



Community Satisfaction Survey

2025 Report

April 2025

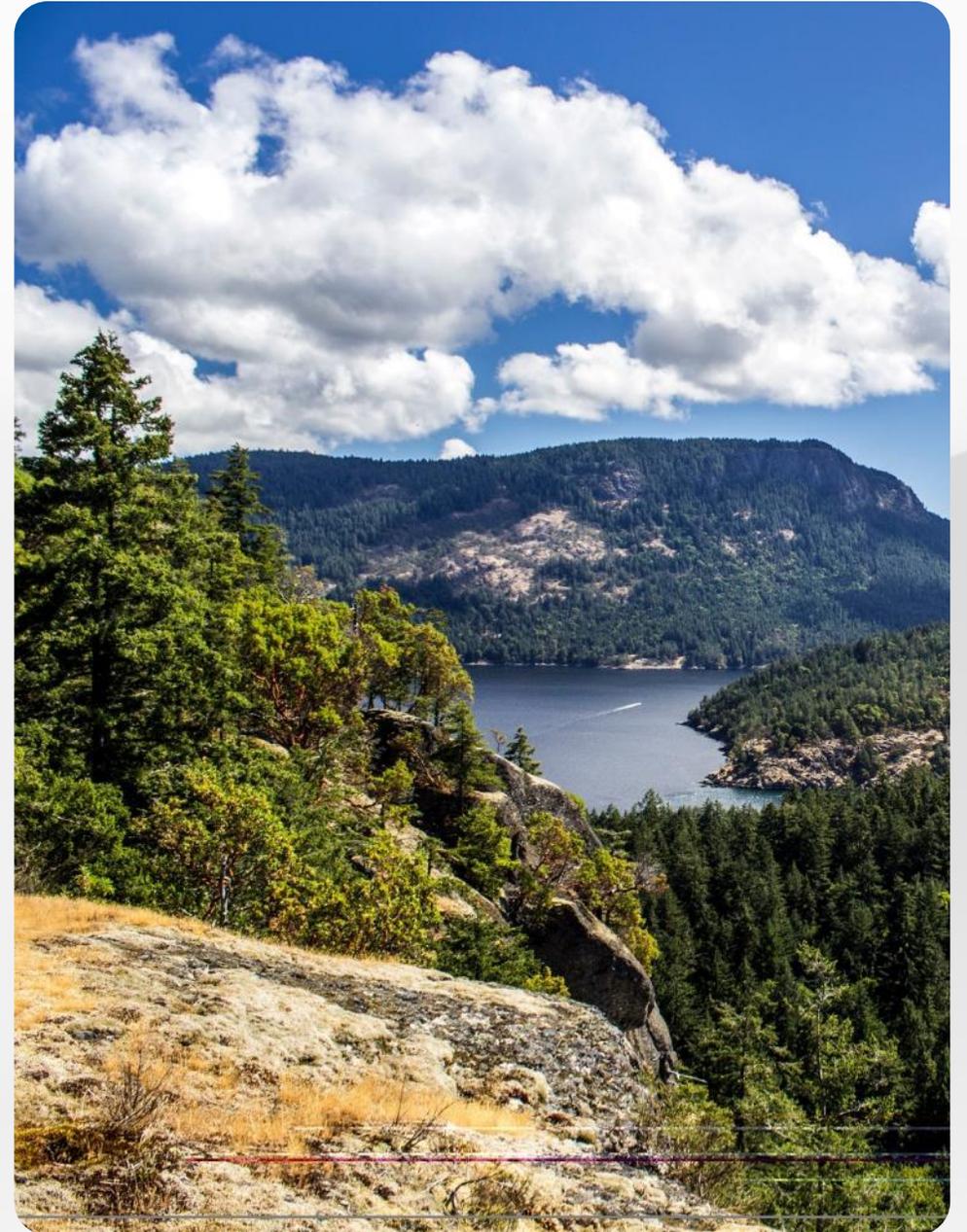


Table of Contents

1	OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY	3
2	KEY FINDINGS	7
3	DETAILED FINDINGS	
	Top of Mind Key Issues	11
	Evaluation of Services	14
	Communications/Community Engagement	18
4	RESPONDENT PROFILE	24



1.



Objectives and Methodology

Objectives

In 2025, the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) continued its partnership with Leger to conduct the Community Satisfaction Survey, following up on previous surveys in 2019 and 2016. This survey aims to provide the CVRD with current insights into residents' perspectives, including views on regional services and preferred methods of engagement.

Specifically, the **main objectives** of this survey are:



Gauging perceptions of the quality of life:

How would residents rate the overall quality of life in their local area today?



Identifying the most important local issues to CVRD residents:

What are the most important issues that should receive the greatest attention from local leaders?



Gauging satisfaction with regional services and how important residents feel they are:

How satisfied are residents with the services within the Cowichan Valley and what is most important to them?



How residents would best like to engage with the CVRD:

How satisfied are residents with their engagement with the CVRD and how would they prefer to communicate with and receive information from the regional district?

Approach & Methodology



Approach

Leger conducted two distinct versions of the Community Satisfaction Survey.

The first version of the survey was intended as a scientific study to aid CVRD leadership in understanding the perceptions and opinions of a randomly-selected sample of CVRD residents. In this version, residents were contacted by telephone, using random digit dialing. Residents were given the option to complete the survey by telephone or by a secure online survey. Those opting for phone were given the option of a callback at a time of their choosing if they were unable to participate at the time of the initial call; those opting for the online version were asked for their email address and were sent a unique link to the online survey by email. A total sample of n=412 survey completions was collected.

The second version of the survey was a non-scientific engagement survey, allowing residents not selected for the scientific study to share their thoughts with the CVRD. This option was provided as an open online link and was available during the same field period as the scientific survey. This link was posted on the CVRD website, advertised in local media, and shared on social media. Results to the open link survey are not included in this report.

The telephone and online questionnaires were developed by Leger in consultation with the Cowichan Valley Regional District. Where appropriate, the wording of questions from previous versions of the Community Satisfaction Survey (conducted in 2016 and 2019) were used in order to facilitate comparisons.



Methodology

Leger used random digit dialing to obtain a random sample of the population within the CVRD, including both landline and cellular telephone numbers known to be based within the area. Residents were then given the option to complete the survey by telephone or online. This method of contact allowed Leger to invite a broad cross-section of the population to participate and avoided common sources of sample bias.

Interviewing began with a telephone pre-test. Following this pre-test, Leger researchers reviewed the results to ensure that the survey was programmed and interpreted as intended. Upon confirmation that the survey was working correctly, interviewing continued until the fielding end date.

Potential participants were deemed ineligible for the study if they did not reside in the CVRD. As well, any household with a household member working for the CVRD was not eligible to participate. Quotas were set by population distribution across the region, including for the four municipalities within the regional district, as well as by age and gender according to proportions from the most recent census results available.

Following data collection, the results from the telephone version of the scientific survey were combined with the results for those who were contacted by telephone for the scientific study but opted to complete the survey online.

Methodology



When

- Data collected from February 25 to March 13, 2025



Margin of Error & Weighting

As the telephone survey (including all those who completed it via telephone and those who were contacted by telephone and opted to complete it online) is based on a probability sample, the margin of error for a sample of n=412 survey completions is $\pm 4.8\%$, 19 times out of 20.

The data was statistically weighted according to Canadian Census figures for age, gender, and sub-region to represent the population of the CVRD as per the 2021 Statistics Canada census.

Where available, results are compared to previous waves of research.



Reporting

This report contains results for the scientific study, inclusive of both telephone and online-invite completions. Results for the open link online engagement version of the survey are not included in this report.

The responses to open-ended questions in the survey were categorized and coded, with the responses provided in data tables. These are included in this report where appropriate.

Most questions are reported as overall scores. To evaluate differences or similarities in responses between subgroups of the public, the results for each question of the survey have been cross-tabulated by key demographic questions, including age, gender, education, region, work location, home ownership, number of years lived in the CVRD, and income.

Note that numbers that are expected to sum to a total or to 100% may sometimes not due to rounding.

Symbols (*,**) are used throughout the report to indicate small sample sizes ($30 \leq n < 100$) and very small base sizes (< 30):

*Small base size, interpret with caution.

**Base size too small to report.



Significant Differences

Significant differences between waves are marked as follows:

  Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

2.



Key Findings

Key Findings

QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE CVRD

Around 9 in 10 CVRD residents rate the overall quality of life as good or very good. However, this rating is has decreased compared to previous years.



The **unhoused** is the top critical issue residents believe should get the greatest attention from local leaders, followed by **housing availability** and **affordability**.

Most Important	TOP ISSUES FACING THE COWICHAN VALLEY	Top 3 Most Important
22%	Unhoused	31%
11%	Housing - availability/affordability	25%
4%	Infrastructure maintenance	14%
5%	Healthcare	13%
6%	Taxation/Municipal Government Spending	12%

Parks and trails stand out as both the most valued CVRD service and one of the highest-rated in terms of resident satisfaction. While **water and sewer services** and **emergency management** are also seen as important, only around 50% of residents are satisfied, suggesting there is still work to be done to raise satisfaction levels.

NET SATISFIED with Cowichan Valley’s services



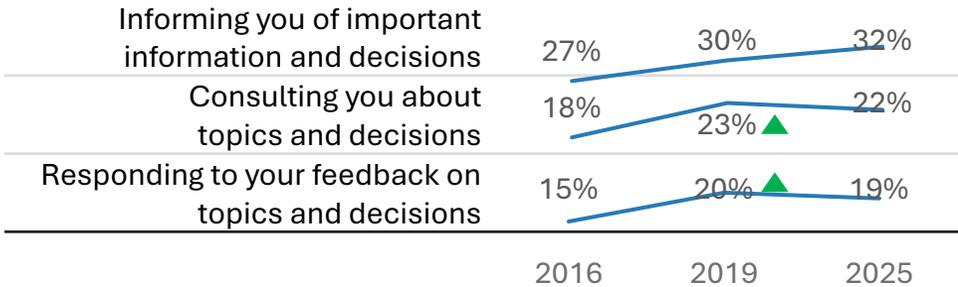
(TOP 5) Chosen as the **MOST IMPORTANT** Cowichan Valley’s services

▲ Statistically significantly higher than previous year
▼ Statistically significantly lower than previous year

Key Findings

Ratings of CVRD's communication with residents have remained stable since 2019. Being informed about important information and decisions continues to earn the highest satisfaction rating.

Overall Good Rating (4/5) Of CVRD Communications



Residents in Cowichan Valley use several ways to connect with CVRD—whether for engagement, gathering information, receiving information, or giving feedback—the most popular methods have stayed consistent since 2016.

▲ Statistically significantly higher than previous year
▼ Statistically significantly lower than previous year

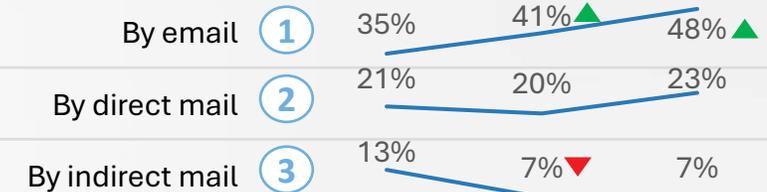
(Top 3) % engaged with the CVRD in the past year through...



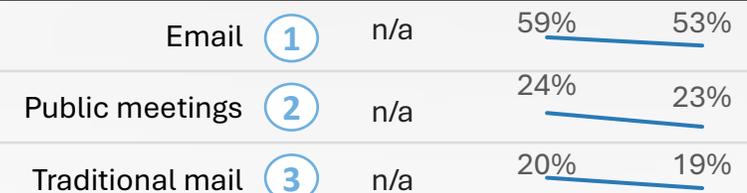
Top 3 sources to obtain information about CVRD



Top 3 preferred methods to receive information from the CVRD



Top 3 preferred method to share feedback with CVRD



2016 2019 2025



Conclusions and Recommendations

- At 88%, the **overall quality of life rating for the CVRD is lower than in previous years**, due primarily to a drop in ratings of it being “very good.” Despite this, the large majority of residents still feel the quality of life is good and the Regional District may consider initiatives addressing the most important issues such as the unhoused and housing availability/affordability to help bring perceptions back up to the previous levels. The unhoused are especially important to Central/East area residents (Duncan, North Cowichan, Cowichan Bay, Cowichan Station/Sahtlam/Glenora) and this may have had an impact on the lower quality of life rating from these residents.
- **Parks and trails** stand out as both the most important CVRD service to residents and the one they are most satisfied with. While **water and sewer services** and **emergency management** are also seen as important, only around one-half of residents are satisfied with each, and the Regional District may consider prioritizing these services to help improve satisfaction levels.
- Generally, there is **lower satisfaction with CVRD services among non-municipal residents** (those who live outside of Duncan, North Cowichan, Lake Cowichan, and Ladysmith), and especially in the South area (Cobble Hill, Mill Bay/Malahat, Shawnigan Lake)—potential improvements to these services may be focused in these areas.
- **Non-municipal residents also tend to feel less informed by the Regional District** though they are more likely to engage with the CVRD via a variety of channels--the CVRD may look at providing additional and interactive engagement opportunities for these residents.
- While **email has continued to grow as the preferred method for receiving information from the CVRD**, those aged 55+ tend less to prefer receiving CVRD information this way. As direct mail remains steady as the second preferred way, and based on the declining use of newspapers, the Regional District could focus on the two top channels to provide information to residents and enable them to choose their favoured method.
- **Preferences for sharing feedback with the CVRD via public events and the *Plan Your Cowichan* platform have fallen since 2019**--the CVRD may consider making these channels more accessible to residents overall as women are especially more inclined to share feedback through these ways.

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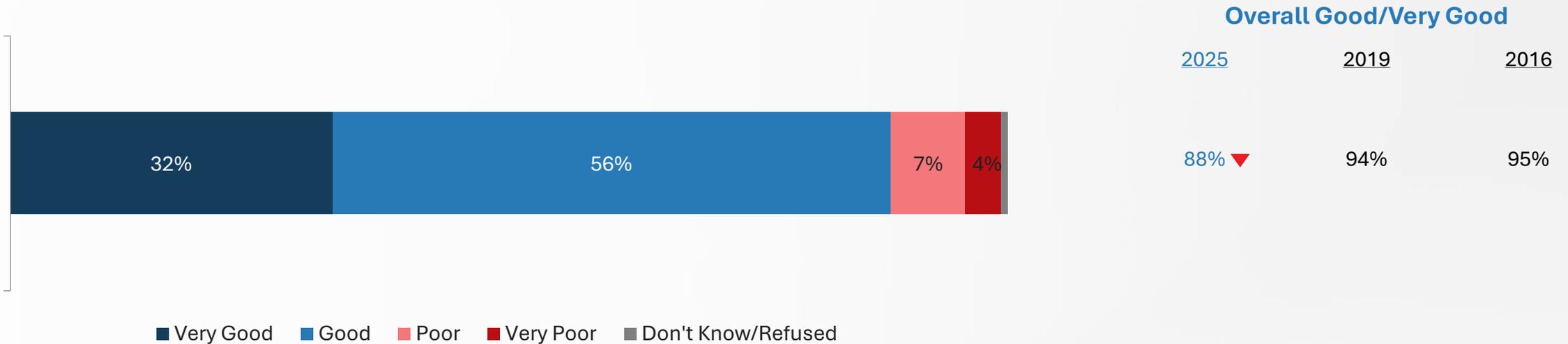


Detailed Findings

- 3.1 Top of Mind Key Issues
- 3.2 Evaluation of Services
- 3.3 Communications/Community Engagement

Quality of Life

- The majority of Cowichan Valley Regional District residents (88%) rate the overall quality of life in their local area as good or very good.
- However, the overall rating is significantly lower than previous years (94% in 2019, 95% in 2016) primarily due to a drop in very good ratings this year (32%, down from 46% in 2019).
- A lower proportion (84%) of Central/East area residents (Duncan, North Cowichan, Cowichan Bay, Cowichan Station/Sahtlam/Glenora) rate the quality of life as at least good and they also have the highest proportion (16%) giving a poor or very poor rating.
- Older or retired residents tend to rate the quality of life higher: 94% of those who are retired feel it is good/very good and almost half (47%) of those aged 55+ are more likely to give a very good rating.



Q1. How would you rate the overall quality of life in your local area today?
 Base: All respondents (2025 n=412; 2019 n=669; 2016 n=612).

▲ Statistically significantly higher than previous year
 ▼ Statistically significantly lower than previous year

Top Issues Facing CVRD

- In 2025, residents were asked to identify, unprompted, what they think are the top three issues affecting the Cowichan Valley region. Of note, in the 2019 and 2016 surveys, they were asked to name the single most important issue.
- The unhoused (previously termed homelessness in 2019 and 2016), remains the most important issue, with 22% of residents identifying it as number one and 31% including it in their top three, similar to 2019 when 15% named it as the top issue. Central/East residents (42%) are more likely to say the unhoused is a top three issue, while South residents (18%) are less so.
- The next most common issue mentioned is housing availability and affordability, cited as the most important issue by 11% and included in the top three by one-quarter (25%) of residents.
- A variety of other issues were also named, though the proportions are much lower than the top two.

	% top three most important issues facing Cowichan Valley				Single Most Important Issue Facing Cowichan Valley	
	2025	2019	2016	Total	2019	2016
Unhoused ^	22%	15%	4%	31%	15%	4%
Housing - availability/affordability	11%	n/a	n/a	25%	n/a	n/a
Infrastructure maintenance	4%	n/a	n/a	14%	n/a	n/a
Healthcare	5%	n/a	n/a	13%	n/a	n/a
Taxation/Municipal Government Spending	6%	5%	5%	12%	5%	5%
Drug/alcohol abuse	2%	n/a	n/a	11%	n/a	n/a
Safety and security	3%	3%	2%	10%	3%	2%
Drinking Water	3%	4%	11%	10%	4%	11%
Arts & Cultural facilities ^	2%	n/a	n/a	9%	n/a	n/a
Public transit ^	3%	n/a	n/a	9%	n/a	n/a
Traffic and Roads	2%	5%	6%	9%	5%	6%

■ Most Important ■ 2nd Most Important ■ 3rd Most Important ■ Top 3 Most Important

Note: Only those mentioned by >9% shown. ^ Adjustment in category naming/coding in 2025

Note: Question wording changed from “single most important issue” in 2019 and 2016 to “top three most important issues” in 2025; hence, no comparison testing versus 2019 was done.

Base: All respondents (2025 n=412; 2019 n=669; 2016 n=612).

Q2. In your opinion, what are the three most important issues facing the Cowichan Valley in order of priority; that are, the issues you feel should receive the greatest attention from your local leaders?

3.

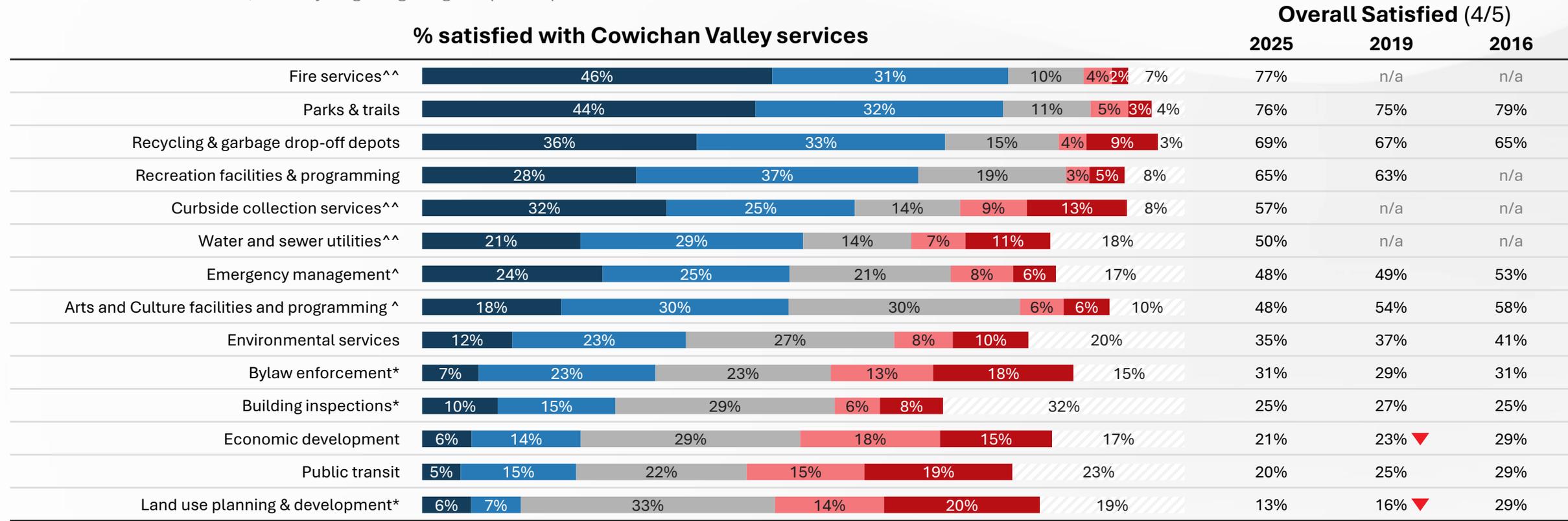


Detailed Findings

- 3.1 Top of Mind Key Issues
- 3.2 Evaluation of Services**
- 3.3 Communications/Community Engagement

Satisfaction with Cowichan Valley Services

- **Fire services** (77% satisfied)—added for the first time this year—is in a virtual dead heat with **parks and trails** (76%) in ranking highest in satisfaction.
- All service ratings have remained consistent with 2019 results.
- Satisfaction with services available only to non-municipality residents remains low, as fewer than one-third of these residents express satisfaction, respectively, with bylaw enforcement, building inspections, and land use planning and development services.
- Those who live in the South (Cobble Hill, Mill Bay/Malahat, Shawnigan Lake) tend to be less satisfied with many services, especially public transit, environmental services, water and sewer utilities, curbside collection services, and recycling and garbage drop-off depots.



Base: All respondents (2025 n=412; 2019 n=669; 2016 n=612).

*Base: Non-municipal respondents [excluding residents of Duncan, Ladysmith, Lake Cowichan, and North Cowichan] only (2025 n=193; 2019 n=283; 2016 n=254).

Note: Numbers may not equal 100% due to rounding. ^ Slight wording change in 2025. ^^ New service added in 2025.

Q3. How satisfied are you with each of the following services within the Cowichan Valley?

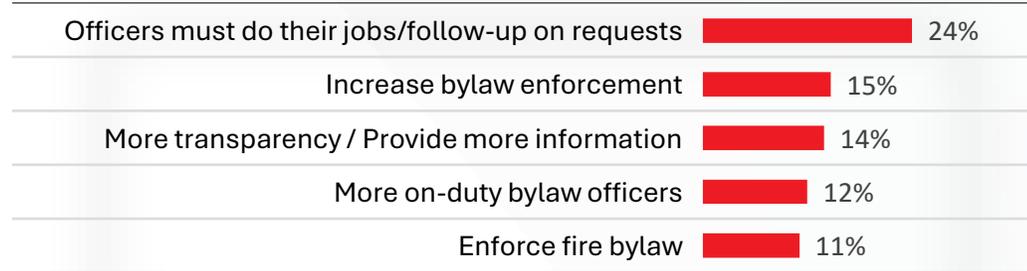
■ 5 - Very Satisfied ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ 1 - Not Satisfied at All / Don't Know/ Refused

▲ Statistically significantly higher than previous year

▼ Statistically significantly lower than previous year

Why Not Satisfied – Services With Highest Dissatisfaction

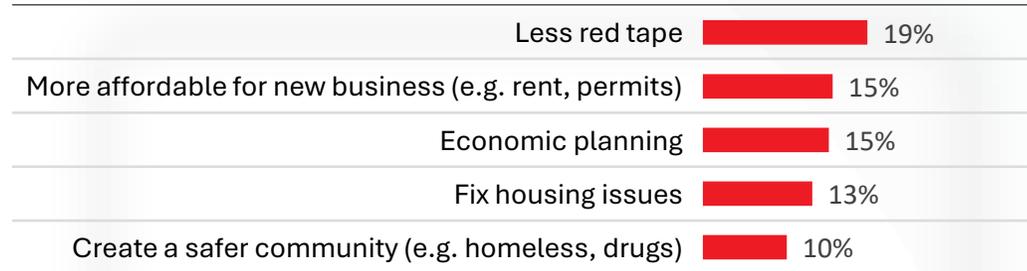
Bylaw enforcement^ (n=21) **



Public Transit (n=54) *



Economic development (n=47) *



Land Use Planning & Development^ (n=25) **



Q3v. You indicated that you are not satisfied with... in the Cowichan Valley. Could you please explain what would make this service better for you?

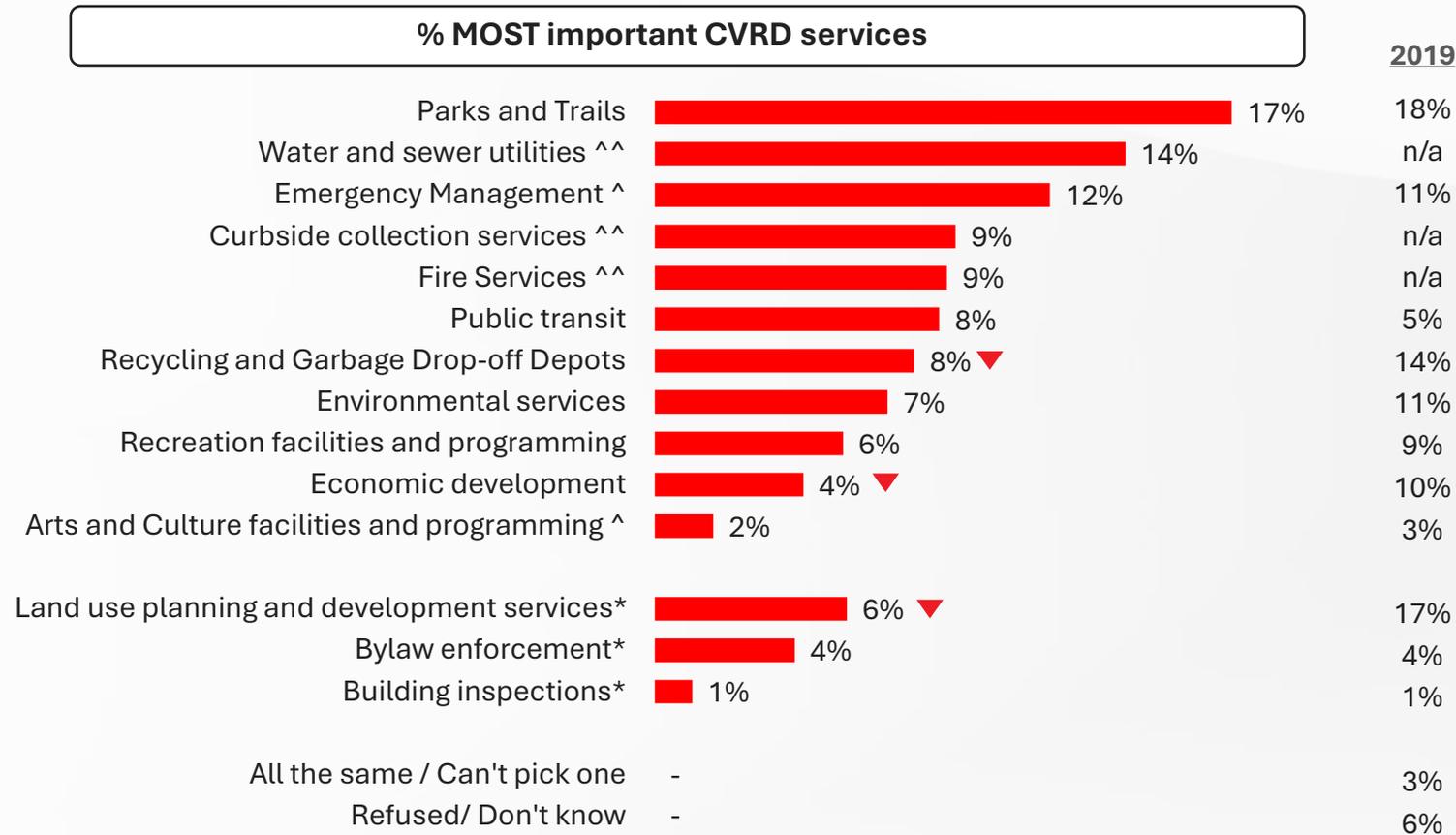
Note: Only those mentioned by >10% shown.

^Question applies to non-municipal respondents only [excluding residents of Duncan, Ladysmith, Lake Cowichan, and North Cowichan]

* Small base size under 100, interpret with caution. ** Extremely small base size under 30, interpret with extreme caution.

Most Important CVRD Services

- Parks and trails (17%) remain the most important service delivered by the CVRD, followed by utility services like water and sewer (14%), and emergency management (12%).
- Recycling and garbage drop-off depots (8%, down from 14% in 2019) and economic development (4%, down from 10%) dropped in importance, while those who live in non-municipal areas are less likely to prioritize land use planning and development (6%, down from 17%).



Base: All respondents (2025 n=412; 2019 n=669; 2016 n=612).

*Base: Non-municipal respondents only [excluding residents of Duncan, Ladysmith, Lake Cowichan, and North Cowichan] (2025 n=193; 2019 n=283).

Note: Numbers may not equal 100% due to rounding. ^ Slight wording change in 2025. ^^ New option in 2025.

Q3R. From the same list of services, which is the MOST important to you?

▲ Statistically significantly higher than previous year

▼ Statistically significantly lower than previous year

3.

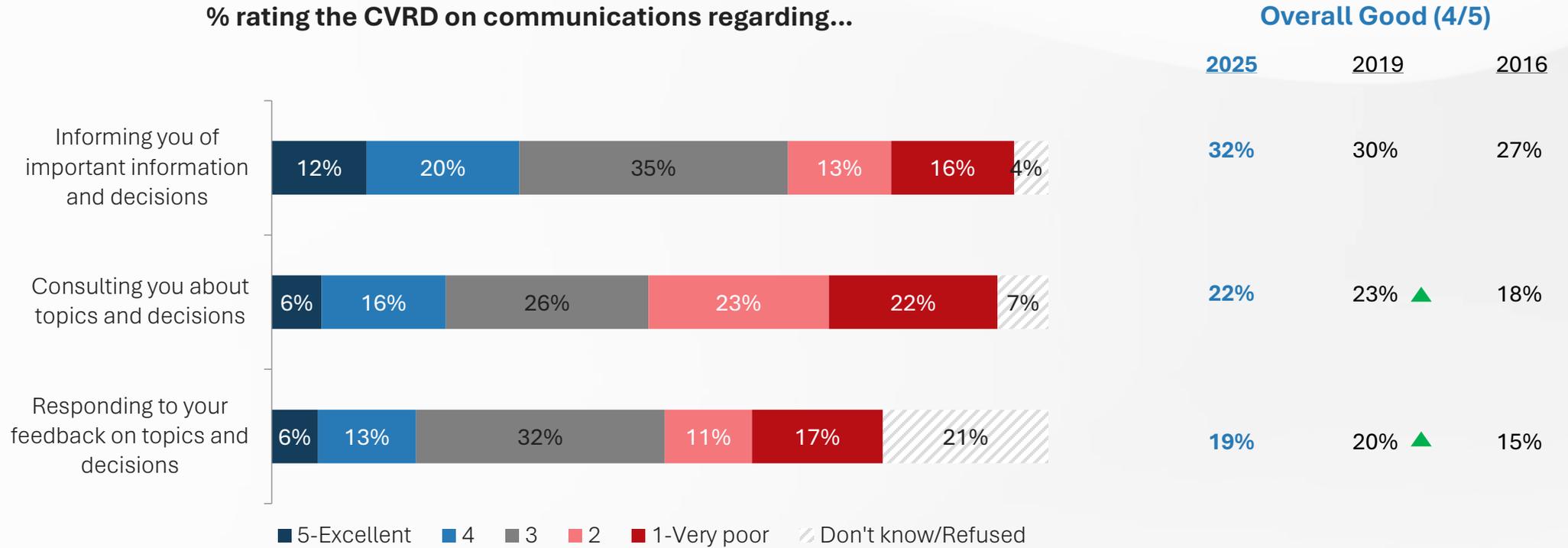


Detailed Findings

- 3.1 Top of Mind Key Issues
- 3.2 Evaluation of Services
- 3.3 Communications/Community Engagement**

CVRD Communications

- Around three in ten residents (32%) continue to rate the CVRD as 4 or 5 (on a scale where 5 is excellent) for informing residents of important information and decisions relating to the District, similar to 2019. Those age 55+ are more likely to give ratings of 1 or 2 (where 1 is very poor).
- Fewer continue to rate the CVRD as 4 or 5 for consulting them about topics and decisions (22%) and responding to their feedback on topics and decisions (19%), again similar to 2019. Those age 55+ as well as those who live in the South tend more to give ratings of 1 or 2 for responding to feedback on topics and decisions.



Base: All respondents (2025 n=412; 2019 n=669; 2016 n=612).
 Q12. Please rate the CVRD on each of the following relating to the District...

▲ Statistically significantly higher than previous year
▼ Statistically significantly lower than previous year

Engagement with the CVRD in Past Year

- Residents continue to cite telephone or online surveys (48%) as the primary way they’ve interacted with the CVRD in the past year. Other common but secondary forms of engagement include phone calls (25%), communicating with elected representatives (25%), and emails (24%).
- Compared to 2019, a significantly higher proportion of residents this year reported engaging with CVRD through elected representatives, emails, or participation in online committee or board meetings.
- Those who live in non-municipality areas tend more to engage with the CVRD, especially via contacting an elected representative, phone call, email, attending community or town hall meetings, and attending CVRD board, committee, or commission meetings.

% engaged with the CVRD in the past year through...	2025	2019	2016
Participate in telephone or online surveys	48%	44%	41%
Phone call with CVRD	25%	20% ▼	30%
Contact your elected representative to share your opinion	25% ▲	17% ▼	22%
Email with CVRD	24% ▲	17%	21%
Attend community or town hall meetings	17% ▼	23%	25%
Watch a Board or committee meeting online	15% ▲	9%	8%
Attend meetings of the CVRD Board, committee or commission	8%	7%	6%
None of these	32%	31%	32%

Base: All respondents (2025 n=412; 2019 n=669; 2016 n=612)

Q14. Have you participated in any of the following ways to engage with the CVRD in the past year? (Multiple Response) .

▲ Statistically significantly higher than previous year

▼ Statistically significantly lower than previous year

Obtaining Information about CVRD

- Despite a decline to 47% from 61% in 2019, CVRD’s website remains the primary source of information, followed by searching the internet and calling the CVRD/staff directly.
- Lower proportions of residents are using local newspapers (10%, down from 15% in 2019) or email (7%, drop from 11%) to gather information about CVRD.
- There were a wide variety of additional responses which could not be specifically categorized, therefore are classified as “other.”

% use the following source to find information on CVRD	2025	2019	2016
Go directly to CVRD’s website	47% ▼	61% ▼	67%
Search the Internet/Google	37%	34%	34%
Call CVRD directly/speak with staff	23%	28% ▲	22%
The local newspaper	10% ▼	15%	16%
Word of mouth/ family and friends	7%	7% ▲	4%
Email CVRD	7% ▼	11% ▲	3%
Social media in general	6%	6%	6%
Attend community or town hall meetings	5%	4%	n/a
Visit the municipal/regional office^	3%	#N/A	#N/A
CVRD’s social media feeds	3%	4%	4%
Other (Specify)	16% ▲	8% ▼	12%
Don’t know	3% ▲	1% ▼	1%

^New option in 2025. All respondents (2025 n=412; 2019 n=669; 2016 n=612).

Q15. If you were looking for information on the Cowichan Valley Regional District, what sources would you use to find this information? (Multiple Response)

▲ Statistically significantly higher than previous year

▼ Statistically significantly lower than previous year

Preferred Method of Receiving Information

- Since 2016, email has grown consistently in popularity as the top method for receiving information from the regional district (48% in 2025), firmly establishing its position as the most preferred channel. Direct mail (23%) remains in second, while all other options are much lower in preference.
- Newspaper ads or articles (dropping to 5% from 9% in 2019) and the CVRD website (4%, down from 9%) are preferred far less often as information sources.
- Those aged 55+ (39%) are less inclined to prefer receiving CVRD information via email.

% prefer to receive information from the Regional District through...

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2016</u>
By email	48% ▲	41% ▲	35%
By direct mail (such as letters addressed to you)	23%	20%	21%
By indirect mail (such as flyers, newsletters, or pamphlets)	7%	7% ▼	13%
Articles or ads in the local newspaper	5% ▼	9% ▼	15%
Through social media (such as Facebook, X or Instagram)^	4%	4%	3%
On the CVRD website	4% ▼	9% ▲	5%
Other (Specify)	4% ▼	7%	4%
Don't know	1% ▼	3%	4%

^ Wording changed from "Twitter" to "X or Instagram" in 2025.

Note: Multiple mentions permitted; only those mentioned by >3% shown

Base: All respondents (2025 n=412; 2019 n=669; 2016 n=612).

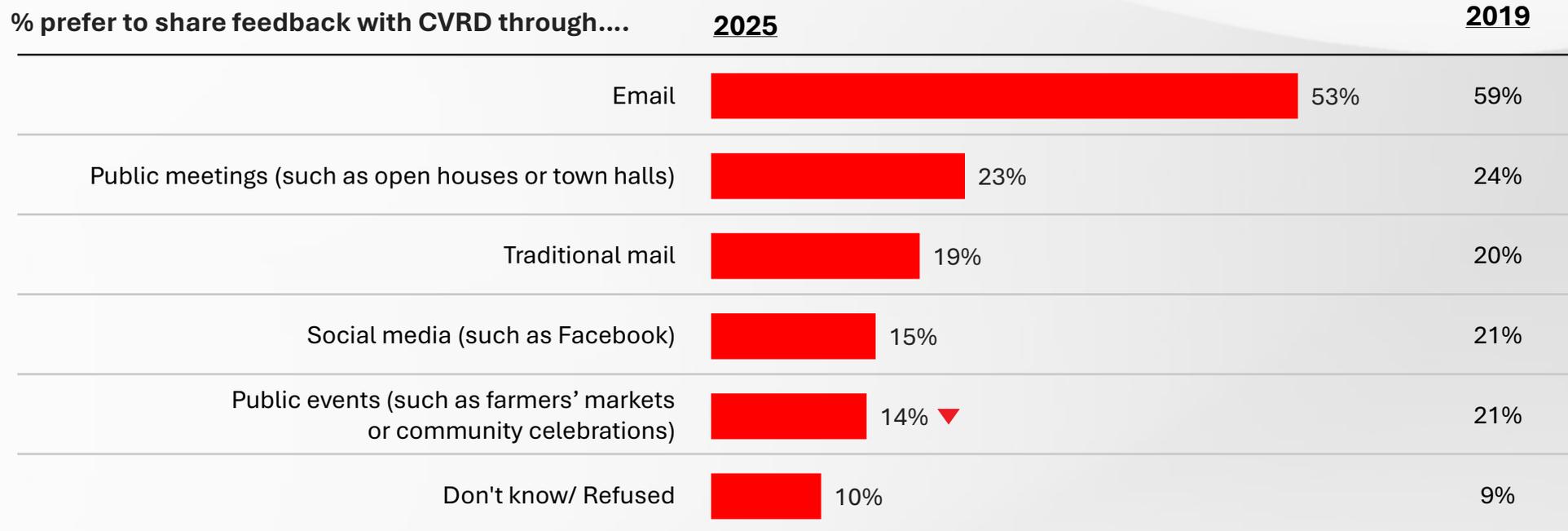
Q16. What is your preferred method to receive information from the Regional District?

▲ Statistically significantly higher than previous year

▼ Statistically significantly lower than previous year

Preferred Method to Share Feedback

- As with receiving information, email remains the top preferred method residents use to share feedback with the CVRD, similar to 2019.
- Sharing feedback through public events dropped significantly from 21% to 14% while social media dipped directionally to 15%.
- Females tend more to share feedback with the CVRD via public events (such as farmers’ markets or community celebrations).



Base: All respondents (2025 n=412; 2019 n=669).
 Q17. What is your preferred method(s) for sharing your input or feedback with the CVRD? (Multiple Response)

▲ Statistically significantly higher than previous year
 ▼ Statistically significantly lower than previous year

4.



Respondent Profile

Demographics

REGION	
Central/East	46%
South	25%
North	18%
West	10%

GENDER	
Male	48%
Female	52%

AGE	
18-34	17%
35-54	28%
55+	55%
Refused	-

INCOME	
Under \$40,000	10%
\$40,000 to under \$60,000	9%
\$60,000 to under \$80,000	12%
\$80,000 to under \$100,000	12%
\$100,000 to under \$120,000	9%
\$120,000 to under \$160,000	11%
\$160,000 or more	15%
Don't know/Refused	22%

YEARS LIVED IN CVRD	
Less than 10 years	15%
10 to less than 20 years	25%
20 to less than 30 years	24%
30 years and over	34%
Don't know/ Prefer not to answer	1%

HOME OWNERSHIP	
Own	80%
Rent	17%
Other	2%
Prefer not to answer	2%

EMPLOYMENT	
Full-time employee	30%
Part-time employee	7%
Self-employed / Multiple jobs / Contract work	14%
Unemployed	1%
Retired	45%
Student	1%
Homemaker / stay at home	1%
Disability assistance	1%