



Committee of the Whole Meeting Report For the Meeting of December 9, 2021

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** December 7, 2021

From: Susanne Thompson, Deputy City Manager
Bill Eisenhauer, Head of Engagement

Subject: 2022 Draft Financial Plan – Public Engagement Summary

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City began public consultation on the 2022 Draft Financial Plan on November 9, 2021. The community was invited to provide input on the Draft 2022 Budget, including the 49 supplementary budget items to further community priorities.

Public input was received through an online survey, written submissions, and the Virtual Budget Town Hall held on November 17, 2021.

In addition, Victoria youth were invited to participate in Youth Speak: Budget 2022, a virtual event hosted by the City of Victoria in partnership with Volunteer Victoria, to learn about the draft budget and share their budget priorities with Council during the Town Hall.

A comprehensive, multi-faceted engagement plan included outreach to Victoria residents and business operators, with targeted communications to reach underrepresented groups, including youth, renters, diverse community groups and newcomers.

A total of 1,059 individuals participated in the City's online budget survey, an increase of 49% over last year. In addition, 135 written submissions were received from individuals and organizations on the proposed budget and supplementary budget items.

Affordable Housing was ranked as the top Council Strategic Objective overall by survey participants for the second consecutive year, and it was also a key theme in written submissions. This was followed by Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods, and Good Governance and Civic Engagement.

When assessing essential priorities for Council, survey respondents said they want our community to be safe (60%), to have the infrastructure it needs for the future (43%), where local businesses are supported in economic recovery (37%), is a leader in climate action and sustainability (33%), and is healthy (33%), among other priorities.

Most survey respondents were satisfied with the repair and maintenance of the City of Victoria's transportation infrastructure/amenities, and with parks and public spaces infrastructure/amenities.

For the second consecutive year, the topic of public safety and Police funding was an often-cited comment among survey respondents and in written budget input, however people expressed divergent views with many seeking an increase to VicPD's budget with others calling on Council to reduce, or at least freeze, the police budget for 2022 and redirect funding to other City priorities, particularly affordable housing and community services. A wide range of topics was covered in budget input and all comments can be reviewed as part of the Attachments accompanying this report.

Overall, 45% of survey respondents said they receive very good or fairly good value for their tax dollars. This is down from 61% in Budget 2021 engagement and on par with Budget 2020.

PURPOSE

This report provides Council with public feedback and correspondence received during the consultation period for the 2022 Draft Financial Plan.

BACKGROUND

On October 21, 2021, the 2022 Draft Financial Plan was provided to Council. The Financial Plan includes summary descriptions of programs and services, deliverables as well as the proposed operating and capital budget (revenue and expenditures) for the upcoming year.

In addition for Budget 2022, Council is also considering investing in new programs and services to advance community priorities including preparing for a changing climate, supporting businesses to help grow the local economy, enhancing public safety, improving housing affordability and reducing plastic waste, among others.

As part of the City's budget outreach and engagement, staff used several strategies to engage and inform the public about the 2022 Draft Financial Plan.

The City's online engagement platform at engage.victoria.ca provided a one-stop hub for budget information and engagement opportunities. Details on the Virtual Budget Town Hall and the online survey were also hosted here.

A budget summary document was prepared to give people a plain language overview of the operational and capital budgets, as well as highlights of the City's programs and services planned for the coming year and the 2022 supplementary budget items under consideration. An accessible version of the summary was also available. Those who wanted to dive in more deeply could review the full draft Financial Plan.

Budget consultation, which ran November 9 - 23, was actively promoted across all the City's online channels, in print and online advertising, stakeholder and neighbourhood outreach, special-edition City e-newsletters, and in media interviews.

This year, the City hosted *Youth Speak: Budget 2022*, in partnership with Volunteer Victoria, who is also overseeing the City of Victoria Youth Council. The event was virtual and ran in parallel with the Virtual Budget Town Hall to foster civic financial literacy and gather feedback from youth, on youth priorities for City Council.

2022 Virtual Budget Town Hall

For the eighth consecutive year, the City hosted a Budget Town Hall. Due to COVID-19, participation in the live webcast was primarily virtual, with limited in-person attendance at City Hall. The community was invited to share their priorities for the 2022 Draft Budget with Council by:

- Submitting their feedback in the online form at engage.victoria.ca
- Tweeting using the hashtag **#victownhall**
- Submitting a video up to three minutes in length in advance of the event
- Pre-registering to call in during the event to speak up to three minutes
- Calling in during the live event to speak up to three minutes

During the live webcast, 274 people tuned in, 10 people phoned in to comment or ask a question, one video presentation was shared and there were 84 online submissions. Four people attended in person. Comments and questions covered a wide variety of topics. A list of the online submissions is included in **Attachment A**. The live webcast is archived and is available for [viewing online](#).

2022 Draft Budget Survey

A total of 1,059 individuals participated in the City's online budget survey, which asked people to share their priorities for investment in 2022. The Draft Budget 2022 Survey Report, including comments provided by survey respondents to open-ended questions, is included as **Attachment B**.

It should be noted that the online budget survey is not a randomized, representative survey of Victoria residents, but rather represents the views of those who became aware of the survey and decided to complete it.

Comments are the views of the respondents and have not been edited, however, some information has been redacted to remove personal information, hate speech, or potential libel comments.

Written Budget Feedback

The City received 135 written submissions from individuals and organizations on the proposed budget and supplementary budget items, which are included in **Attachment C**.

Youth Speak: Budget 2022

This virtual event was a collaboration between the City of Victoria and Volunteer Victoria to connect local youth with the City and give young people the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft budget and participate in the Budget Town Hall. This small-group, facilitated engagement session gave participating youth the opportunity to learn more and provide input on the City's budgeting process and what's being considered by Council for investment in Budget 2022.

Food security was a primary area of interest. Participants wanted to know how the budget will ensure that food remains a priority for the City, both in terms of expanding the number of community gardens and the many ways to teach people about growing food, food waste, and sharing food. Youth Speak participants were strongly in favour of continuing the free bus pass program. They also thought that the City did an excellent job with parks and green spaces and liked the changes to the dog park and walkway along Dallas Road.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

The City's online engagement platform provides enhanced data on how people interact with an engagement project online. Over the two-week budget engagement period (November 9 to 23, 2021), the City's budget consultation resulted in:

- 2,733 people **aware** of the draft budget (visited at least one page of the Budget project)
- 1,601 people **informed** of the draft budget (downloaded a document, visited multiple project pages)
- 1,059 **completed the budget survey**

When compared to last year, participation in the budget survey increased nearly 50% (up from 709 survey participants) and saw a 27% increase in the number of people interacting on engage.victoria.ca.

2022 Online Budget Survey – Highlights of Results

Who We Heard From:

- 93% of respondents said they live in the City of Victoria, with 14% indicating they operate a business in Victoria
- 59% indicated they own their home, while 41% indicated they rent their home, reside in affordable or below-market housing/co-ops or reside in unstable housing
- 20% indicated they are newcomers, living in Victoria for less than five years
- 10% identified as being an immigrant
- 21% of the survey respondents were between the ages of 25-34 (the highest number of respondents of all age groups)
- 8% of respondents were youth, between the ages of 14-24

The demographic profile of survey participation was generally representative and aligned with census data across a number of key indicators, with the exception of renter/homeowners and youth aged 14-24.

The percentage of survey participants identifying as renters was 41% this year, down from 57% in Budget 2020 engagement, but up from 35% in Budget 2019.

This year, fewer youth participated in the budget survey and youth participation was slightly underrepresented compared to census population data: 8% participation rate compared to 11% census. Participation in 2021 was overrepresented at 16%.

What We Heard

Participants were asked to rank Council's eight Strategic Objectives from highest to lowest importance, with 1 being the highest priority and 8 being the lowest:

Council's 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan includes more than 180 actions under eight strategic objectives. A strategic objective is a high-level goal that Council is working to achieve by the end of 2022. Please rank the City's Strategic Objectives from most to least important, with 1 being most important and 8 being least important.

OPTIONS	AVG. RANK
Affordable Housing	3.65
Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods	3.84
Good Governance and Civic Engagement	4.17
Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City	4.47
Sustainable Transportation	4.54
Climate Leadership and Environmental Stewardship	4.62
Prosperity and Economic Inclusion	5.06
Reconciliation and Indigenous Relations	5.40

Optional question (1033 response(s), 26 skipped)

NOTE: Items with the lowest ranking number indicate the highest priority.

The ranking of Council's strategic objectives has shifted this year. While Affordable Housing continues to be in the top (Budget 2021 and 2019) or number two spot (Budget 2020) among all survey participants, this year Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods has moved up into a close second (fourth in Budget 2021 engagement), with Good Governance and Civic Engagement in third ranking (sixth in 2021). Health, Well-being and a Welcoming City has moved into fourth ranking (fifth in 2021).

Climate Leadership and Environmental Stewardship has dropped back to sixth place, having climbed into the second spot for Budget 2021 engagement, up from sixth spot in 2019 and seventh in 2020.

Sustainable Transportation was ranked fifth (up from seventh for 2021), with Prosperity and Economic Inclusion ranking seventh (ranked eighth in 2021).

Of Council's eight strategic priorities, overall survey participants this year ranked Reconciliation and Indigenous Relations as the least-highest priority, down from the second-highest priority among survey participants in Budget 2021 engagement. This strategic priority also received the lowest priority ranking in both the 2020 and 2019 surveys.

The ranking of Council strategic priorities varies quite significantly depending on the age of survey respondents and whether respondents are renters or homeowners.

The table on the next page shows the City's Strategic Objectives ranked **by age**.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES RANKING BY AGE							
14-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	Strong, Liveable Neighbourhood	Good Governance & Civic Engagement	Good Governance & Civic Engagement	Good Governance & Civic Engagement	Good Governance & Civic Engagement
Reconciliation & Indigenous Relations	Climate Leadership & Environmental Stewardship	Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods	Good Governance & Civic Engagement	Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods	Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods	Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods	Affordable Housing
Climate Leadership & Environmental Stewardship	Reconciliation & Indigenous Relations	Climate Leadership & Environmental Stewardship	Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City	Health Well-Being and a Welcoming City	Health Well-Being and a Welcoming City	Sustainable Transportation	Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods (tied with Health)
Sustainable Transportation	Sustainable Transportation	Sustainable Transportation	Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing	Prosperity & Economic Inclusion	Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City (tied with Neighbourhoods)
Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City	Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods	Good Governance & Civic Engagement	Prosperity & Economic Inclusion	Prosperity & Economic Inclusion	Sustainable Transportation	Affordable Housing	Reconciliation & Indigenous Relations
Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods	Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City	Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City	Sustainable Transportation	Sustainable Transportation	Prosperity & Economic Inclusion	Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City	Sustainable Transportation
Good Governance & Civic Engagement	Good Governance & Civic Engagement	Prosperity & Economic Inclusion	Climate Leadership & Environmental Stewardship	Climate Leadership & Environmental Stewardship	Climate Leadership & Environmental Stewardship	Climate Leadership & Environmental Stewardship	Prosperity & Economic Inclusion
Prosperity & Economic	Prosperity & Economic	Reconciliation & Indigenous Relations	Reconciliation & Indigenous Relations	Reconciliation & Indigenous Relations	Reconciliation & Indigenous Relations	Reconciliation & Indigenous Relations	Climate Leadership & Environmental Stewardship

The table below compares how Council’s strategic priorities are ranked by homeowners and respondents who indicated they rent, reside in affordable or below-market rental housing/co-ops or reside in unstable housing.

Ranking of Strategic Plan Objectives (Highest to Lowest Priority)	
Renters	Homeowners
Affordable Housing	Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods
Climate Leadership and Environmental Stewardship	Good Governance and Civic Engagement
Reconciliation and Indigenous Relations	Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City
Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods	Sustainable Transportation
Sustainable Transportation	Affordable Housing
Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City	Prosperity and Economic Inclusion
Good Governance and Civic Engagement	Climate Leadership and Environmental Stewardship
Prosperity and Economic Inclusion	Reconciliation and Indigenous Relations

Community Priorities

The following items were ranked as being **essential priorities for 2022**. The table below compares the 2022 Budget Survey responses with responses to the same questions in the 2021 Budget Survey.

When assessing priorities for Council for 2022, survey respondents said they want our community to be safe (60%), has the infrastructure it needs for the future (43%), where local businesses are supported in economic recovery (37%), and the community is a leader in climate action and sustainability (33%) and is healthy (33%).

Ranked an Essential Priority	2022 Budget Survey (1,054 Respondents)	2021 Budget Survey (686 Respondents)
Our community is safe	60%	41%
Our city has the infrastructure it needs for the future	43%	31%
Our community supports local business and economic recovery	37%	39%
Our community is a leader in climate action and sustainability	33%	44%
Our community is healthy	33%	38%
Our city supports vulnerable populations	32%	58%
Our community is equitable and inclusive	28%	41%
Our city supports multi-modal transportation	26%	31%
Our city embraces arts and culture	15%	21%
Our city is welcoming	12%	13%
Our city is innovative	8%	11%

Q2 For 2022, what level of priority do you place on the following for our city?

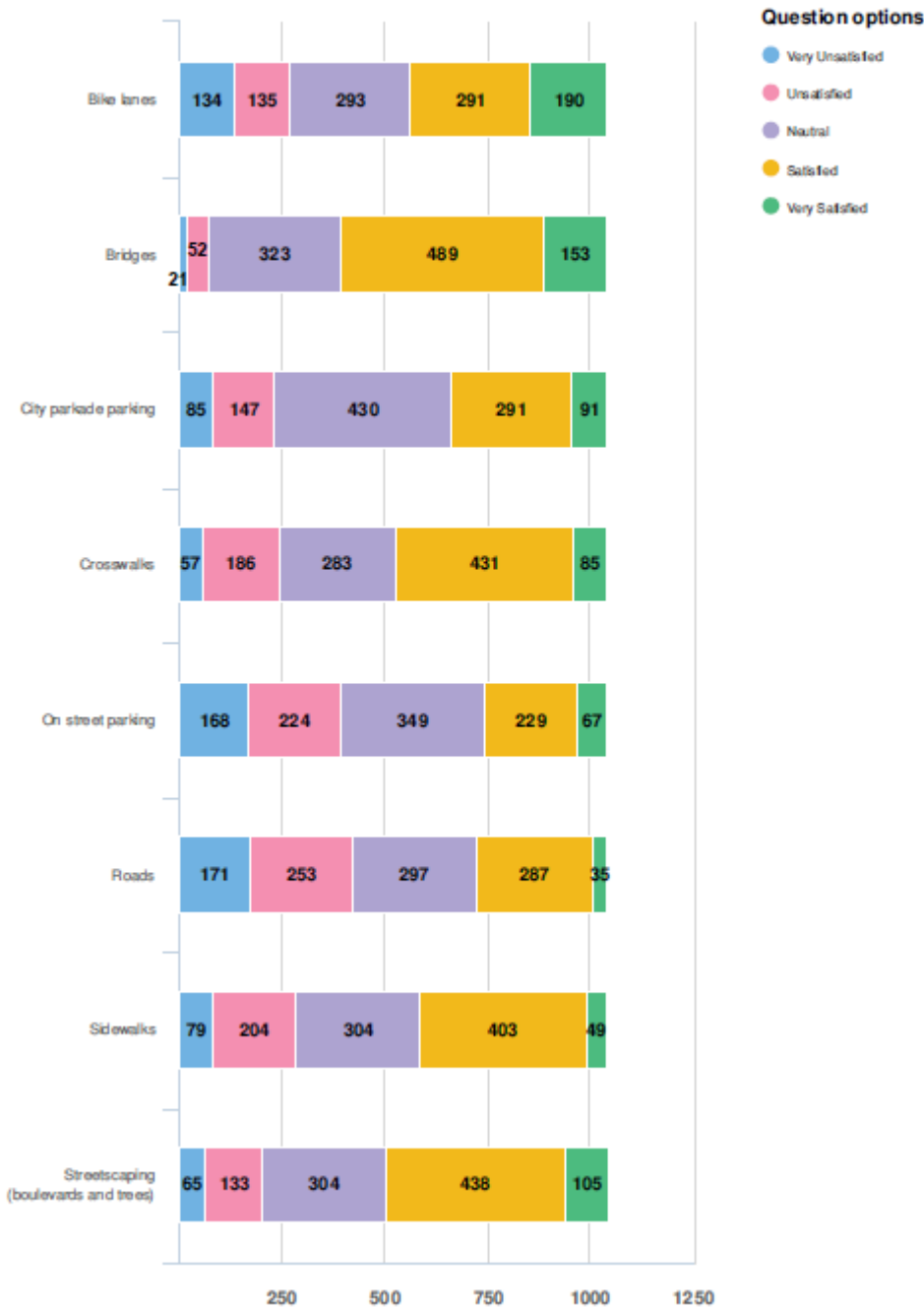


Optional question (1054 response(s), 5 skipped)

Transportation and Infrastructure/Amenities

When asked **How satisfied are you with the availability, repair and maintenance of the City of Victoria's transportation infrastructure/amenities?**, the majority of respondents indicated that they were very satisfied, satisfied, or neutral, which is similar to last year's survey results.

Q4 How satisfied are you with the availability, repair or maintenance of the City of Victoria's Transportation infrastructure/amenities?



Optional question (1055 response(s), 4 skipped)

Six-in-10 survey participants provided additional comments regarding **Transportation Infrastructure Amenities**. Key themes are summarized below. Some comments were related to specific neighbourhood concerns, while others were more city-wide.

- Focus on fully paving roads and fixing potholes on residential streets; paint roadway markings
- Road congestion downtown due to bike lanes; synchronize traffic lights; vehicle emissions are increasing
- Accommodate electric transportation (scooters, skateboards)
- Increase focus on infrastructure for electric cars
- There were calls to halt investment in bike lanes and focus investment on pedestrian and road maintenance, while others indicated they would like to see the City build more protected bike lanes
- Increase parking downtown
- Increase traffic calming
- Some people wanted more street parking while others wanted less.
- Provide more active transportation routes
- More investment in pedestrian infrastructure like sidewalks, and removal for accessibility of poles and encroaching shrubs and hedges
- Improve bus service to get people out of their cars; free bus service for everyone
- Return Clover Point to its former design
- Displeasure with Richardson/Vancouver bike lanes and Shelbourne construction

A complete list of comments is included in the full **Budget Survey Report Attachment B**.

Parks and Public Spaces Infrastructure/Amenities

When asked **How satisfied are you with the availability, repair and maintenance of Victoria's parks and public spaces infrastructure/amenities?**, most respondents indicated that they were very satisfied, satisfied or neutral. This year, more people stated they were "neutral" about park washrooms, whereas last year more people stated they were unsatisfied.

Q6 How satisfied are you with the availability, repair or maintenance of the City's Parks and Public Spaces infrastructure/amenities?



Optional question (1042 response(s), 17 skipped)

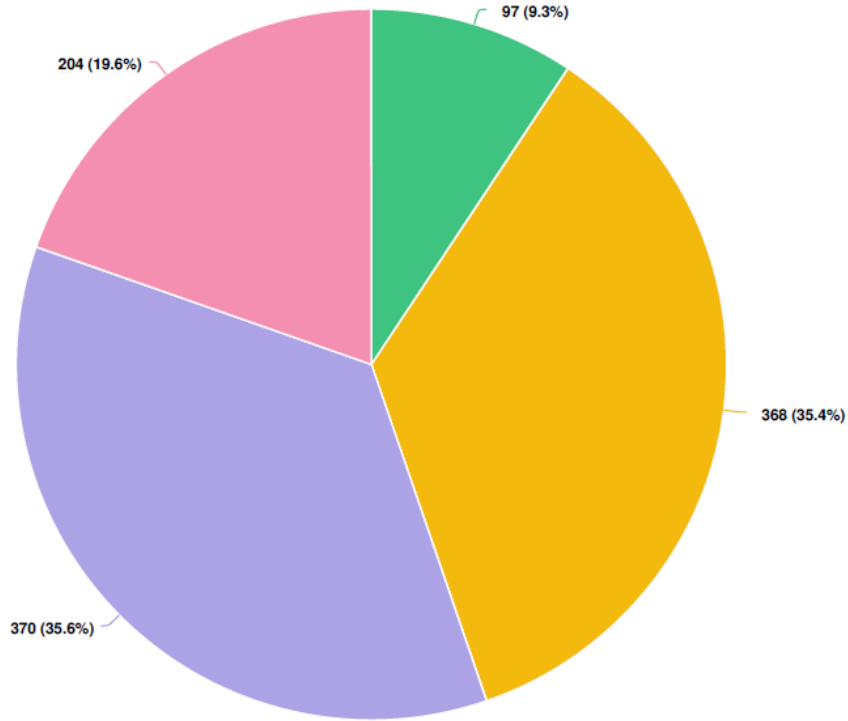
Four-in-10 survey participants provided additional comments regarding the **City's Parks and Public Spaces Infrastructure Amenities**. Key themes are summarized below. Some comments were related to specific neighbourhood concerns, while others were more city-wide.

- Need parks and park washrooms to be safe, clean and maintained
- Calls to restrict camping and open drug use in City parks and add more Bylaw officers to enforce
- Support for the Topaz Park artificial turf replacement project
- More outdoor covered spaces in parks for off-season use
- Some wanted more dogs-off leash areas while others called for more restrictions on dogs in parks, particularly more enforcement on Dallas Road
- Desire to see more trees planted throughout the City, particularly on boulevards downtown, and plant more fruit-bearing trees in parks
- Improved maintenance for overgrown boulevards
- Calls for more park space and playgrounds downtown to accommodate increased density
- More sport fields, basketball courts and park amenities for children and teenagers, as well as dedicated pickleball courts
- More outdoor seating and outdoor performance spaces are needed
- A number of commenters would like to see the City invest in a new public pool

A complete list of comments is included in the full **Budget Survey Report Attachment B**.

Value for Tax Dollars

When asked to **assess the value you get for your tax dollars for all the programs, services and capital projects you receive from the City of Victoria**, 45% of survey respondents said they receive Fairly Good to Very Good value for their tax dollars, compared with 61% last year.



Question options

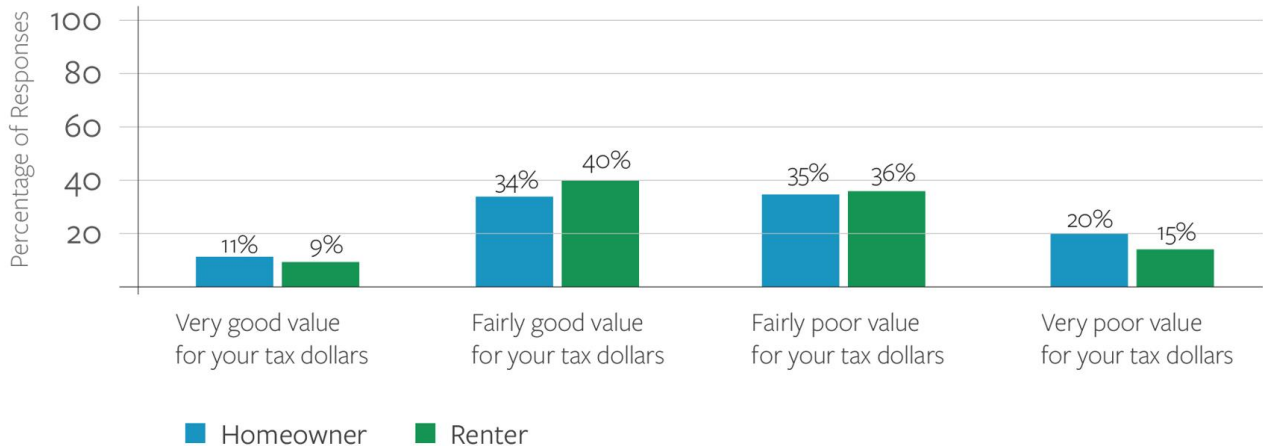
- Very poor value for your tax dollars
- Fairly poor value for your tax dollars
- Fairly good value for your tax dollars
- Very good value for your tax dollars

Optional question (1039 response(s), 20 skipped)

When comparing the results between renters and homeowners, the data shows that renters believe they are receiving slightly more value for their tax dollars than do homeowners.

Overall value for tax money

Thinking about all the programs, services and capital projects you receive from the City of Victoria would you say that overall you get:



Value for Tax Dollars – Comparison 2019 – 2022

	Budget 2022	Budget 2021	Budget 2020	Budget 2019
# Survey Participants	1,059	709	*5,100	1,483
Satisfaction with Value for Tax Dollars				
Very or Fairly Good Value	45%	61%	45%	50%
Neutral	-	-	-	15%
Very or Fairly Poor Value	55%	40%	55%	33%

**High number of surveys received as part of consultation on Council remuneration.
Note: Percentages will not add to 100 due to rounding*

Additional Comments on Proposed Operating or Capital Budgets for 2022

Four-in-10 survey respondents provided additional comments and suggestions for Council to consider as part of the 2022 Draft Financial Plan.

Key themes included:

- Public safety needs to be a priority
- Reduce funding for police and invest in mental health teams, harm reduction and community supports to reduce homelessness, affordable housing, climate action and reconciliation
- Focus spending on core services, infrastructure, storm drains and fixing roads
- Make cuts before increasing taxes
- Rent control is very much needed for vulnerable people
- Stop camping in parks. Capital funds are being used to repair damage made by homeless encampments.
- Some asked that spending be halted on bike lanes, while others called for continuing to expand the cycling network
- Commit to funding Crystal Pool replacement and stop looking for new projects
- This budget reduces the affordability of living in Victoria
- A number of citizens can't afford inflation plus 1%
- The tax hike is too high at this time due to people still recovering from the pandemic
- Supplementary programs should compete with core services for budget allocation

A complete list of comments is included in the full **Budget Survey Report Attachment B**.

Supplementary Budget Programs and Services

This section of the survey focused on 49 Supplementary Budget programs and services that Council is considering as new investments in Budget 2022 to advance community priorities. Survey respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree that each supplemental item should be included in the 2022 Draft Budget. To help inform the public's answers, each question included a short description, cost, how much an item would add to the property tax increase, as well as links for more information.

Analysis

In the table below, supplementary items are listed in the order of their overall average ranking. **A ranking with the lowest number is the most supported.** For additional context, the table also includes the percentage of people who indicated they Strongly Agree/Agree and Strongly Disagree/Disagree.

Supplementary Item	Ranking	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Barrier-Free Housing and Universal Design Initiative	2.30	65.9%	15.1%
Project Support – Victoria Housing Strategy Implementation	2.33	63.4%	25.1%
Our Place Society - Extended Hours Grant	2.38	66.9%	21.9%
Child Care	2.39	62.1%	19.6%
VicPD Co-Responder Team	2.49	61.9%	27.2%
Crossing Guards	2.54	56.2%	20.9%
Grant to Ending Violence Association of BC *	2.56	56.7%	25.6%
Zero Waste	2.56	57.6%	26.2%
Transportation Electrical Designer	2.59	53.3%	18.9%
Patio Operations	2.66	51.7%	25.0%
VicPD Cyber Crime Sergeant	2.67	54.2%	29.1%
Fare Free Transit for LIFE Pass Holders	2.68	52.3%	30.1%
Patio Bylaw Development	2.69	49.8%	23.6%
Our Place Society - Storage of Belongings	2.70	54.6%	31.0%

Supplementary Item	Ranking	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
VicPD Front Desk Clerk (Alternative to Sworn Officers)	2.71	53.6%	30.3%
Bylaw Support - Police	2.74	53.8%	35.1%
Development Services Planner	2.74	48.7%	26.9%
Reconciliation Training	2.74	52.7%	35.9%
Urban Forest Specialists – Permit Applications	2.75	46.0%	26.1%
Sheltering Support	2.75	54.0%	33.9%
Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness	2.75	52.1%	36.9%
Anti-Racism Training	2.76	51.0%	35.1%
Safety Initiative Reimbursement Program	2.76	46.4%	27.4%
Vision Zero Program Development and Action Plan	2.77	45.5%	25.9%
VicPD Assertive Community Treatment Officer	2.77	48.2%	31.8%
Food Forest and Allotment Gardens Plan Consulting	2.78	47.4%	30.0%
Vision Zero Transportation Planner	2.79	46.4%	28.5%
Bylaw Officers	2.79	50.9%	34.8%
Tenant Support Toolkit	2.79	49.0%	33.1%
Per Capita Neighbourhood Grant **	2.80	43.4%	25.5%
Get Growing, Victoria! Food Tree Stewardship Program	2.82	46.1%	31.2%
Get Growing, Victoria! Grant Program	2.83	46.8%	32.8%
OHS Training Professional	2.86	41.9%	28.3%
Homelessness Advisor	2.87	49.5%	40.7%
VicPD Records Specialist	2.88	44.5%	34.7%

Supplementary Item	Ranking	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
VicPD Cultural Liaison Officer	2.90	46.6%	36.1%
Indigenous Relations Function or Elder in Residence	2.90	47.7%	41.9%
Youth Project Coordinator	2.92	41.8%	30.6%
Planning Assistant	2.92	45.6%	36.7%
Building Deconstruction Permit Administration System Towards Zero Waste Victoria	2.92	37.5%	28.5%
Cultural Infrastructure Grant Program	2.93	44.1%	34.4%
Arts and Innovation District Master Plan Implementation	2.93	42.4%	33.5%
VicPD Business Intelligence Analyst	3.03	39.3%	38.6%
Victoria Reconciliation Dialogues	3.06	41.6%	42.2%
Victoria 3.0 Economic Development Officer	3.08	35.9%	35.4%
Committee Administrator	3.19	32.5%	39.3%
Reconciliation Grant to the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations	3.28	40.2%	52.8%
Newcomer Sport & Recreation Assistant	3.29	29.0%	43.4%
Newcomer Sport & Recreation Consulting	3.36	25.8%	44.5%

NOTES TO SUPPLEMENTAL DATA TABLE:

Wording for **Question 43** and **Question 47** was updated for accuracy during the survey period. For this reason, results for these questions may be skewed.

***Q47 Original wording:** Grant to End Violence: Establish a new Grant to End Violence to deliver a prevention training program geared towards hospitality and late-night venues to address sexualized violence in the community. (Ongoing: \$50,000) (+ 0.03% to property tax increase).

UPDATED Grant to Ending Violence Association of BC: Provide a grant to the Ending Violence Association of BC to deliver a prevention training program geared towards hospitality and late-night venues to address sexualized violence in the community (One-Time)

****Q43 Original wording:** Per Capita Neighbourhood Grant: Increase the per capita grant to neighbourhood associations without community centres to the same level provided to neighbourhoods with community centres. See item 52 of link. (Ongoing: \$59,360) (+ 0.04% to property taxes)

UPDATED Per Capita Neighbourhood Grant: Increase the per capita grant to neighbourhood associations with community centres to the same level provided to neighbourhoods without community centres. See item 52 of link. (Ongoing: \$59,360) (+ 0.04% to property taxes)

Feedback on Supplementary Items

Nearly all survey participants took time to provide written feedback on the supplementary budget items. Below are the key themes identified. Please see **Appendix B** for all respondent comments.

- Focus on your local government mandate; “stay in your lane” to minimize impact on taxpayers
- Trying to do too many things that are the responsibility of other levels of government or organizations
- Cut the nice to haves and focus on what needs to get done
- Prioritize public safety - fund the police to reduce crime downtown – make our city safe again
- Freeze or reduce police funding and redirect to community services
- Fund mental health response teams, not VicPD team
- Fund Bylaw officers to enforce bylaws
- Fund the building of affordable housing for low-income individuals and families
- Reconciliation is a federal and provincial responsibility; do not fund the grant as it pre-emptly work by other levels of government; too expensive for Victoria taxpayers
- Climate action is the responsibility of senior levels of government
- End sheltering in parks
- Limit new full-time staff; look at process efficiencies internally instead
- Support Vision Zero for pedestrian safety
- Invest in a new pool
- Invest in arts and culture

Additional Questions -- Tiny Homes and Garden Suites

Council directed that the survey probe two specific questions about actions in the Victoria Housing Strategy: Tiny Homes and Garden Suites.

City Council is seeking your input as they consider whether to prioritize two Victoria Housing Strategy initiatives – Tiny Homes and Tiny Homes and Garden Suites – to help provide additional housing options. Doing this would require trade-offs with other initiatives.

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree that the following initiatives should be moved up to start in 2022, rather than in 2023 as currently planned. To do this, the following initiatives now planned for 2022 will be impacted: 1) a family housing policy to ensure Victoria has housing suitable for families would need to be deferred to a later year, and 2) the next phase of local area planning in the Rockland, Jubilee, Oaklands and Fernwood (east) neighbourhoods would slow down or be delayed.

Tiny Homes

Allow moveable, tiny homes in all backyards that currently allow garden suites at rents of no more than \$500 a month.

Of the 1,048 respondents:

- 59% Strongly Agree or Agree
- 14% Neutral
- 27% Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Tiny Homes and Garden Suites

Allow tiny homes and garden suites on lots that already have secondary suites or duplexes.

Of the 1,041 respondents:

- 63% Strongly Agree or Agree
- 13% Neutral
- 25% Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Note: Percentages will not add to 100 due to rounding

Respondents showed strong support in the above survey questions for expediting work to allow moveable tiny homes in all backyards that currently have garden suites at rents at no more than \$500 a month, and to allow tiny homes and gardens suites on lots that already have secondary suites or duplexes.

The trade-off would be deferring work on the family housing policy to ensure Victoria has housing suitable for families to a later year and delaying the next phase of local area planning in the Rockland, Jubilee, Oaklands and Fernwood (east) neighbourhoods. This work includes a strong focus on creating more housing choices (with a strong focus on rental), better transportation options, new services and amenities, and improved public spaces, which align with the highly ranked strategic plan objectives of affordable housing, strong liveable neighbourhoods, and sustainable transportation.

In the comments below, however, there was strong support for focusing on providing affordable, missing middle housing for families, and there were concerns that \$500 a month would not cover the costs of providing a tiny home, as well as concerns about safety regulations and reduced parking.

Additional Comments about the Other Initiatives to Provide Housing Options

About one-in-three people provided additional feedback on Tiny Homes and Garden Suites. Below are the key themes identified. Please see **Appendix B** for all respondent comments.

- Density needs to be spread out; all neighbourhoods to do their part
- Support Missing Middle zoning as soon as possible for families
- Speed up permit process; blanket zone the city for multi-family residences
- Garden suite rules need to be made part of “up-zoning” initiatives; ease permitting process
- Tiny homes and garden suites require consultation with immediate neighbours
- Need affordable housing for students and rent controls
- Concern expressed for limited residential parking and the cost of wastewater and sewer hook-up
- Restricting rent to \$500 is unrealistic based on hydro, heating, water, garbage costs, etc.
- More public discussion needed on what is a tiny home and what is a garden suite

More Information on Who Participated in the Budget Survey

Newcomers

- **20%** of survey respondents indicated they are a ***newcomer to Victoria (lived here for five years or less)***.

Persons with a Disability

- **16%** of survey respondents said ***they identify as a person with a disability***. Research conducted as part of the development of the City’s Accessibility Framework estimates 21% of Victorians have a disability.

Age Distribution

Age Range	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percent City Population (Census 2016)
14 – 24	8%	11%
25 – 34	21%	19%
35 – 44	19%	13%
45 – 54	13%	12%
55 – 64	17%	14%
65 – 74	18%	12%
75 – 84	4%	6%
85+	0.4%	4%

Neighbourhood Distribution



The following table shows the percentage of people per Victoria neighbourhood who participated in the 2022 Budget Survey, compared with the percentage of the City's population per neighbourhood as per Census 2016. (Based on 1,017 responses)

Victoria Neighbourhoods	2022	2021	(Census 2016)
Fairfield	17%	16%	14%
Fernwood	11%	11%	11%
Hillside-Quadra	7%	10%	9%
James Bay	13%	10%	14%
Vic West	10%	7%	9%
Downtown	9%	7%	4%
Burnside-Gorge	5%	6%	8%
North Park	3%	5%	4%
Jubilee	3%	4%	6%
Harris Green	2%	3%	3%
Rockland	5%	3%	4%
Oaklands	5%	3%	8%
Gonzales	4%	2%	5%
Other Municipalities	7%	12%	N/A

Note: Percentages will not add to 100 due to rounding

Family Size

The 2022 budget survey *asked respondents to best describe their family size*.

- 44% live with their partner/spouse
- 22% live alone
- 15% live with their partner/spouse and one or more children
- 11% live with one or more roommates
- 5% live in a multigenerational family with parents, grandparents (etc.) and children
- 3% are single parents with one or more children
- 1% are two or more families sharing the same home

Note: Percentages will not add to 100 due to rounding

Online Submissions -- What We Heard

In advance and during the Virtual Budget Town Hall on November 17, the City received 84 online submissions, which are available in **Appendix A**.

Key themes included:

- Opposition for reconciliation grant
- Some want the police increase to be funded, while others do not
- Replace Crystal Pool
- Make park washrooms wheelchair accessible and playground equipment and amenities accessible
- More investment in traffic calming, improved crosswalks and pedestrian infrastructure
- Invest in food security and food systems
- Support for Bicycle Master Plan
- Focus on low- and very low-income housing not just missing middle housing
- Support for Our Place Society staffed and secure storage of belongings
- More funding to expand Greater Victoria Public Library services

Written Budget Input – What We Heard

Written public input came from 135 submissions, which are available in **Appendix C**.

Key themes of the written budget input included:

- Increase funding for Police with increased presence in downtown for public safety, including a joint letter submitted by The Chamber, Downtown Victoria Business Association, Our Place Society, Victoria Conservatory of Music and Destination Greater Victoria.
- Do not increase funding for Police, instead focus on supporting community services.
- In a letter submitted by the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association, improved crosswalks, parks and green space, and speed bumps were requested
- Preference to see funding support for Bylaw Officers
- Focus investment on infrastructure improvements
- Expedite affordable housing solutions
- Support for homelessness report recommendations and advisor role
- Invest in more transit shelters to improve public transit

- Some people said the Reconciliation grant should come from provincial and federal governments, while others supported the City providing a Reconciliation grant
- Focus on core business (safety, roads, sewers, parks and garbage)
- Improve budget consultation with marginalized groups, provide more time and make the content more accessible to people
- Support for the Cultural Infrastructure Grant, including letters from several local arts organizations
- Support for dedicated pickleball courts at Topaz Park, including by the Victoria Regional Pickleball Association

CONCLUSIONS

The budget engagement process continues to evolve and improve each year. Feedback from residents on the 2022 Financial Plan and community priorities helps to inform Council decisions on investments in the City's programs, services and capital projects.

Respectfully submitted,

Susanne Thompson
Deputy City Manager/Chief Financial Officer

Bill Eisenhauer
Head of Engagement

Report accepted and recommended by City Manager.

List of Attachments:

Attachment A: 2022 Virtual Budget Town Hall Online Submissions

Attachment B: 2022 Draft Budget Survey Report

Attachment C: Written Budget Feedback