



**REPORT TO JUAN DE FUCA WATER DISTRIBUTION COMMISSION
MEETING OF TUESDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2008**

SUBJECT: CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the Customer Service Survey.

BACKGROUND:

In the past, customers have typically complained without necessarily seeing change or accepted the level of service provided. Today, customers are better informed, have high expectations and want to see a responsive public sector utility response.

The purpose of the customer service survey is to gain an understanding of our customers' expectations, their knowledge about the services being provided and their perceptions surrounding the retail water service. Based on the results of the survey, we will develop initiatives to address concerns and perceptions, to be more responsive to customers needs with the constraints posed by resources and budgets.

For the first time, Capital Regional District (CRD) Water Services is surveying its customers in the service area administered by the Juan de Fuca Water Distribution Commission. The scope of work will address the following areas of interest:

- Billing and bill payment options,
- Customer service,
- Property owners' responsibility for the water account,
- Consequences of non-payment of water bills,
- Moving properties,
- Customer responsibility regarding maintenance of water pipes and fixtures,
- Consequences of abnormal consumption on a property,
- Water meters and regulations pertaining to the access,
- Cross Connection Control bylaw (backflow prevention devices),
- Pressure reducing devices,
- New service connections and water meter applications,
- Defective and inaccurate water meters,
- Unauthorized connections and tampering with water equipment,
- Navigating the telephone system,
- Water rates,
- CRD Water Services website and navigation,
- Suggestions for improving customer service right now, and
- Customer's willingness to pay additional costs for service improvement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The responses received from the Request for Proposal issued in August 2008 indicated each firm proposed to survey between 400 and 2,400 customers. The minimum sample size was 400 customers surveyed, which is appropriate for the population of the Western Communities to provide a high confidence level in the survey conclusions. The costs of the survey depend on the sample size.

The lowest proposal received was \$2,825 above the original budget of \$25,000.

Juan de Fuca Water Distribution Commission – 7 October 2008

Re: Customer Service Survey

Page 2

ALTERNATIVES:

1. As the project is over the 2008 budget amount, do not proceed with the customer survey.
2. Proceed with the customer survey and award the contract to Ipsos Reid Public Affairs.

Four proposals were received and evaluated in accordance with CRD policy. Only two met the technical criteria. The financial proposals for the two technically qualified consultants, based on a survey of 400 residents, inclusive of GST, are as follows:

- Malatest Program Evaluation & Market Research: (Victoria Based Company) \$33,701.56
- Ipsos Reid Public Affairs: (Vancouver Based Company) \$27,825.00

The balance of funding would be sourced from under expenditures within the operations budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Juan de Fuca Water Distribution Commission award the contract for the Customer Service Survey to Ipsos Reid Public Affairs.

Donna Costin, CMA
Manager, Customer Service

J.A. (Jack) Hull, P.Eng., MBA
General Manager, Water Services Concurrence