2019 Budget Survey

Survey Overview
The City engages with residents to gather ideas, suggestions and feedback as it drafts the budget each year for Council’s consideration. Typically, the City holds numerous public meetings throughout the budget process – at the beginning when setting the guideline, when the draft budget is released, and before Council considers approving the budget. This year, the City took another step toward expanding its engagement activities.

Budget Roadshow
Ahead of the setting of guidelines for the drafting of the 2020 Budget, City Staff worked with Finance Chair Councillor Dean Pappas, Finance Vice Chair Councillor Gary Baldwin as well as the Mayor and Ward Councillors to undertake a Budget Roadshow. The Budget Roadshow included a series of sessions, four drop-in style sessions and one more structured setting with organized group discussions, in each of the Wards. The sessions provided an opportunity for residents to talk with Council members and Finance staff about priorities for next year’s budget and to have conversations about the issues in our community. About 300 people attended these sessions.

Through the Budget Roadshow, residents were encouraged to fill out the 2020 Budget survey on priorities and issues. The 2020 Budget survey was open for approximately four weeks, from Monday, April 15 to Friday, May 10. It offered broad, high-level topics and questions as one way for residents to engage in the budget process at this early stage of drafting the budget. There were 996 responses to the survey – both online and through paper copies.

Read More
The complete survey results report with comments provided is available at peterborough.ca/budget.

Respondent Demographics
The City asked for some basic demographic information as part of the survey in order to compare the demographics of survey respondents with the overall demographics of the community.

For example, 78% of respondents indicated they own their home, while the 2016 census put the homeownership in the City of Peterborough at 63%.

The following chart compares the ages of survey respondents with the 2016 Census information for our community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Survey Response</th>
<th>2016 Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>11.34%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results Overview: Services

Community Issues by Ranking

According to survey respondents, the most important issues facing the community, recognizing that not all these issues are within the City’s control, are as follows ranked from most important to least important:

1. Housing, accommodations
2. Infrastructure, transportation
3. Cost of living
4. Social issues
5. Economy, jobs, economic issues
6. Health, public health
7. Environment, environmental issues, sustainability
8. Addiction and overdoses
9. Crime, criminal activity
10. Property taxes
11. Provision of recreation facilities
12. Governance and transparency

In the comments section respondents specified other topics most important to the community including issues such as roads, storm water infrastructure, arts funding, taxes, jobs, composting, homelessness, and the environment.
Results Overview: Services

**Municipal Services**

Survey participants were asked how well the City is doing overall in terms of service delivery, they were asked to rank municipal services in terms of importance, and they were asked how well the City is doing delivering specific types of services.

Overall, respondents gave a 61% favorability rating for the quality of services provided for residents and businesses by the City of Peterborough.

The five most important municipal services according to respondents:

1. Sewers, water, storm water
2. Fire prevention, police, paramedics
3. Garbage and recycling
4. Managing tax dollars
5. Providing transportation infrastructure for walking, bikes, transit and vehicles

How important do you think the following services/programs are to the community?

- Sewers, water, stormwater management
- Fire prevention, police, paramedics
- Garbage and recycling
- Managing tax dollars
- Infrastructure for walking, bikes, transit and vehicles
- Parks and green spaces
- Social services
- Enabling affordable housing
- Planning for and managing development
- Environmental protection, support for green projects
- Providing information, customer service and public engagement
- Promoting economic development
- Recreation facilities and programming
- Libraries, Art Gallery, Museum and their programs
- Permits, inspections and enforcement

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Undecided
- Somewhat unimportant
- Very unimportant
Results Overview: Services

**Service Delivery by Ranking**

In terms of how well the City is delivering services, the following services ranked the highest in terms of satisfaction by the respondents:

1. Fire prevention, police, paramedics
2. Garbage
3. Sewers, water, storm water management
4. Recycling
5. Libraries, and cultural facilities and programs

Respondents were the least satisfied with the City’s enabling of affordable housing, which ranked 16 out of 16 categories, with 47% reporting that they were either somewhat unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. Providing vehicular transportation infrastructure for transit and vehicles, managing tax dollars and social services all ranked low on satisfaction for the provision of services while at the same time ranking high on the importance of municipal services.
Results Overview: Budget

Opinion: Balancing the Budget

Participants were asked to consider some of the broad tools that the City has available for balancing its budget, as required by law. They could select one option or a mix of up to three options.

- **39%** increase property taxes
- **32%** reduce the level of City services such as hours or frequency of service
- **53%** increase user fees for City services that currently have fees
- **55%** introduce new user fees for some City services that currently have no fees

Outside of the four options, participants provided a wide range of suggestions on how to balance the budget such as a hiring freeze, reducing staffing and reducing staff wages, increasing development charges, reducing spending on studies, increasing development growth, reducing the frequency of collection for garbage and recycling, contracting out services, and cutting non-essential services.

If the most important local issue facing the City at the present time was not listed above, please tell us what it is.
Opinion: Service Levels

Question 11 of the survey asked participants on their desire for increased levels of service that would be paid for through property tax increases beyond the typical annual increase of about 2%, or about the rate of inflation, that is needed to maintain levels of service. Some participants reported confusion over the wording of the question – a sentiment that could also be the cause of the significant number of respondents who skipped the question.

This question had the highest percentage of skipped responses with 23% of survey participants choosing not to answer the question. The question generated responses from 762 of the 996 survey participants.

To better reflect the results of the question, the percentages to the right are calculated based on total number of survey participants instead of the percentage of those who answered the question.

Over and above the traditional 2% increase:

- 27% support an additional 1% increase
- 24% support an additional 2% increase
- 4% support an additional 3% increase
- 10% support an additional 4% increase

Comments that opposed over and above the traditional 2% increase:

- 20% responded that the City should hold property taxes at 2019 levels
- 4% responded that the City should hold at the typical 2% increase to maintain levels of service

Outside of the specific questions in the survey, the survey included an option at the end for respondents to provide other comments on the budget. Respondents provided 441 comments on topics such as transit, cycling infrastructure, roads, arts and culture, taxes, development planning, the environment, housing, and homelessness.

The results from the survey, including provided comments, are available at peterborough.ca/budget.
Results Overview: Consultation and Communication

**Future Consultation**
Beyond the core questions on budget priorities, the City also asked questions about how respondents learned about the survey and how they want to get information about the budget to help us plan future consultations. Survey comments showed strong support for local media and suggestions for communication through direct mail and emails.

**Future Communication**
For how residents want to interact with the City, the survey showed that 75% of respondents indicated that they prefer to engage with the City through online surveys, while 40% asked for email communications, and 32% showed support for public meetings or open houses.

**Future Community Engagement**
The survey was one touch point for residents who want to engage in the budget process. This is the beginning of the process. There are several more public meetings scheduled through the budget development process, with final approval of the budget expected on Monday, December 9, 2019.

Information on engagement opportunities are posted online at peterborough.ca/budget, distributed to local media, and promoted through the City’s various communications channels.

One of the top preferences for communicating to the Public indicated through the survey is using the City’s website for sharing information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget summary</td>
<td>52.00% 495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget fact sheet</td>
<td>50.21% 478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterborough.ca with links to more information</td>
<td>47.58% 453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An “Understanding the Budget” Guide</td>
<td>45.27% 431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City’s Facebook page with links to more information</td>
<td>33.31% 319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City’s Twitter feed with links to more information</td>
<td>22.79% 217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-person events such as open houses with City staff</td>
<td>22.79% 217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A budget blog on peterborough.ca</td>
<td>20.48% 195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary information displays at community locations (unstaffed)</td>
<td>14.92% 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary information kiosks with staff at community locations</td>
<td>10.50% 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-person workshops</td>
<td>8.19% 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinars</td>
<td>8.09% 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know or not interested</td>
<td>2.42% 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Respondents: 952</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey Questions

The see full survey results, please visit peterborough.ca/budget.

Q1:  Is your home or business in the City of Peterborough?

Q2:  You don’t need to be familiar with the City’s budget to take part in this survey. But we would like to understand how familiar the community is with the budget, this way we can work to provide the information people want and need. How familiar are you with how the City develops the annual budget?

Q3:  How familiar are you with how the City makes decisions about spending on programs and infrastructure each year?

Q4:  How familiar are you with the services and programs funded by the City of Peterborough annual budget?

Q5:  How important do you think the following services/programs are to the community?

Q6:  Please rate the following municipal services based on how well you think the municipally funded services are being delivered in our community.

Q7:  From your perspective, and recognizing that not everything is within City control, what are the most important local issues facing the City at the present time (1 - most important, 12 - least important)

Q8:  If the most important local issue facing the City at the present time was not listed above, please tell us what it is.

Q9:  To balance the 2020 budget as required by law, the City of Peterborough has a number of options to consider. Which of the following options would you prefer the City use to balance its budget? Note: User fees are monies you would pay to the City to access specific services, facilities and utilities, such as licences, permits, using City-owned facilities such as arenas and recreation centres, and utilities such as stormwater management. You can select one option or a mix of up to three options.

Q10: Would you say that you are generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the overall quality of services provided to residents/businesses by the City of Peterborough?

Q11: To maintain levels of service, the City has historically increased taxes in the range of 2% annually. Would you be willing to pay a further increase in your property taxes to increase levels of service? Please select as many as the following options as you wish.

Q12: The following responses are optional, but your responses would help us understand how the results from this survey reflect the makeup of our community and inform how we communicate with you in the future. How did you find out about the 2020 Budget questionnaire?

Q13: Here’s a list of types of information and ways of sharing information about the budget. What are the best ways to help you get more informed about the City’s annual budget? (select your top 5)

Q14: Thanks for sharing your experience with the City. We’d like to check in on how you would prefer to interact with us. From the list below, please tell us which channels you are most likely to participate in. Please select up to three.
Survey Questions

Q15: Do you own or rent your current place of residence?

Q16: In which area of the City is your home address located? (It’s about how you identify, not any formal boundaries – just choose how you identify the area where you home is located)

Q17: In which age category do you fall?

Q18: Do you identify as:

Q19: And, finally, the City of Peterborough wants to know if you have any further comments or suggestions to add about any of the topics covered in this questionnaire. Please type your comments in the space provided.

Results Overview: Notes

The full survey report and survey results with provided comments are available through the City website at peterborough.ca/budget. A plain text version of this document is available on request.