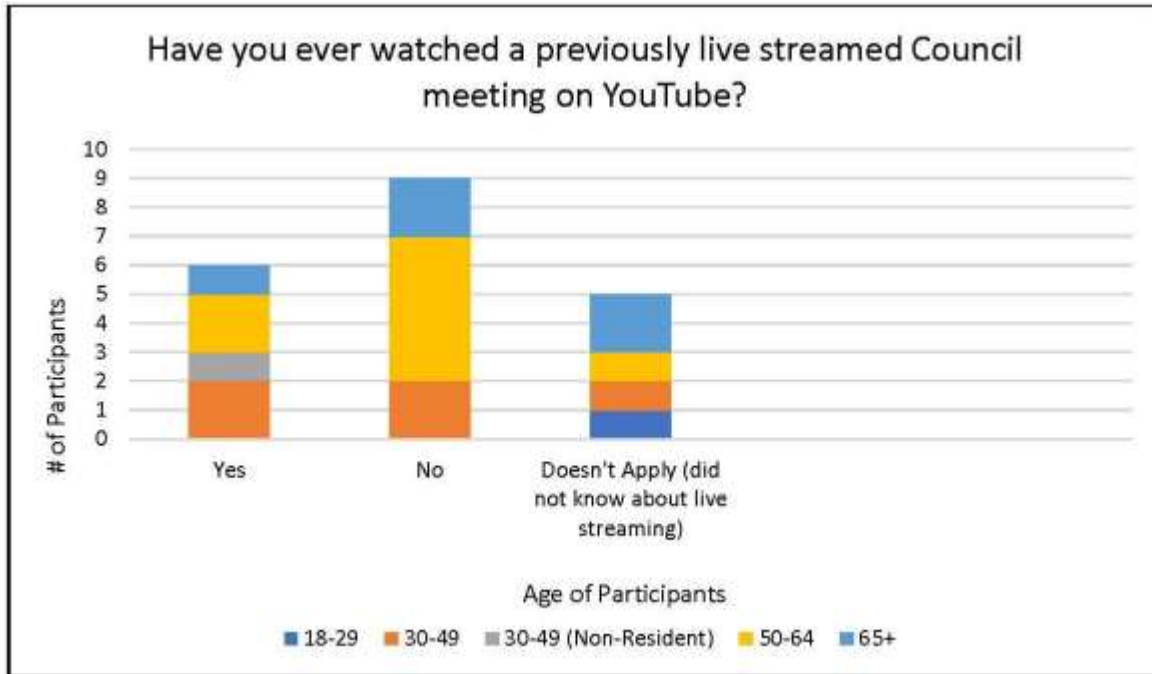
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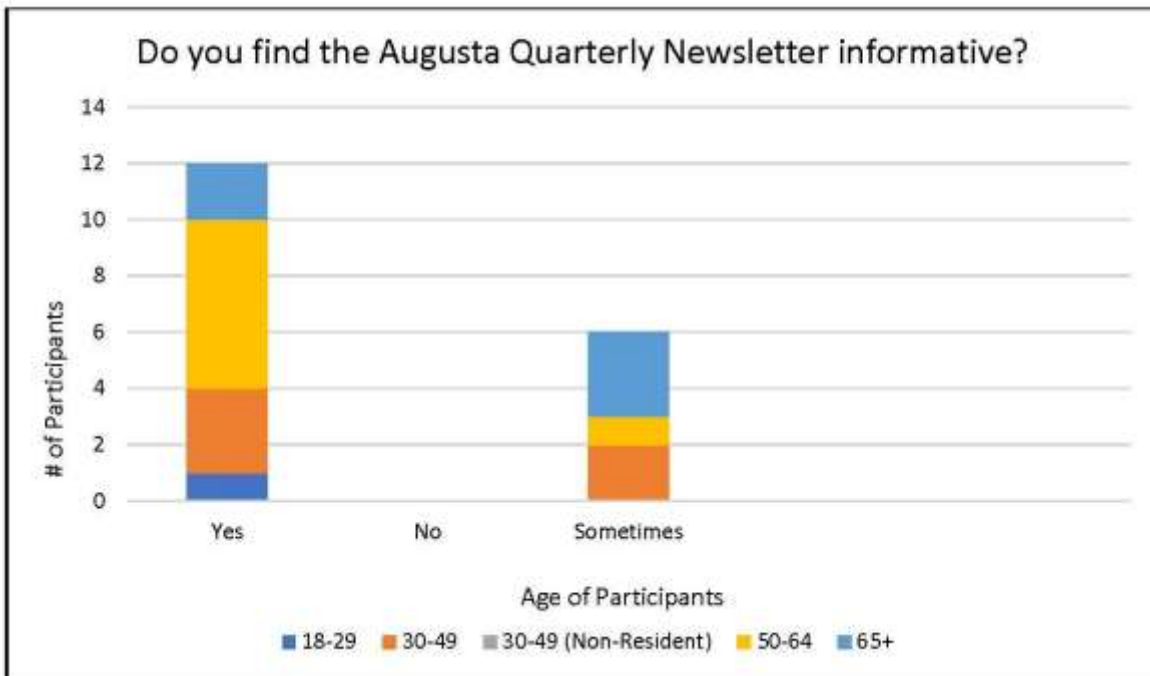
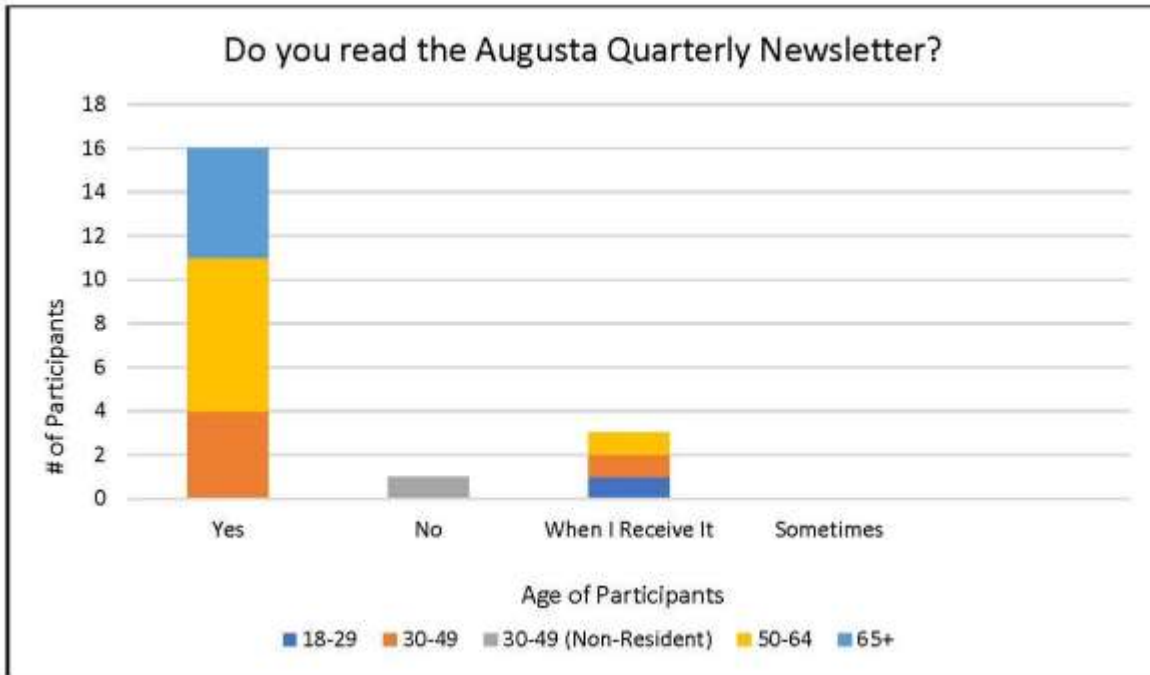
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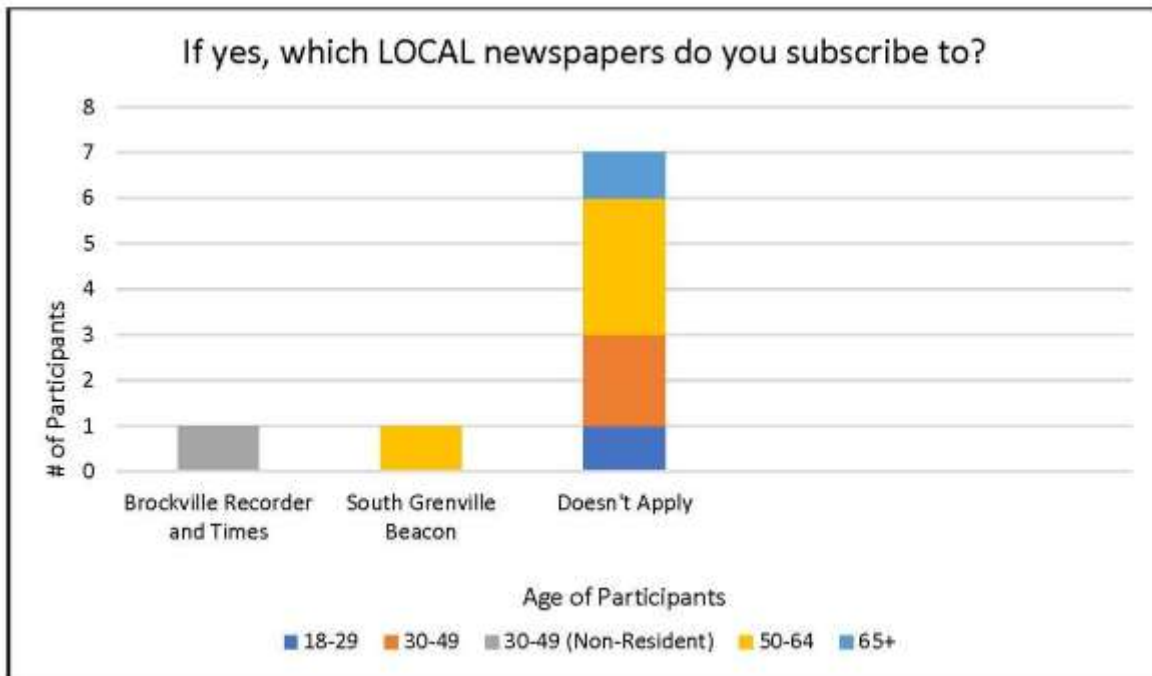
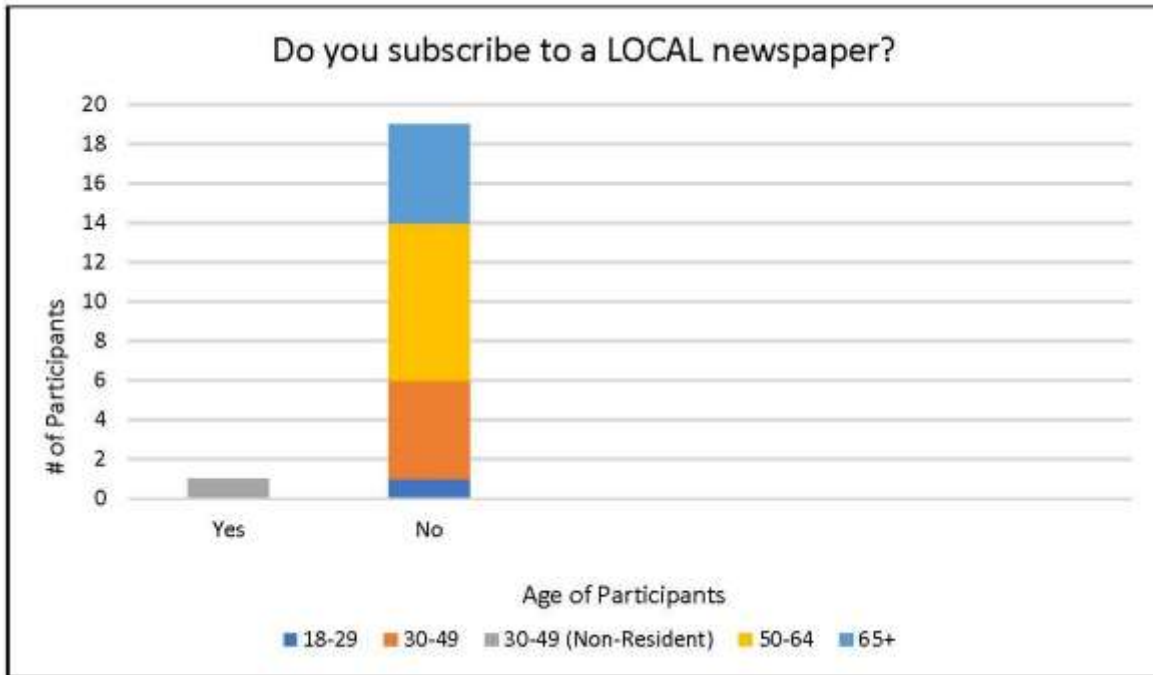


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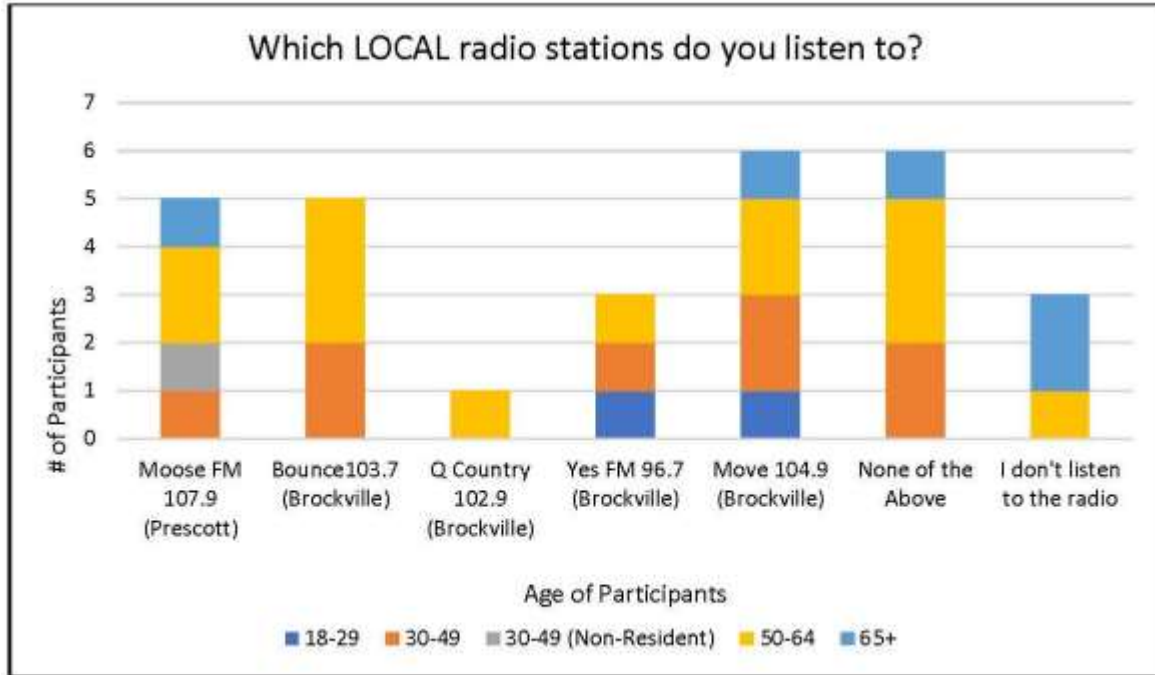


The survey then asked participants what types of things they would like to see in the Augusta Quarterly Newsletter. One commented that they would like to see road and park plans ahead of the project start, another commented that they “Love it!!!” while one other stated that they were unsure what more could be done. A final resident commented that the newsletter is all “stuff that’s a done deal” with nothing about things ongoing or in progress and suggested a section specifically for that. They went on to request a summary “in plain language” of what has taken place during council meetings as they find the minutes “cryptic and frustrating”.

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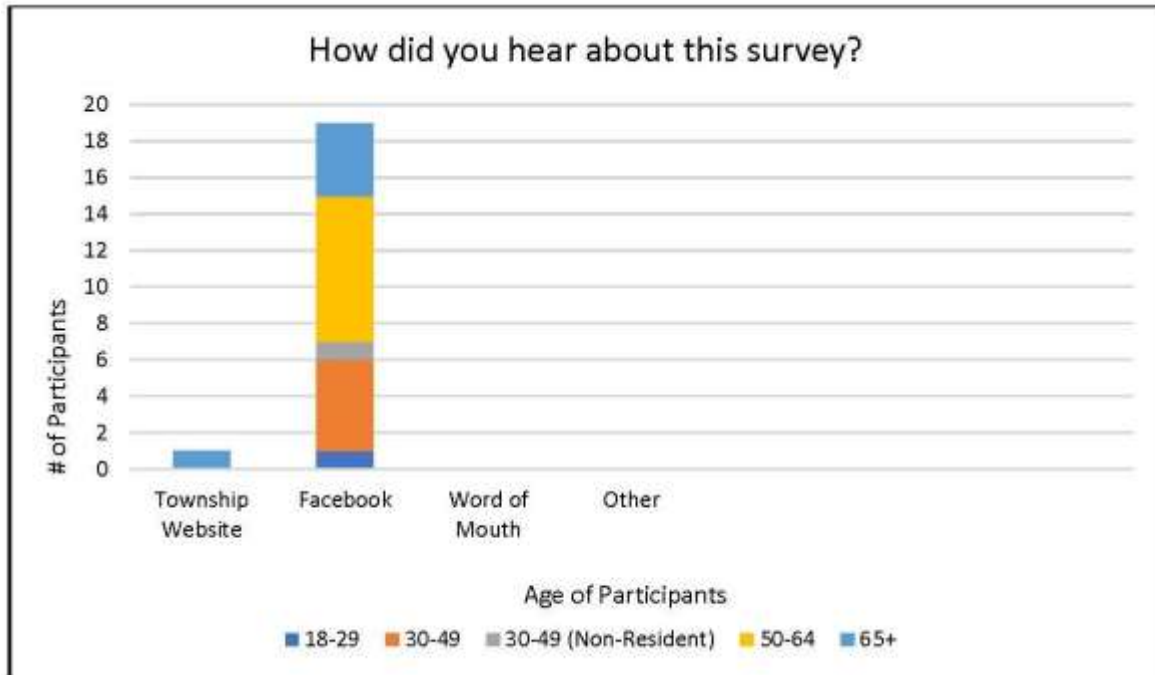


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Participants were then asked how they thought the Township could improve how it communicates information to residents. One responded that we should have more information on our website and Facebook page. Another stated that they didn't find Council forthcoming with information, that it "seems everything's a secret". They went on to say that they find out about projects from the news, other resident's Facebook pages before Council. They stated that Councillor Pape does a better job sharing information however and that they don't have an opportunity to question anything because they find out about it when it's a "done deal". They mention that they faithfully read all the meeting minutes but find them cryptically written and mention projects or proposals that "you have to be a detective to find out where or exactly what it is". In closing they state, "that they're not sure if that's intentional so no one challenges it or if you just assume everyone knows what you're talking about" and that it shouldn't be so hard to get details.

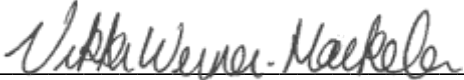
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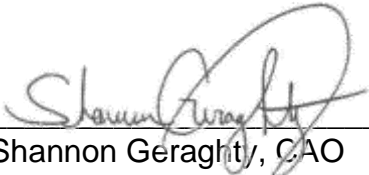


CONCLUSION:

Although relatively new, the public engagement webpage, 'Have Your Say', is up and running on our website. Staff are being encouraged to utilize this public engagement site ahead of starting projects to seek feedback, prior to going to Council, so the public feels they have had input in the decision-making process and there will be more buy-in from the residents. Council is encouraged to ask staff if public engagement was utilized or how public input was sought. As the site gets more projects/content and as word gets out, we believe there will be a pool of residents ready and willing to engage with us.

Staff is also in the process of developing a public engagement policy for Council's review.


Vikki Werner-Mackeler, Deputy Clerk


Shannon Geraghty, CAO