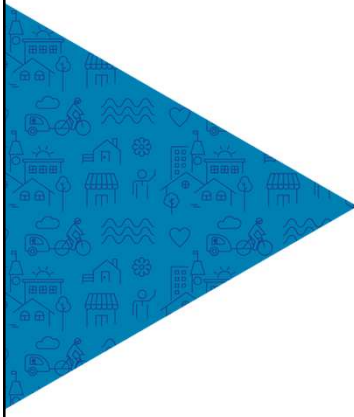


CITY OF VICTORIA | Communications and Engagement

2026 Draft Budget

Public Input Summary



1

Engagement Summary

Invited input on Council's eight priorities for investment to help inform 2026 budget decisions.

Ipsos Budget Survey

- July 31 to Aug. 19, 2025
- Scientific random sampling of 700 Victoria residents 18 years+
- Cell phones + land lines
- Aligned with 12 Victoria neighbourhood populations (Census 2021 data)

Budget Community Conversation Series

- Aug. 25 to Sept. 17, 2025
- Co-hosted focused conversations with six equity-deserving local organizations
- Connected with 68 members of the community

2 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE | February 19, 2026



2

Engagement Summary

Recently invited public input on Council's updated 2026 Draft Budget:

- **Public Input Opportunity:**
 - Dec. 12, 2025 to Jan. 23, 2026 (six weeks)
 - Visit engage.victoria.ca
 - Heard from 351 people:
 - 292 individuals (written correspondence + four videos)
 - 59 individuals representing 56 local businesses through an unsolicited Downtown Victoria Business Association survey



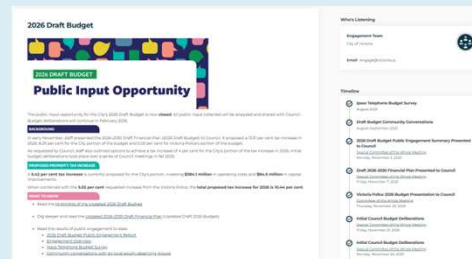
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Promotion

- **Have Your Say** engagement platform
- City of Victoria **website**
- City **e-newsletters**:
 - **Have You Heard** and **Connect e-news**
- **Stakeholder email** inviting over 275 local groups and organizations to participate and amplify this engagement opportunity with their networks (e.g., DVBA championed)
- **Series of social media posts**
- **Paid social media post** (Dec. 30)
- Paid print ad in **Victoria News** (Jan. 8) and **Times Colonist** (Jan. 10)
- **Public service announcement**



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Analysis | Two Streams

STREAM 1: Written Correspondence and Videos (292 individuals)

- All feedback – Attachment A
- Self-directed, qualitative input on the updated 2026 Draft Budget
- Analysis Methodology – manual and AI (Microsoft Co-Pilot) for topic and sentiment tracking
- Topic Analysis Table – Attachment B

STREAM 2: DVBA Business Information Package (59 individuals from 56 businesses)

- Aggregated DVBA survey results – Attachment C
- Eight structured quantitative questions to select top concerns from a series of set responses + two open-ended qualitative questions
- DVBA survey questions frame **what is most important to business operations** to help inform Council's 2026 budget decisions
- Survey highlights are in the report

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What We Heard | Stream 1

- 1) **Police budget increase – OPPOSE**
(98% of the 208 mentions)
- 2) **Housing Initiatives – SUPPORT**
(99% of the 106 mentions)
- 3) **Property Tax increase - OPPOSE**
(98% of the 89 mentions)
- 4) **Arts, Culture and Events budget decrease - OPPOSE**
(99% of the 76 mentions)
- 5) **Grant Funding for Community Initiatives budget decrease - OPPOSE**
(99% of 75 mentions)

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What We Heard | Stream 1

Closely followed by:

- **Program budget decrease – OPPOSE**
(100% of 74 mentions)

Overall, there is a general sentiment to fund programs and services that support community wellbeing.

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What We Heard | Stream 1

| Topic Analysis | # of Mentions | % Support or Oppose |
|--|---------------|--|
| Police budget increase | 208 | 98% oppose |
| Housing Initiatives | 106 | 99% support |
| Property Tax increase | 89 | 98% oppose |
| Arts, Culture and Events budget decrease | 76 | 99% oppose |
| Grant Funding for Community Initiatives | 75 | 99% oppose |
| Program budget decrease (e.g., neighbourhood and various community programs) | 74 | 100% oppose |
| Climate and Environmental Action budget decrease | 25 | 96% oppose |
| Library budget decrease* | 22 | 100% oppose |
| Bike Lanes budget decrease | 22 | 41% support , 59% oppose |
| Infrastructure Projects and Upgrades budget increase | 17 | 59% support , 41% oppose |
| Community Safety and Wellbeing Initiatives | 17 | 100% support |
| Transit Investment budget increase | 12 | 100% support |
| Accessibility budget decrease (EDI)** | 12 | 100% oppose |
| Community Planning Initiatives budget decrease** | 12 | 100% oppose |

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8

What We Heard | Stream 1

| Topic Analysis | # of Mentions | % Support or Oppose |
|--|---------------|-------------------------|
| Staffing and Salary budget increase | 12 | 92% oppose |
| Bylaw Services budget increase | 11 | 91% oppose |
| Parks budget increase | 9 | 100% support |
| Recreation budget increase | 7 | 100% support |
| Centennial Square Revitalization | 6 | 100% oppose |
| Truth and Reconciliation budget increase | 5 | 60% support |
| Question City Math on proposed property increase | 4 commented | |
| Victoria Fire Department budget increase | 3 | 67% support, 33% oppose |
| Beautification Projects budget increase | 3 | 100% support |
| Roads and Multi-Modal Improvements budget decrease | 3 | 100% oppose |
| Consulting and Professional Services budget decrease | 2 | 100% support |
| Communications and Engagement budget decrease | 1 | 100% oppose |
| Utility Infrastructure budget increase | 1 | 100% support |
| Return to Work Downtown | 1 | 100% support |

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What We Heard | Stream 2



DVBA survey five key take-aways:


1. Safety and Cleanliness
2. Function Before Transformation
3. Predictable and Reliable City Systems
4. Foundational Services First
5. Little Support for Tax Increase

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10


What We Heard | Stream 2



DVBA Survey - Top Three Most Important Themes


| | |
|-------|---|
| 80.7% | Public realm, cleanliness & downtown conditions |
| 79.0% | Public safety & enforcement |
| 67.7% | Downtown activation & vibrancy |
| 43.6% | Transportation, parking & access |
| 16.1% | Business operations, permitting & licensing |
| 12.9% | City communication & engagement |

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What We Heard | Stream 2



DVBA Survey Open-ended Response Themes:

| | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Arts Funding | Bike Lanes | City Staff | Cleanliness | Crystal Pool |
| Downtown Vibrancy | Essential Services | Governance | Pandora Avenue | Parking |
| Permits | Police Budget | Police Enforcement | Property Taxes | Rent Increase |
| Return to Office | Road Changes | Road Maintenance | Sidewalk Maintenance | Tourism |

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Who We Heard From | Stream 1

Written and Video Correspondence (292 individuals):

| | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| 203 (70%) | Victoria residents |
| 57 (20%) | Did not self-identify |
| 14 (5%) | Non-Victoria residents |
| 10 (3%) | Local business |
| 7 (2%) | Local group or association |
| 1 (0.3%) | Vancouver-based business |

Of note:

59 (20%) individuals used a form-type email to guide, yet personalize their input: “As an artist... as a renter ... as a person with lived experience of mental health and substance use challenges...”

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13

Who We Heard From | Stream 1

Of the **203** individuals who self-identified as Victoria residents, **139** (68%) shared their address or neighbourhood:

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Fernwood | 20 (14%) | Oaklands | 11 (8%) |
| Fairfield | 19 (14%) | Rockland | 8 (6%) |
| James Bay | 18 (13%) | Burnside | 6 (4%) |
| Hillside Quadra | 17 (12%) | Victoria West | 6 (4%) |
| Downtown | 15 (11%) | Gonzales | 4 (3%) |
| North Park | 12 (9%) | Jubilee | 3 (2%) |

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Who We Heard From | Stream 2

59 DVBA survey respondents representing 56 local businesses:

| | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Arts and Culture | Event-based | Investment | Real Estate |
| Beauty | Faith-based | Jewellery | Recreational |
| Construction | Food and Beverage | Legal | Retail |
| Design | Health and Wellness | Mortgage | Technology |
| Developers | Hotel | Property Management | Transportation |

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Overall Budget Engagement Results

Engagement results from the **Ipsos survey** and **community conversations** demonstrate support for Council’s eight Strategic Plan priorities for investment, and in particular:

- **Housing**
- **Community Wellbeing and Safety**

Combined with public input on the draft budget from these two streams:

- **Written and video input**
- **DVBA business survey results**

Help inform Council’s continued 2026 budget deliberations and advocacy with agencies and other orders of government.

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Recommendation


That Council receive this report for information.

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Questions?



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