



RSCA Needs Assessment

March 14, 2017



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President's Message



(Photo: courtesy of Metroland News)

The Riverside South Community Association (RSCA) Community Survey was a huge success!

We received 224 responses from residents who provided thoughtful and constructive comments on a wide range of concerns and suggestions on ways to improve the lives of residents. Residents said Riverside South had a community feel and that they very much liked living in this community.

Your concerns and issues will be raised with our local councilor, city staff, and community stakeholders.

We will:

- Incorporate as many of your community improvement suggestions as possible.
- Refine our strategy to address pressing concerns such as security, traffic, services and facilities for seniors, recreational programs, snow removal, parking issues, and many other issues raised in the survey; and,
- Address any future suggestions to the RSCA.

Your interest and participation were most appreciated, and the Survey Summary Team and I wish to thank you for taking part. On behalf of the RSCA, I would also like to say that we all look forward to continuing the work we've started on ways to improve our community: Riverside South!

Bruce Lindsay

RSCA President

Survey Overview

The objective of the survey was to find out exactly what residents were concerned about and to seek suggestions on concrete actions that could be taken. Your feedback was quite helpful and important to the priorities and action plans that the RSCA will undertake on your behalf.

A big thank you goes out to all those who took the time to complete and submit the Community Survey, as well as the Survey Analysis and Compilation Team:
John Brayman, Bruce Lindsay, Michelle Nowlan, and Patrick Pinsonneault.

Note: The results reported can only be considered the opinions of the survey participants. They cannot be generalized to represent the entire resident population as a whole.



1. What do you feel are the most pressing issues in Riverside South?

	Does not concern me	Concerns me very little	Neutral	I'm somewhat concerned	This concerns me greatly	N/A
Security Concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traffic Concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recreational Programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services for Seniors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snow Removal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Results by question

The Riverside South Community Association’s (RSCA) mission is to channel the voices of the residents towards the development and maintenance of a safe, vibrant, and attractive community. It is important to have the residents’ perspective on how to maintain it and to receive suggestions for how improvements can be brought to the community. We will always take into consideration our resident’s greatest concerns.

The greatest concern of the community is traffic. 84.23% of respondents expressed a concern, 29.73% indicated that they were somewhat concerned, and 54.50% greatly concerned. There is a high volume of traffic during rush hours challenging commute from Riverside South to different areas of Ottawa and vice-versa in the late afternoon. Commute time from Riverside South to most areas of the city is on average 40 minutes. However, depending on the weather, it can take over one hour, making it a long commute for residents who work in different parts of Ottawa.

Security concerns (67.42 %) and the importance of recreational programs (69.51 %) were close seconds on the list of priorities. In regards to security concerns, almost three-quarters (71.43%) of the survey participants have stated that they wanted a community meeting including the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) to talk about what can be done to help Riverside South residents feel safer in the community.

Some of the respondents wanted to see the *Neighborhood Watch* program reactivated, as well as enabling a Block Parent program. There was a desire for an increase of police presence during nights and weekends. Recreational programs (especially those for youth) were identified as important community

programs to provide. One of the major findings in question 9 of the survey was that 69.05% of responses included a desire for a community centre with a swimming pool and library.

Snow removal concerned 50.45% respondents. Residents said the main roads, and roads with single family homes were well maintained, and residents were generally satisfied with snow maintenance operations. However, more attention needs to be given on roads with higher density housing i.e. townhouses and sidewalks. The slow maintenance of those areas is affecting the safety of both drivers and pedestrians.

Parking (42.34%) was not an issue on most streets with single family homes/bungalows/villas, however, is a significant issue on streets with multi-dwelling units (townhomes, condos, etc.). Parking issues are more than just the inconvenience of driving on narrower streets- it's a safety issue to passing motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, residents and children playing.

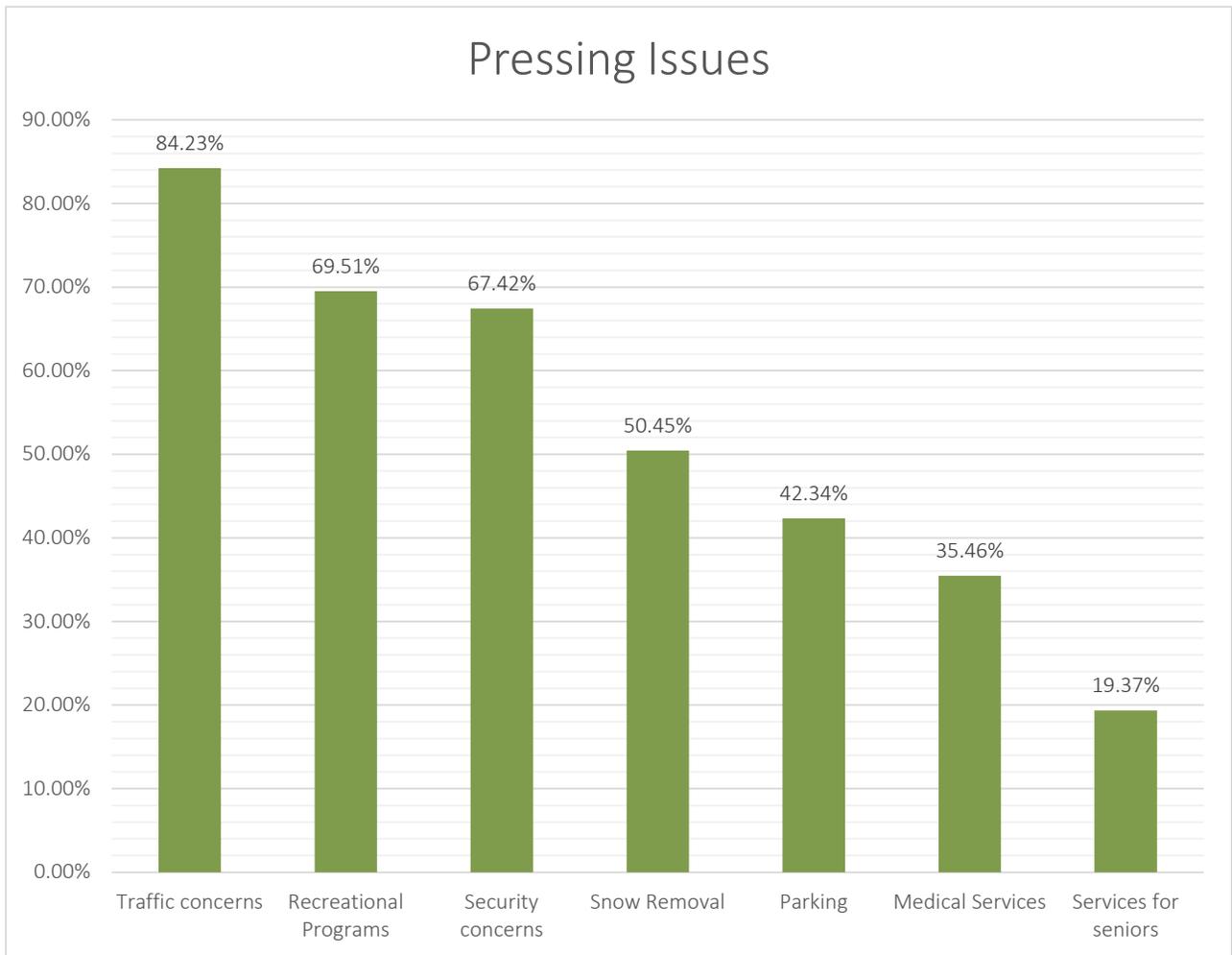
Medical services concerned 35.46% of the respondents. More than half of the survey participants 63.63% said they were neutral, had no or little concerns about this specific issue. The results indicated an overall satisfaction towards the medical services available in Riverside South.

The comments given regarding services for seniors indicated that these responses were largely made by non-seniors. A separate survey targeting the community's seniors will need to be distributed to obtain a more accurate reflection of their comments and concerns.

1.1. Concerns towards pressing issues of the Riverside South Community

	Does not concern me	Concerns me very little	Neutral	I'm somewhat concerned	This concerns me greatly	N/A	Total # of respondents
Security Concerns	3.62%	10.86%	17.65%	47.06%	20.36%	0.45%	221
Traffic Concerns	1.80%	5.41%	8.11%	29.73%	54.50%	0.45%	222
Recreational Programs	6.28%	4.93%	18.39%	35.43%	34.08%	0.89%	223
Medical Services	11.36%	16.82%	35.45%	24.55%	10.91%	0.91%	220
Services for Seniors	26.13%	14.86%	28.83%	11.26%	8.11%	10.81%	222
Snow Removal	11.26%	10.36%	27.48%	32.88%	17.57%	0.45%	222
Parking	16.67%	12.61%	27.03%	22.07%	20.27%	1.35%	222

1.2. Percentage of respondents' expressed concerns:



(Total % from responses from fig 1.1: "I'm somewhat concerned" + "This concerns me greatly")

2. There have been several posts about security concerns. Should there be a community meeting including the Ottawa Police Service to talk about what can be done to help Riverside residents feel safer in the community?

Yes

No

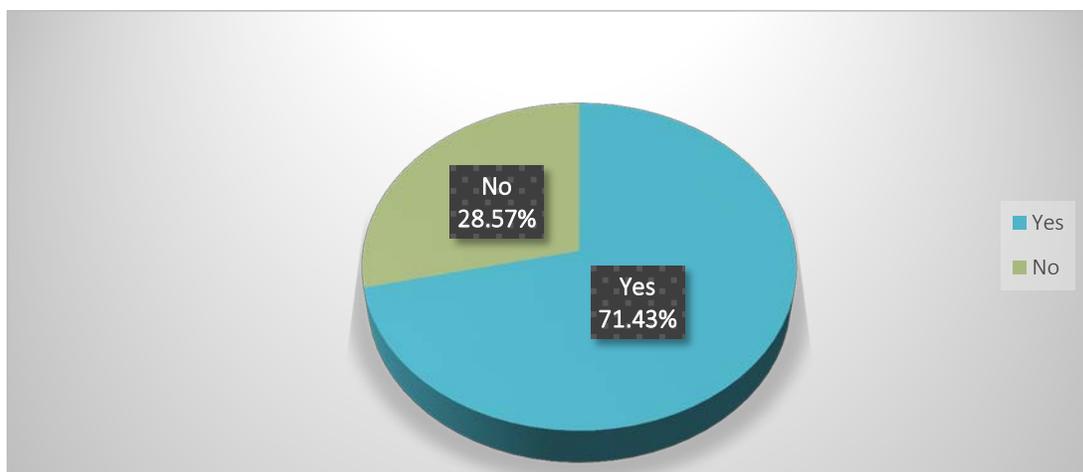
Comments

Yes: 71.43% or 160 respondents

No: 28.57% or 64 respondents

There was a favorable response (71.43%) for a community meeting that would include the Ottawa Police Service. The comments given seemed to suggest that residents needed to take greater care to ensure their cars and doors were locked. The general feeling was that Riverside South was a safe community. The reintroduction of the Neighbourhood Watch Program was suggested by a few respondents, as was the 'Block Parent' program. Improved lighting, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) initiatives was also suggested. Some of the responses asked for greater police presence, more activities for youth and locating a police detachment closer to this community. A couple of responses suggested learning from other communities their best practices on community safety and to obtain up to date crime data and measurements for Riverside South.

2.1. Citizens in favor of having a community meeting including the Ottawa Police Service



3. Is there enough activities and facilities for youth?

Yes

No

What type of activities would you like to see implemented

Yes: 22.32% or 50 respondents

No: 77.68% or 174 respondents

The nature of the question asked in this section of the survey resulted in numerous singular responses that cannot always be aggregated. They have however been classed where possible, and none have been excluded.

A recurrent theme was to identify teenagers as the age group with the least activities/facilities available to them and the most in need. It was suggested that a future survey be designed for youth to respond directly, and gain their insight.

New recreational and sports centre

The need of a recreation and sports centre in the community to deliver activities for youth was frequently mentioned in the responses.

Also mentioned were:

- A pool
- Indoor rink
- Skating park (skateboard/rollerblade)
- Library
- BMX park

The possibility of having a new facility could be challenged by competing services found in Barrhaven, and make it difficult for a Riverside South facility to compete against. A shuttles service to facilities outside of Riverside South was suggested to increase access to our residents.

Existing Community Centre Recommendations

- Programming should be designed to be accessible and more inclusive to disabled or differently abled children.
- Offer more programming on the weekends
- Keep facilities opened later
- Improve Advertising
- Offer more children and teen-oriented activities.
- Offer more activities at the community centre, such as gymnastics, yoga for teens, art classes

Existing Outdoor Rinks

The four rinks in Riverside South are very much appreciated by the residents. Suggestions were made in regards to how the coordination and maintenance of it could be improved:

- During late hours of the evening- 'No sticks allowed' at the rink.
- Have a paid skating rink coordinator/team position(s).
- Push the City to accept a trailer at Spratt Rink again without the requirement for it to become a supervised rink.

Other activities

There was a significant amount of suggestions for other activities that could take place in the community that is worth itemizing. Responses have been broken down into sub-groups where possible. There was mention that the community could capitalize on the volunteer hours students need to complete their program at high schools. Another concern not directly linked to recreation was the lack of lighting in parks, e.g. Nimiq and Claudette Cain, which are very dark areas at night, and especially unusable early in the evenings during the winter.

Additional ideas include:

Sports

- Fun boot camps
- Hiking
- Ultimate Frisbee
- House leagues
- Misc. Tournaments

Park activities

- Music jam sessions
- Theatre in the park and public places (from drama clubs at the local schools)
- Art in the park and public places
- Have a Carnival at the Claudette Cain Park and make into a winter wonderland
- Add basketball nets on hoops

Outdoors

- Tree planting
- Community gardens
- New nature trails & waterway access points and/or promotion/improvement of existing ones
- Plans for a multi-use trail along the river (with periodic turns in to accommodate unattainable private property), as well as a connection over the Blacks Rapids Locks to trails in the greenbelt on the Barrhaven side)
- Put docks next to the pathway below the Strandherd bridge for fishing
- Producing a pedestrian friendly and bike friendly community should be considered a priority since this will help aging residents and foster healthy lifestyle choices for the youth
- Put Christmas decorations up on Spratt and on Limebank between Earl Armstrong to Spratt (e.g. wreaths hanging from lamp posts, etc.)

Additional suggestions:

- Book clubs and music clubs
- Community improvement projects (e.g. clean-up, help a neighbour event, stream restoration, and running program)
- Boys & Girls club or expansion of Osgoode Youth Centre to Riverside South
- Mentorship type program or cross-generational program
- More hang out places (e.g. Cafes)
- Community fun day, including a car seat clinic with SEATS for Kids
- Movie nights organized indoor in the winter and in the park in the summer
- Rock climbing facility
- New restaurants that are suitable for youth
- Theatre
- Community dinners in collaboration with businesses for seniors and families.
- Later bus service



RSCA 'Toy Mountain' Volunteers (2015)

4. Are there enough services and facilities for seniors in Riverside South?

Yes

No

Comments

Yes: 48.66% or 109 respondents

No: 51.34% or 115 respondents

The responses to the seniors' questions appear to have been generally answered by non-seniors. We suspect a good number of seniors' aren't on Facebook or they don't access the Riverside South Community Association (RSCA) website, which was the primary survey tools and sources of publicity.

It was also mentioned that seniors may not have the electronic means to answer an online survey and should be polled differently i.e. other seniors organizations, in-home support services, door to door, etc.

Of the 224 survey responses: 115 felt there was not enough services and facilities for seniors, 109 felt it was adequate. Additional methods of reaching out to the seniors' population will need to be explored and included in a more comprehensive survey on the type of facilities and services seniors believe are needed for their age group.

5. What type of seniors housing is needed in Riverside South?

Responses: 103

The survey responses seemed to suggest that most of the responses were made by non-seniors. A number of answers related to the type of seniors housing needed in Riverside South (103 responses; 121 skipped) the question.

Regardless of the age group who submitted survey responses, there were a number of housing types suggested which would be consistent with the type of accommodation one would associate with seniors.

Pressing Issues Related To Seniors:

Housing for seniors is going to be an increasing issue as more baby boomers reach retirement.

There is no designated senior-specific housing in Riverside South. However, the Villas have unofficially become a seniors enclave but it isn't identified as a seniors complex. These homes are bungalow doubles and are extremely popular with seniors. The senior demographic is rapidly growing and seniors housing will be a major concern in the City of Ottawa and suburbs like Riverside South.

Respondents who answered this question were also very concerned with affordability and accessibility – living on one floor, apartments with elevators, close to shops/services, transit. There seemed to be a desire for rental units as well as owned.

There appeared a wide spectrum of preferred housing types in both rental and owned/condo:

- Bungalow
- Town bungalow
- Low rise apartments
- Seniors-only communities

Location seemed to be important as seniors find themselves needing greater support both in personal health and home maintenance. It was also suggested that seniors rental or condo apartments with elevators in the downtown core close to shops and transit would be ideal.

Respondents also suggested a desire for:

- Full seniors care facilities to help seniors as they transition to requiring more care and support
- Nursing homes
- Chronic care facility
- Retirement home
- Seniors transitional retirement home – offering multi-level care from retirement with no assistance to full daily nursing care and palliative care.

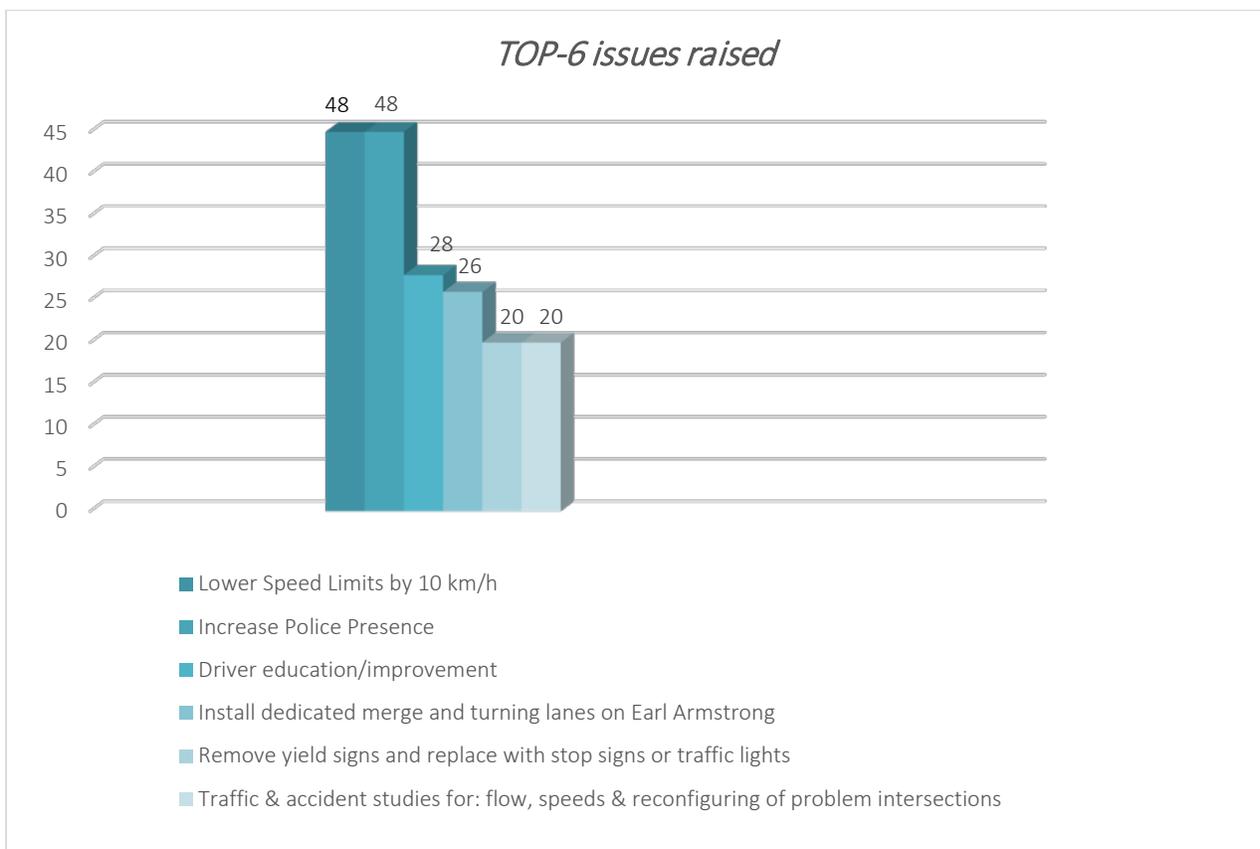
A few comments made reference to seniors/adult lifestyle communities/complexes close to Riverside South i.e. Manotick, Barrhaven that perhaps are, or currently meeting the transitional needs of seniors.

With the seniors population expected to experience significant growth in the next twenty years, consideration on the type of services, facilities and housing requirements for this age group will need to be incorporated in the growth plan for Riverside South.

6. Earl Armstrong has seen several automobile accidents since the opening of the Vimy Memorial Bridge. What do you feel the City should do to help reduce the number of accidents on our arterial roads?

Responses: 175

With Riverside South’s increasing densification/expansion, and it largely being a ‘commuter community’, there were a number of suggestions of how the existing and future transportation infrastructure and roadway safety could be improved. A total of 301 suggestions were received from the 175 respondents who answered this question.



Looking further into the issues raised, it was necessary to group the comments and suggestions into categories/themes. The number of responses is below for each; **bolded items** represent a top-6 road-safety issue:

<i>Safety- Speed</i>	
Lower Speed Limits by 10 km/h	48
Roundabouts (especially Spratt & Earl Armstrong)	6
Keep Speed as-is (reduces congestion)	5
Digital speed display	5

<i>Safety- enforcement</i>	
Increase Police Presence	48
Red light cameras/ photo-radar and/ or monitoring cameras	12
Increase Police presence in school zones	2

<i>Driver education/improvement</i>	
Driver education/improvement	28
Traffic & accident studies on flow, speeds & reconfiguring of problem intersections (Ottawa Police Service, City of Ottawa + Independent review)	20
People shouldn't be driving well below limit in 'passing lane'	4
Lessons-learned from Barrhaven side?	3

<i>Roadway Safety- Improve traffic lights & intersections</i>	
Remove yield signs and replace with stop signs or traffic lights	20
Advanced Left at arterial roads needed	15
Light patterns: reduce wait times of lights from arterial roads, but lengthen change between colours & synchronize properly	11
No right on red (especially Spratt)	10
Traffic light at Brian Good & Earl Armstrong	6
Poor visibility when turning left onto Spratt when other vehicles in opposite direction turning left	6
No left turns on during peak periods	2

<i>Other areas ideas for improvement: City of Ottawa</i>	
Install merge and turning lanes on Earl Armstrong (especially at Spratt)	26
Increase snow bank removal frequency at intersections	7
Bike lane lines can be deceptive: paint different colour than regular lanes	4
River Road and Prince of Wales widened to 4 lanes	3
Larger street name signs	2

Additional ideas from the survey:

- At major intersections, install yellow 'flashing lights' to warn of light change (as used in other jurisdictions)
- Install speed bumps at pedestrian crossings (similar to Australia)
- Increase Police speeding blitzes during rush hours & late at night. Incorporate the use of 'decoy' or non-attended police cars as a speeding deterrent.
- Driver education, including those involved in accidents or major infractions in the area. This could include correct turning and merging procedures.
- Police could have a driver education campaign in advance of, and during a community blood drive (i.e. 50 blood donors needed to save 1 serious car crash victim)
- Remove dedicated bus lane on the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge
- Continue and increase encouragement for motorists to use Earl Armstrong (vs. River Rd.) and create a pedestrian bridge from Claudette Cain area to adjacent communities and/or pathways
- Create dedicated turning lanes at intersections that might not have them, including River Rd & Honey Gables

There are numerous takeaways for RSCA stakeholders of how the existing (and future) transportation infrastructure and roadway safety could be improved. It is hoped that the RSCA, through these suggestions and continued stakeholder engagement can help develop a *'Transportation Improvement Action- Plan'*, as there seems to be a major need.



(Photo: courtesy of Ottawa Police Service)

7. What are your thoughts on the city's snow maintenance in Riverside South?

Responses: 191

Snow removal seems to be fine on the major roads and more of a concern on the side streets and in particular townhouse streets.

Half of the respondents said snow clearing was a concern. A large number of the responses indicated that the level of service is satisfactory and what they expected it would be. Snow accumulation at the corners created hazardous and unsafe conditions. Lack of sidewalk clearing was mentioned often in the responses.

There were some complaints about plows going through side streets too quickly. Cars parked on the street were mentioned as one of the reasons for poor plowing. Respondents didn't feel snow banks were cut back in a timely manner and often not done at all.

Recommendations:

- Greater enforcement of the parking by-law on overnight parking during snow clearing operations
- More attentions to sidewalk clearing and keeping snow banks down
- More salt used at bus shelters and sidewalks



(Photo: courtesy of John Brayman)

8. How is parking on your street?

Responses: 194

The results from this question were very evident: parking is not an issue on most streets with single family homes/bungalows/villas, however, is a significant issue on streets with multi-dwelling units (townhomes, condos, etc.).

	<u>Total</u>
Ok, good, or excellent; minimal issues (especially on streets with single family homes, villas)	104
<i>Not good</i> , on 'tight' streets (multi-dwelling units, etc.); parking should only be allowed on one side of the street	90

Many residents from all housing types expressed concern with safety issues and a perceived lack of by-law enforcement that stem from parking congestion. This included reduced safety for residents exiting their driveways, pedestrians, cyclists, and children playing were highlighted in many responses, especially with streets that allow parking on both sides. Here are some sample comments received:

"Parking on all narrower streets should be limited to only one side of the street year round"
Problem areas include: Canyon Walk, Cove Island, Golden Eye, Goose River, Jersey Tea, North Bluff, Rocky Harbour, Wild Mint, Wild Shore, etc., as this would facilitate ease of emergency vehicle access, passing in both directions, snow removal operations. The need for first responders to navigate streets must take precedence over the privilege to park on the street"

"So many (residents) park their cars on the street and leave their laneways empty...our guests end up parking way down the street because there is never any parking in front of our house"

Thirty-two residents also expressed concern over the perceived lack of bylaw enforcement regarding parking infractions, and that residents (and tradespeople) should be educated on proper parking procedures, etiquette, etc.

As the community grows, there should be an opportunity for stakeholders (City, Developers, RSCA & residents) to help improve the existing parking conditions on streets with medium-to-high density multi-dwelling units and improve parking for future community designs with the above comments and suggestions in mind.

9. What suggestions do you have for the Riverside South Community Association?



Responses: 127

There was overall significant praise for the work of the RSCA.

To help the association continue its work and grow, communication improvement to the community was a recurrent theme. Respondents suggested that it should be more diverse (electronically and otherwise) and there should be a greater presence (including reinstating street reps). A “formal” complaint system through Facebook was suggested. The RSCA needs to stay aware that using electronic communication may rule out those who don’t have this service (potentially may leave out seniors if no other methods used to reach the community). Strategies put in place should be inclusive and accessible to all residents.

One respondent raised the concern that the Association might be perceived as being influenced by businesses, while a number of other respondents believed that the Association should advocate for more small businesses in the community (e.g. asking owners of the plaza to lower their rental costs).

Further suggestions included semi-annual town-hall style meetings (not just the AGM once a year). To increase participation at such meetings, it was suggested that each member brings two friends. The RSCA could organize a meet and greet neighbour sessions for new residents of Riverside South. There could also be the possibility of starting a Welcome Wagon program.

Other ideas including having a community fun day, car seat clinics with ‘SEATS for kids’, and increasing the overall RSCA signage in the community at key locations.

It was also suggested that the RSCA be the community-city liaison advocate, and draw on underutilized programs/ services developed in other parts of the city. Such an approach could build a ‘sharing’ or collaboration model with neighbouring community associations – ideas exchanges, pooling of resources for joint community projects, bus coordination to neighbouring community events, etc.

It was also suggested that the RSCA and community stakeholders could improve, or increase their advocacy and action for:

English public secondary school

It was mentioned that for many local families, Catholic schooling was not an option, especially for those living a lifestyle outside of the Christian faith. In addition, the location of English Public schools isn't ideal. It was noted that Merivale high school is too far and removes children from their community, familiar surroundings during a period of great change.

Local businesses

Comments included: Having a local coffee shop (4) and more store competition (2). A petition to lower costs at plazas could be created, and on a related note- prevent the loss of local businesses. Attracting more commercial businesses to the community (and employing local residents) would enable Riverside South to become less of a bedroom community. There could also be increased promotion or incentives to promote local businesses and to encourage folks to shop locally.

Security

- More police presence at night and weekends
- Install lighting in parks i.e. Claudette Cain, Nimiq, Mosquito Creek/Storm Water Ponds
- Reintroduce Neighbourhood Watch Program

Transportation

- Have an extended schedule when local / community buses come online; and, Create an OC Transpo Express service
- Residents would like the community to be more pedestrian and bike friendly
- Continue lobbying to get the LRT extension to Riverside South built early

Recreation

- Better engagement and communication regarding the recreation and community centre planning process (rinks, pool, fields, and activities), and timelines
- More recreational activities for youth, adults, and seniors
- Paid skating rink coordinators and rink attendants
- Hold movie nights in the winter months at the community centre/school gym
- Maintain existing activities i.e. Canada Day, Xmas Sleigh Ride, Pancake breakfast, Spring Clean-up, Community Garage Sale

Misc. ideas

- Seniors needs assessment i.e. housing, variety of programs available and future needs
- Community Library (beyond the 'book bus' or 'Little book' libraries)
- Mechanisms put in place to complete a needs assessment of seniors. This would include future needs such as housing, variety of programs available
- Keep an eye on the Bayview redevelopment project- lessons learned
- To have a tree planting plan for the community to help increase tree cover and to help replace dead/diseased trees i.e. trees lost to Emerald Ash beetle
- Increase visibility and quantity of 'Poop and Scoop' and 'On-leash' vs. 'Off-leash' signage

Electronic Communication

- RSCA should be the communications conduit for all of the activities in Riverside South. The Facebook page and Website should be interactive
- Respondents proposed that the Facebook group administrators be more flexible. Posts should not be deleted and commenting should not be turned off. It was also recommended that there be more openness about the types of posts (e.g. lost pets). If the posts and comments are being conducted in a polite and respectful way, the conversation should be allowed on the RSCA social medias

One comment, in particular, went into detail with some concrete suggestions:

My main concerns are with how I interact with the RSCA over the internet. I'd like to see more of a social media presence. The Twitter is rarely updated and since things get so easily lost on Facebook I find it's hard to know what's going on. I would subscribe and read a monthly or quarterly e-newsletter. MailChimp has some great tools to help with this. I disagree with the segregated Facebook pages. I think a unified approach would make it easier for people to share posts that are relevant to our community without having to go to a different group for lost pets or recommendations, etc. As silly as this may sound, but my experience with web design has taught me that the extra click is costly. The RSCA website is a bit dated and the information is scattered. The "contact" envelope in the "Social" card doesn't work. The events calendar isn't synced with Facebook. Several items under the "Your Association" menu could be moved to an "Activities" menu. The sub-menu is a mix of images and icons which are confusing. I think switching to a new WordPress template could help re-organize the content. Sorry about all the complaining. Ultimately, you guys are doing great work so keep it up! We are new to the community (almost 2 years now) and it's the first time in Ottawa that we've been in an area that really has a family feel.

- Improve and increase the frequency of social media posts; be more active on Twitter; increase community events, ideas, and info-sharing (website, emails, social).
- Push notification of upcoming RSCA events (meetings etc.)

Actions to be taken by the RSCA

1. The RSCA will arrange to meet with the Ward Councillor to review the Community Survey Summary
2. The Community Survey Summary will be posted on the RSCA website, linked through Facebook, Twitter, and Newsletter
3. The Community Survey Summary will be forwarded to the Ottawa South Community News as a news item
4. The RSCA will develop an action plan to respond to the concerns and suggestions made and to establish a set of priorities to tackle the items listed in the summary
5. A Youth and Seniors Survey will be prepared to inquire about the specific interests and needs of these demographics i.e. activities, facilities, services, programs and housing, etc.
6. Regular updates will be given on the progress of the action plan implemented to address the concerns and suggestions provided by residents.