

SMALL CELL TECHNOLOGY REVIEW

Public Engagement Summary

February 2021

Background

The City is seeking to better understand the opportunities, issues, and value of small cell technology and the implementation of 5G service. Small cells are smaller versions of large (“Macro”) cell phone towers and antennas to access internet, phone, and texting services.

Engagement

The City is looking for feedback to find out more and prepare for small cell technology. We are asking for input from residents and other stakeholders to help inform activities within the [City’s jurisdiction](#).

In Fall 2020, the City entered phase one of the small cell technology review and asked for feedback to answer the question: What are residents’ and organizations’ thoughts about small cell technology? This feedback will help inform aspects of trials conducted by cellular providers in the next phase. Public engagement included three activities, outlined in Table 1.

Promotion

Public engagement opportunities were promoted using the following methods:

- City of Winnipeg website – public on October 9, 2020
- News release – sent on October 9, 2020
- Facebook posts with 16,797 followers – 10 posts in October/November 2020
- Twitter posts with 78,700 followers – 10 posts in October/November 2020
- City of Winnipeg public engagement newsletter with over 2,900 recipients – [dates and details], and;
- Stakeholder email sent on October 9 and 10, 2020

Key Findings

- Those who were randomly selected to complete the research survey have different views on small cell technology than those who self-selected to complete the online survey.
- There was more familiarity with small cell technology amongst those who participated in the self-selected online survey (87% very or somewhat familiar) than those who were randomly selected for the research survey (49% very or somewhat familiar).
- There was more support for small cell technology amongst research survey participants (73% strongly support or somewhat support).
- Of those who were not strongly supportive, not knowing enough was the top response in the research survey and ‘small cell antennas and 5G are unsafe’ was the top response on the online survey.

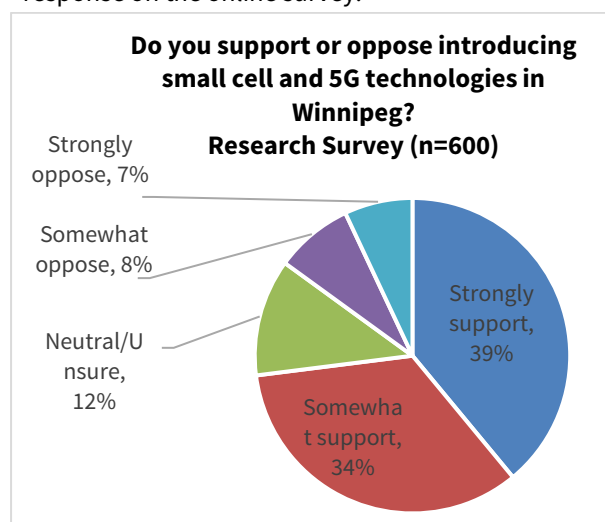


Table 1 Engagement activities

Date	Activity	Details
September 8 – 17, 2020	Research Omnibus survey	Random sample of 600 Winnipeg residents. Statistical relevance: 95% certainty that results are within ±4 percentage points if entire adult population of Winnipeg were surveyed. Full results in Appendix B.
October 9 – November 6, 2020	Online survey	Self-selected participation. 254 responses; 253 in English and 1 in French. Full results in Appendix C.
December 11, 2020 – January 25, 2021	Interviews	Interviews held with North Forge, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, University of Manitoba, 5G Winnipeg Awareness, and Shared Health. Notes from those participants who agreed to having notes shared are in Appendix E.

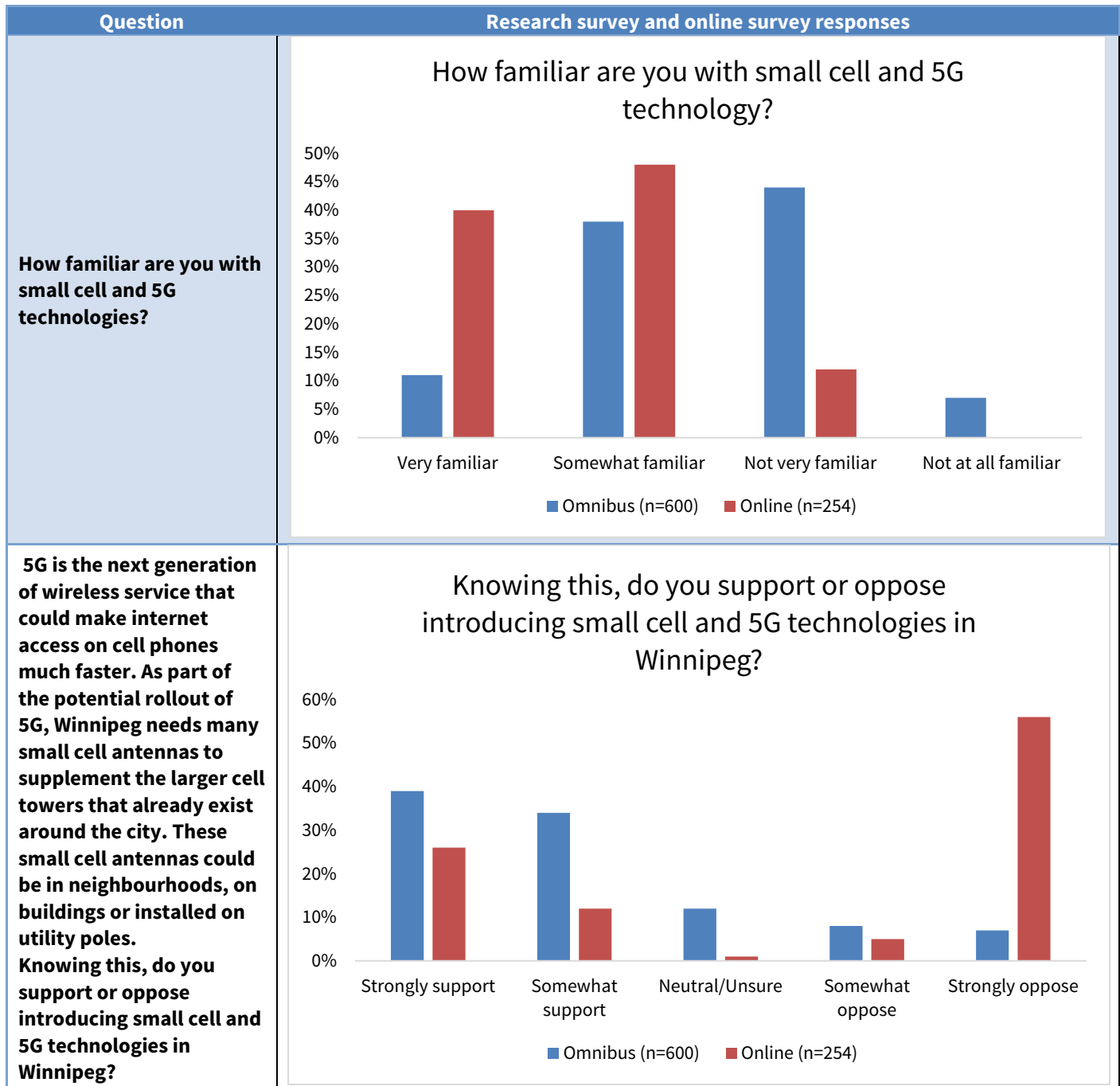
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Table 2 Research survey and online survey responses compared



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The differences between the surveyed groups (random sample vs. self-selected) demonstrates the specific interests in the safety of small cell technology that exists within Winnipeg which may not be shared by the greater population. There are some residents who strongly oppose small cell technology and feel the technology is unsafe, and others who may be unfamiliar. Since the City is not the regulator of small cell technology, it is not responsible for making decisions based on the safety of the technology; however, it will continue to be mindful of the feedback received in the next phases of engagement, working with cellular carriers on their trials and working through the City’s role with regards to guidance around location, design, and consultation with the community.

Interviews

Interview participants provided a range of perspectives on small cell technology and a greater understanding of the implications of small cells. Organizations with an interest in small cell technology were asked how they view the City’s role and potential actions they think the City should take when it comes to small cell technology. Notes from interviews are in Appendix E. Some of the key considerations from interview participants:

- Technology is growing quickly
- 5G offers opportunities for businesses
- Informing residents is important as well as addressing the concerns raised
- Clarity on processes and next steps is needed
- Impacts on equity need to be considered – not everyone has access to the latest technology

Next Steps

The feedback collected has been reviewed by the City's internal working group and stakeholder advisory group as they continue to discuss cellular carrier's upcoming small cell trials. As the City explores our role with regards to guidance around small cell location, design, and consultation with the community, this feedback will assist in how the trials are structured and evaluated. All those who subscribed for updates on the review will be notified of next steps.

Appendices

Appendix A – Promotion examples

Appendix B – Research omnibus survey report

Appendix C – Online survey results

Appendix D – Qualitative Input Analysis, Questions, and Feedback

Appendix E – Interview notes