



## IPSOS RESPONSE TO NSRA LETTER

November 14, 2016

To: Coralie Breen, Senior Planner – Policy and Engagement, District of North Saanich

From: Kyle Braid, Senior Vice-President, Ipsos

### Background

As requested, this is a response to some of the concerns outlined in an October 21, 2016 letter to North Saanich Mayor and Council from John Kafka on behalf of NSRA Board of Directors.

#### 1. Concerns about low familiarity with Bylaw 1352 in the telephone survey.

It's true that only 18% of survey respondents said they were 'very familiar' with Bylaw 1352 and the increased density housing permitted in Areas 1 and 2. A further 45% said they were 'somewhat familiar' and 37% were either 'not very familiar' or 'not at all familiar'.

However, this familiarity question was asked in terms of familiarity 'prior to today' and survey respondents were given a detailed description of the issue, as follows:

*As you may know, in July 2014, North Saanich Council passed bylaw 1352 which permitted new increased density housing in two defined areas of North Saanich. This increased density housing could include small lot houses, townhouses or apartments.*

*Area 1 is 126 acres in size and is bounded by McTavish Road on the South, the Sidney border on the North, East Saanich Road on the West and Lochside Drive on the East. Area 2 is 79 acres in size and is mostly bounded by John Road on the South, McMicken Road on the North, Pat Bay Highway on the West and McDonald Park Road on the East. Area 2 also includes the Windward Kiwanis Village just East of McDonald Park Road.*

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that familiarity with the issue was raised considerably by the detailed description.

Moreover, I would not place too much reliance on these familiarity results. They are based on 'claimed' familiarity and we have no way to know what this claimed familiarity is based on. I have certainly seen many studies where those claiming the most familiarity are in fact less knowledgeable about the issue. I'm not saying that's true here – we just don't know.

Nevertheless, I did take a look at the results broken out between those who said they are familiar ('very' or 'somewhat') and those not familiar ('not very' or 'not at all'). They show (see table on following page) that those who said they are familiar were more likely to believe the increased density housing is consistent with the both the overall objectives in the Official Community Plan as well as with the cornerstone objective to retain the present rural, agricultural and marine character of the community. Those familiar were also more likely to



have said they would like to see Council take no action and allow the permitted increased density housing to proceed.

	'Very' or 'Somewhat' Familiar (n=189)	'Not Very' or 'Not at All' Familiar (n=111)
<b>Q5. Overall, do you think the increased density housing permitted in these two areas is consistent or not consistent with the objectives I read earlier from the Official Community Plan?</b> Consistent Not consistent Don't know	53% 42% 5%	38% 53% 9%
<b>Q6. And how about with respect to the first and cornerstone objective, which is to retain the present rural, agricultural and marine character of the community? Do you think the increased density housing permitted in these two areas is consistent or not consistent with this objective?</b> Consistent Not consistent Don't know	49% 46% 4%	35% 60% 4%
<b>Q7. There has been some discussion in the community about how North Saanich Council should proceed with respect to bylaw 1352 and the increased density housing permitted in these two areas. Which of the following three approaches would you most like to see Council take?</b> Take no action and allow the permitted increased density housing to proceed Repeal the bylaw and allow none of the permitted increased density housing to proceed Make some changes to the number, type, location or other characteristics of the increased density housing permitted Don't know	40% 17% 41% 2%	20% 19% 58% 3%

## 2. Concerns about information that may have affected respondents' answers being omitted from survey.

It's true that adding additional information to the survey may have affected the responses we received. However, the information that gets included is always a balancing act. We want to provide enough information to give respondents some context, but not too much so as to confuse or push respondents to a particular opinion.



In this case, the questions and the information provided were vetted at multiple stages through Council, staff and the Community Advisory Committee. I think we struck a good balance and had a fair description. I've also learned that in surveys like these, someone always believes that their nugget of information should be included and that it is impossible to satisfy everyone.

### **3. Concerns about secondary suites not being included as possible Area 1 and 2 affordable housing options.**

A question about secondary suites was included at one point, but cut during one of the final survey revisions. However, my recollection is that this question was in respect to secondary suites in the entire District and not related to Areas 1 and 2.

I do not recall any suggestions to include secondary suites as an option in Area 1 and 2. And more importantly, I don't see how their inclusion would have impacted the responses we received.

### **4. Concerns about greater weight being placed on the telephone survey results versus the online results.**

I think this concern is directed more at Council than at Ipsos. However, I stand by the statement in the report that *'It is the strong view of Ipsos that the telephone results provide the more reliable and representative picture of public opinion.'*

### **5. Concerns about excluding some telephone respondents for being over-quota for age or gender.**

The main goal of the telephone survey was to obtain a random and representative sampling of public opinion. This required sacrificing some willing respondents in order to boost our sampling of under-represented segments, in this case younger respondents and men. This is standard survey practice.

### **6. Concerns about the CAC not being permitted to look at changes made as a result of CAC feedback.**

Ipsos did provide a list of changes made and the rationale for these changes. It is my understanding that this was shared by District staff with the CAC. Ipsos believes it did a good job of incorporating the feedback of the CAC as one of several inputs into the final questionnaire. I do not believe it was ever the plan for the CAC to have the final say or a veto over changes.

### **7. Concerns about the inclusion of more than 3 online surveys from two IP addresses.**

I think this is a legitimate complaint. It was my recommendation to include these interviews and it did violate the rules set out at the start. The rule was set to avoid individuals or groups in effect 'stuffing the ballot box'. That was not the case here. There was no sign that these



surveys were anything other than individual opinions that happened to come from a couple of IP addresses. I did not want to disenfranchise these well-meaning respondents.

We could still re-run the data excluding these respondents (i.e. those beyond 3 per IP address). However, when I looked at this earlier, my recollection is that it would have a very small impact on the overall online results (i.e. no more than 1-2% per question).

### **Final Words**

I would like to thank the NSRA for their thoughtful feedback on the process. I hope that I have addressed their concerns to everyone's satisfaction.