



FINANCE AND LABOUR RELATIONS COMMITTEE ADDENDUM

Adoption of Addendum to the Finance and Labour Relations Committee Agenda:

Motion by

THAT the Addendum to the Finance and Labour Relations Committee Agenda dated December 14, 2023, be added to the agenda as printed to include the following:

5. 2024 Budget Survey Results

Attachment – Management Report: 2024 Budget Survey Results (FIN23-036)

Motion by

THAT the report titled, “2024 Budget Survey Results” dated December 14, 2023 (FIN23-036), be received for information.

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: December 14, 2023
To: Finance and Labour Relations Committee
From: Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services
Report#: FIN23-036
Attachments: 1. 2024 Budget Survey Results
2. Summary of Other Comments Received for 2024 Budget Survey

Title: 2024 Budget Survey Results

Objective: To provide the Finance and Labour Relations Committee and Council with summarized results from the 2024 Budget Survey.

Background: On Wednesday, November 22, 2023 a survey consisting of 13 questions was issued to seek resident feedback and sensitivities around the upcoming budget. The intent was to gauge participation, and get a sense of overall tone and reception relating to the process and overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with City services. Specific initiatives were not targeted, as Council had not had an opportunity to review any of the draft documents, however respondents had the opportunity to provide general or specific comments on the City services and any items within the budget package.

The survey was open for about 2 ½ weeks until end of day, Sunday, December 10th 2023, allowing this period for residents to get involved and provide their feedback.

Similarly to 2023, the 2024 draft budget survey was launched on the Engage Stratford public engagement site. In addition to providing the electronic methods, staff provided paper surveys to several locations around the City, including the Local Community Food Centre, the Library and the Rotary Complex.

In response to feedback received in 2023, the Treasurer, with the assistance of staff through their preparation work, was able to host a drop-in session where residents could come and find out more about how the budget is prepared, and how it relates to taxes, as well as any other questions they might have.

Analysis: The Engage Stratford platform recorded 98 survey responses (2023: 177) plus 3 received on paper. While 2024 results are lower than 2023, the Engage Stratford platform appears to be more effective compared to previous methods to disseminate

the survey which was via the website. (2022: 24, 2021: 95). This is likely attributed to the ease of use for the platform.

The tool provides a summary document that is attached to this report for your review. We have also attached a few comments we received by email or paper, outside of the platform. For questions that had a finite number of choices, the responses are summarized into a chart, and for those where providing comments was applicable, each comment is included in the report. All responses are unedited, with the exception of redacting inappropriate comments towards specific individuals, and removal of personal information provided.

One observation is that many of the residents who took the time to complete the survey provided thoughtful and constructive feedback. Some comments are too brief or lack context to guide Council decisions, but we hope to continue to build upon the survey questions and format going forward to gain more and better insights.

25% of respondents indicated a desire to attend the in-person session, but interestingly there were only 5 in attendance. The feedback from the attendees was positive, and additional comments seemed to indicate that the timing (4pm-7pm) was a barrier to attend. Staff will continue to try and find opportunities to educate and inform the public, despite lower than ideal turnout.

While no one actually wants to see property taxes increase, 63% of respondents could support tax increases in order to maintain or increase service levels. Further, 67% of respondents felt that they received fair or good value for their tax dollars.

When asked what services the City should spend more resources on, the 70 responses were varied, however, there were a couple of common themes around housing and homelessness initiatives, transit options as well as infrastructure, which includes road maintenance, active transportation, with a small handful using this comment area to suggest cuts or decreases.

Conversely, when asked what services the City should spend less on, the 71 responses were equally varied. Several comments around consulting, staffing, waste management, tourism and transit services indicate areas where further information and education can be provided in future to clear up misconceptions. Finding consistent themes was a bit more challenging for the responses to this question.

Staff continually work to provide as much supporting information as possible for the draft budget documents, however there are some areas that we can continue to build upon, including how we categorize and structure our budget, and why the City does or does not provide certain services. Sometimes, residents assume certain things that are untrue or invalid, so perhaps by continuing to enhance some of the supporting documents, some of these can be addressed.

When preparing this report, it became evident that comments provided under 'please specify' questions did not flow through to the base report. A supplementary document was extracted and should be read in conjunction with the applicable question in the main survey report. Staff are investigating these further.

This information is intended to show Committee members some of the feedback from this public engagement, and in some cases give a sense of what priorities are important to participating residents. It should be noted that while 98 responses is a reasonable response rate, it still only represents a small sampling of all the residents in the City so all responses should be considered in this context.

Financial Implications:

Not applicable:

There are no financial implications to be reported as a result of this report.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "2024 Budget Survey Results" dated December 14, 2023" (FIN23-036), be received for information.

Prepared by:

Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services

Recommended by:

Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services

Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer

2024 Budget Survey

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

21 November 2023 - 11 December 2023

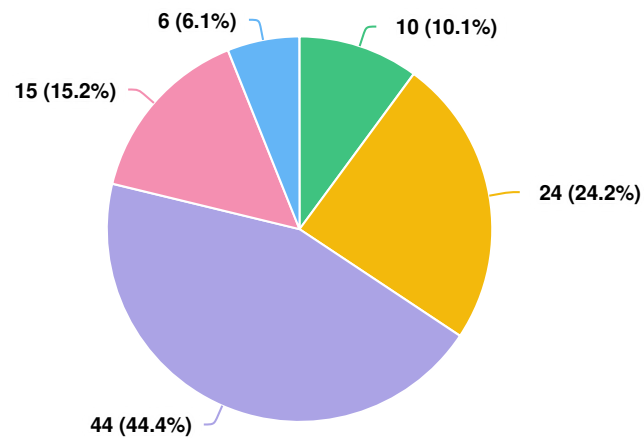
PROJECT NAME:

2024 Budget



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 | I participate in the City's annual budget process:



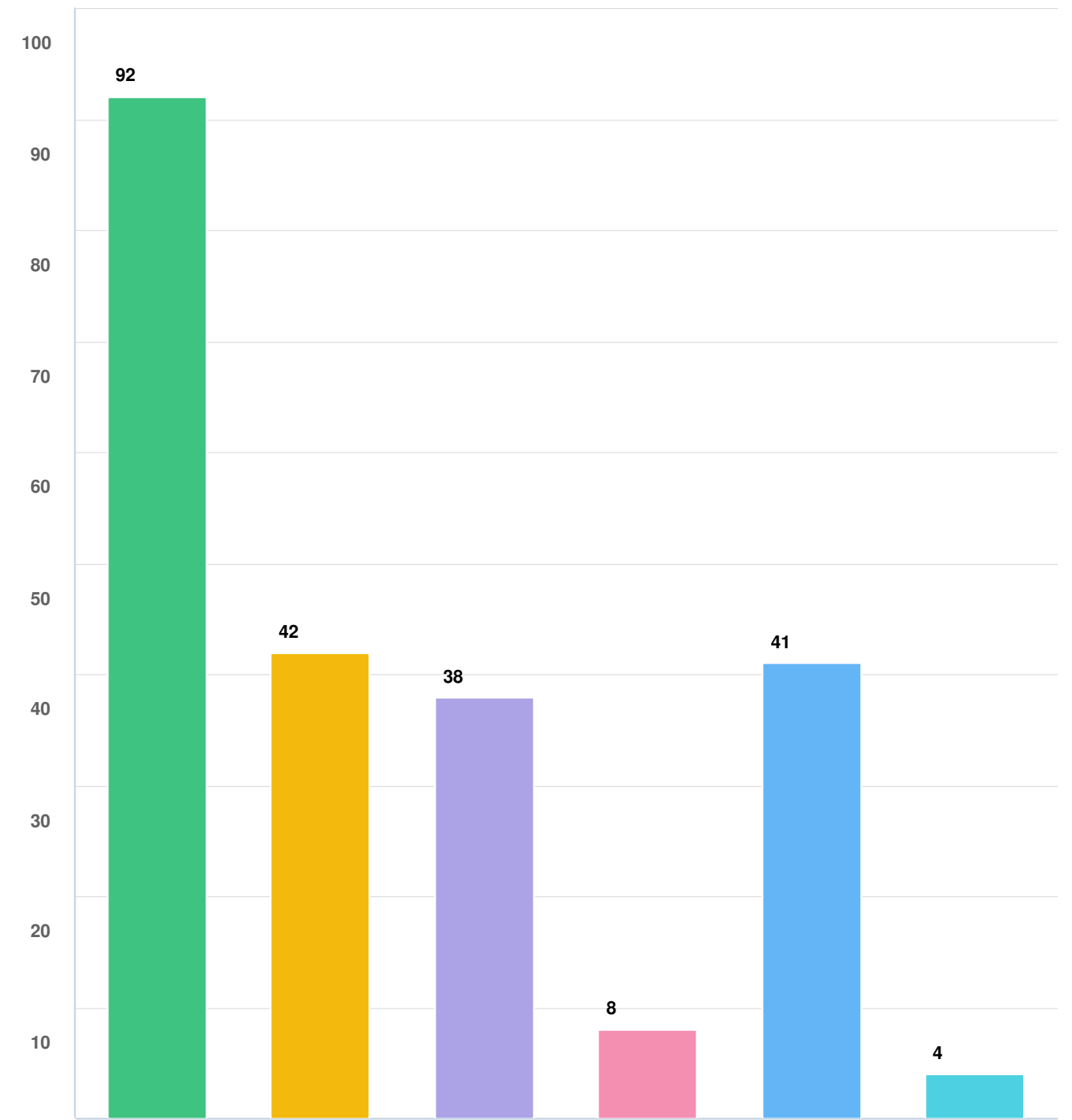
Question options

Always Never Sometimes Only when something interests me Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (98 response(s))

Question type: Radio Button Question

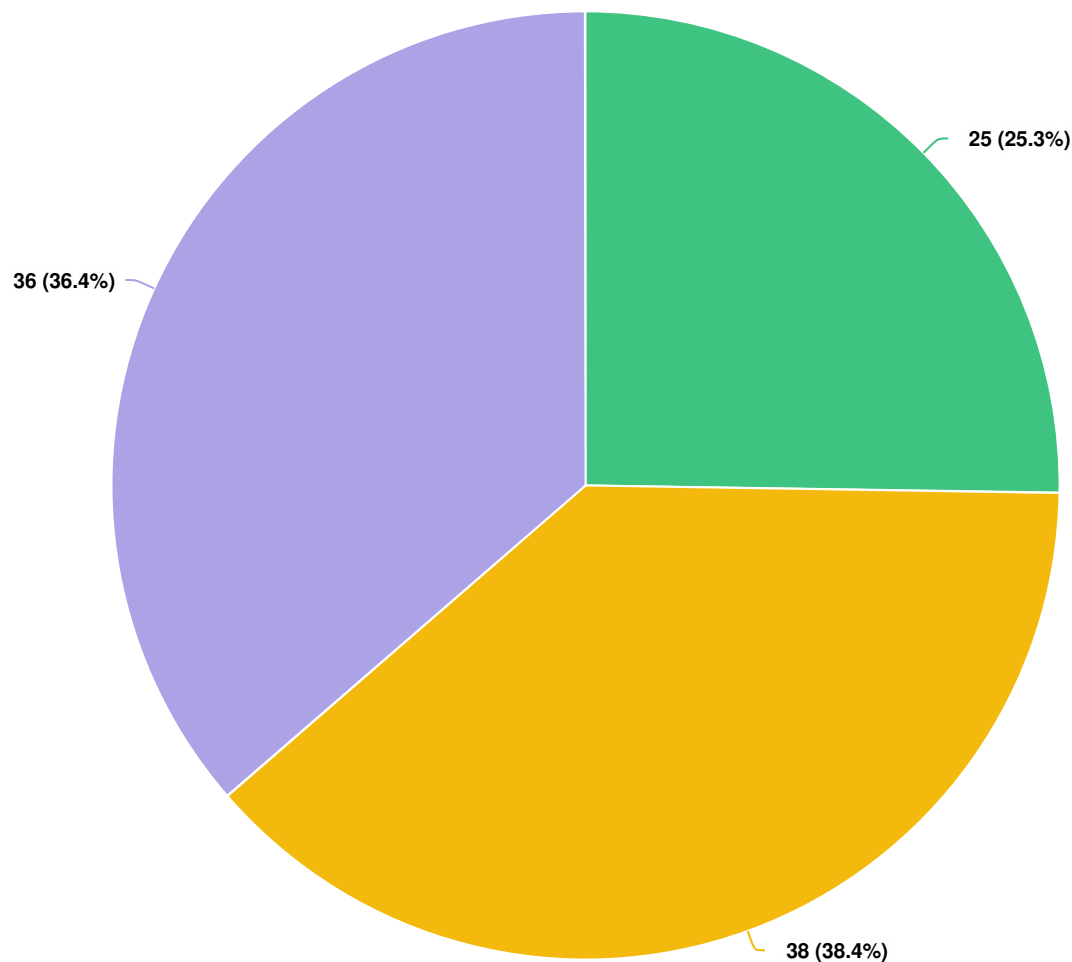
Q2 I would be interested in participating or engaging in the following activities related to the annual budget process (select all that apply):



- Question options**
- Completing surveys
 - Submitting questions
 - Watching budget-related meetings
 - Appearing as a delegation at budget-related meetings
 - Attending public information sessions related to the annual budget process
 - Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (98 response(s))
Question type: Checkbox Question

Q3 Results from last year's survey suggest that citizens are interested in an in-person budget information session. We are planning to hold an informal Chat With the Treasurer on Tuesday, December 5 from 4-7 p.m. in the City Hall auditorium. Would you...



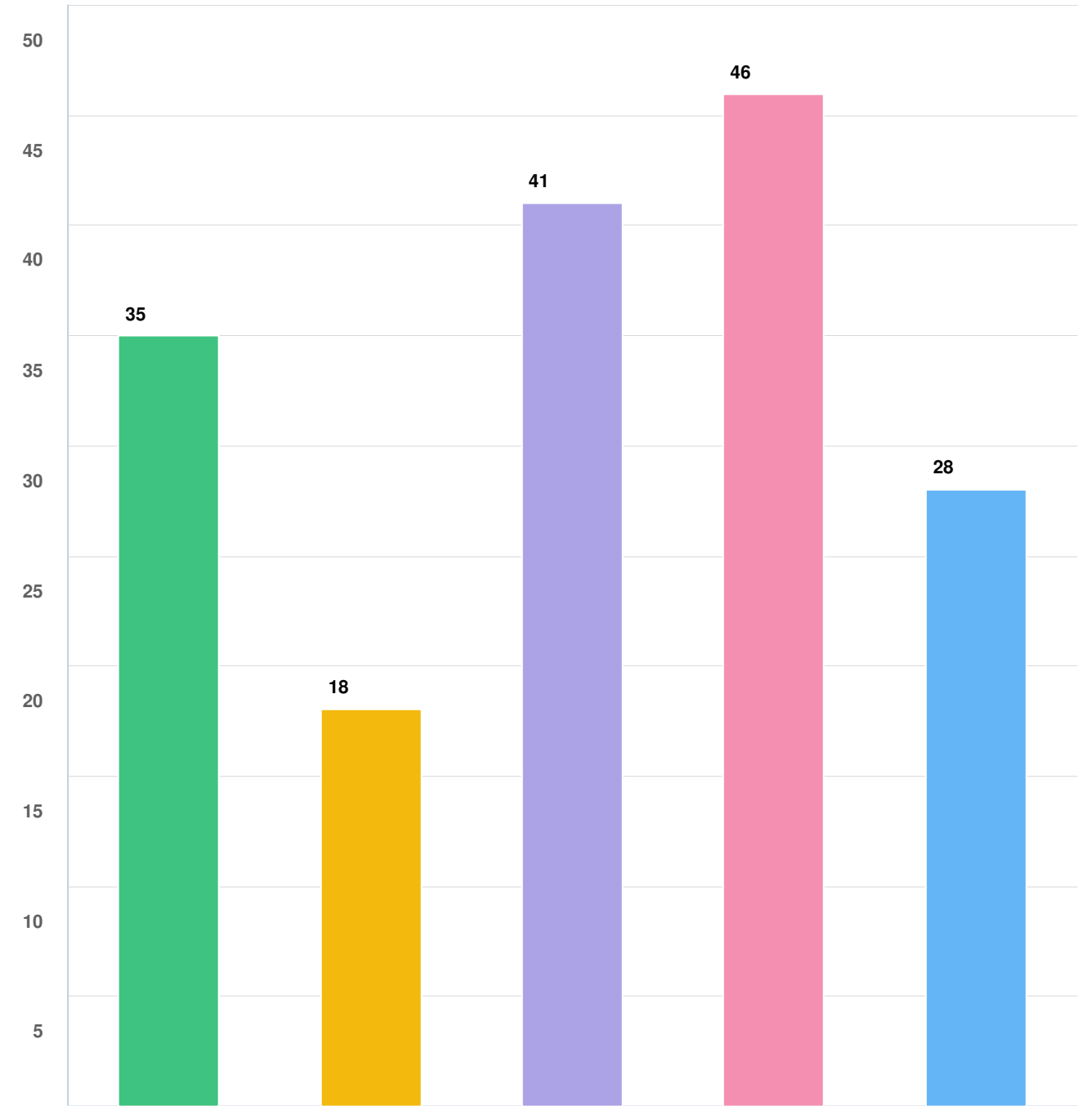
Question options

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Optional question (98 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q4 The City is required by law to balance the budget. A number of strategies are available to accomplish this. Of the following, which would you prefer the City use to balance its annual budget? (select all that apply)

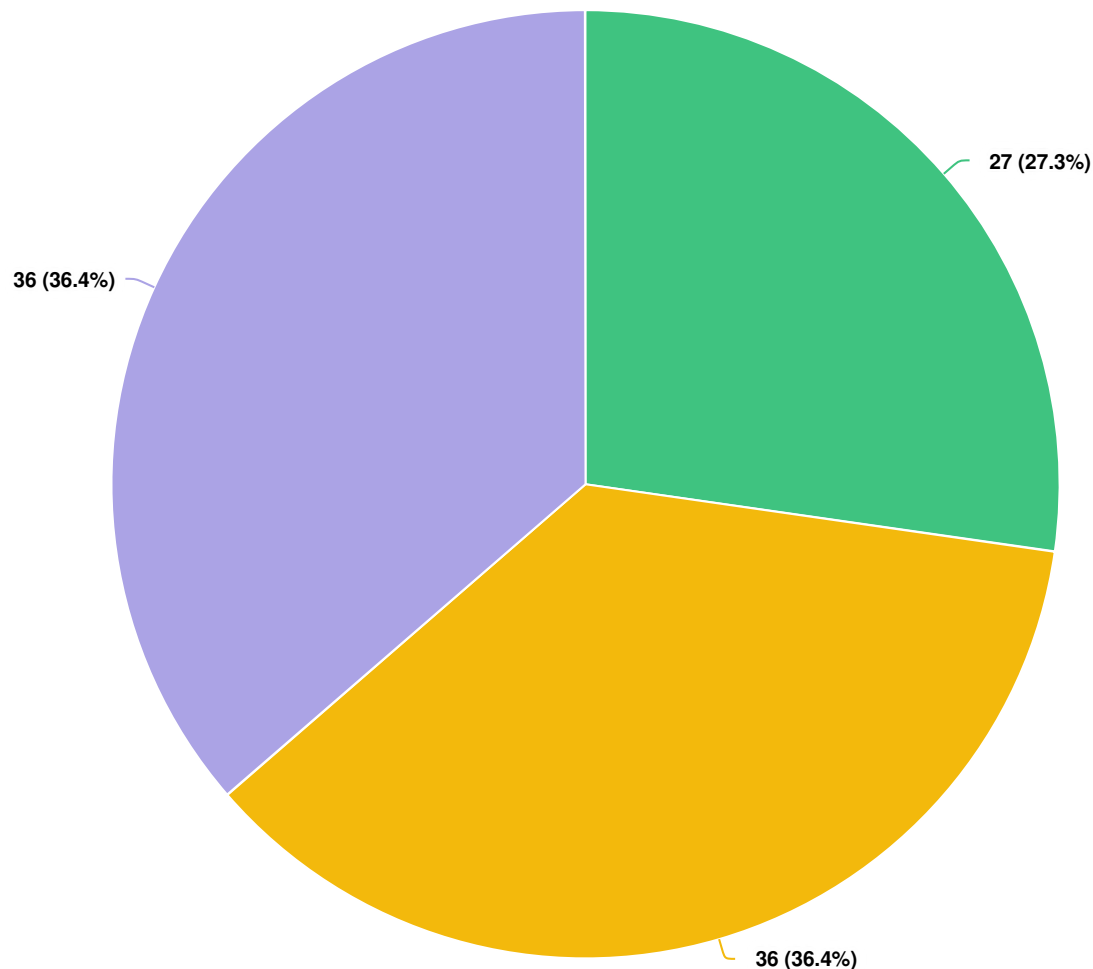


Question options

- Reduce the level of services (e.g. reduced hours, frequency)
- Increase property taxes
- Increase user fees (e.g. ice, room and facility rentals, transit, bag tags)
- Introduce new user fees for some City services that currently have no fees
- I have an idea or strategy not listed above (please specify)

Mandatory Question (98 response(s))
Question type: Checkbox Question

Q5 | Property taxes pay for the delivery of municipal services. This includes maintaining and replacing the assets used to deliver those services. Please choose one of the following statements that you most agree with:



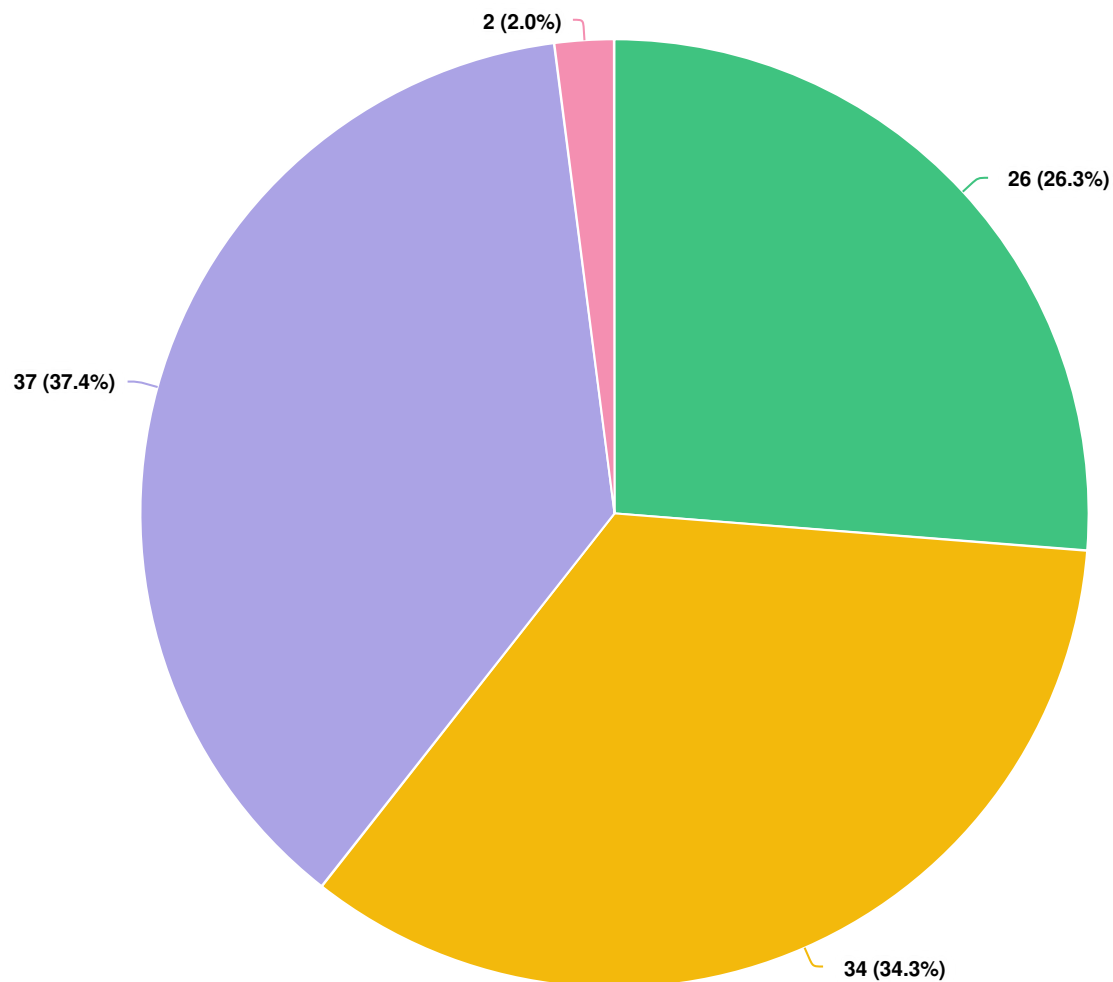
Question options

- ☐ I support additional tax increases if it means we can take care of our existing assets and keep service levels the same.
- ☐ I support additional tax increases if it means enhanced services.
- ☐ I want my taxes to stay the same and I am prepared to accept a reduced service level when taxes cannot keep up with asset deterioration.

Mandatory Question (98 response(s))

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q6 Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with the services that your tax dollars currently support:

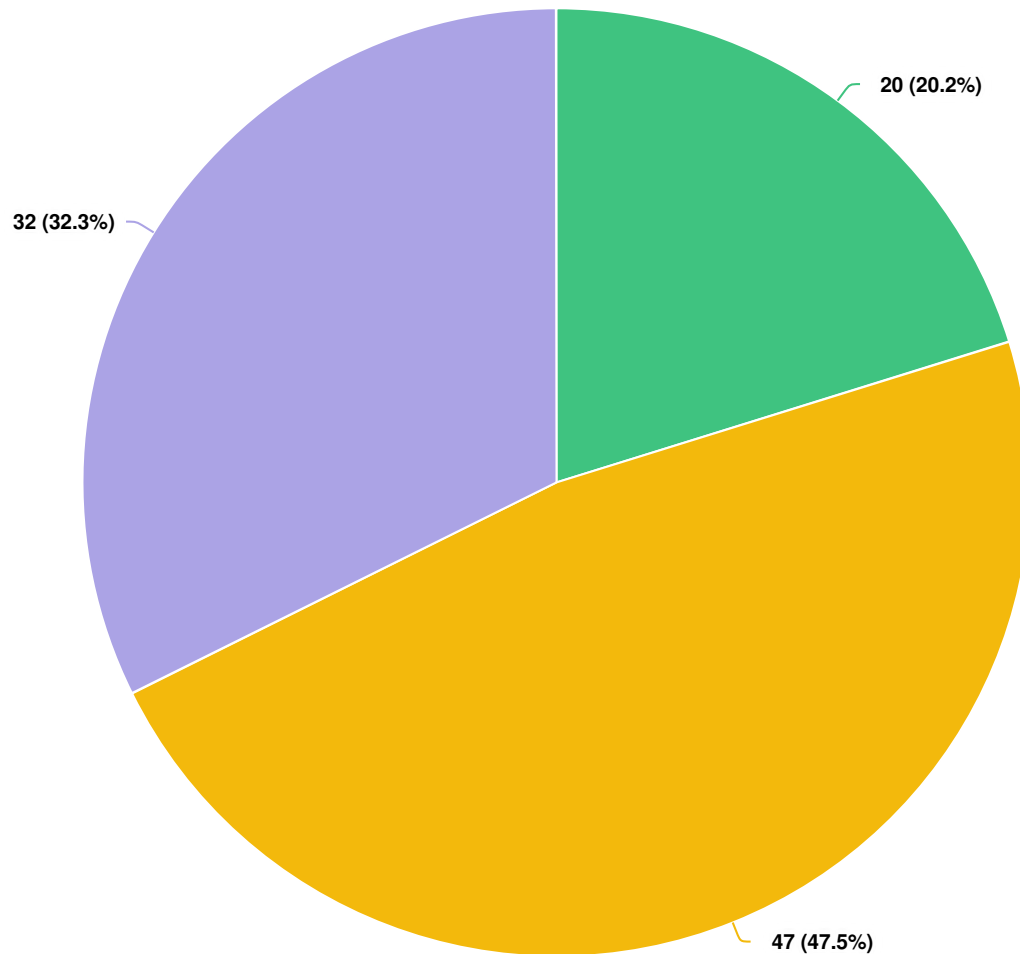


Question options

● Satisfied ● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ● Dissatisfied ● Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (98 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q7 Thinking about the part of your taxes that go to Stratford (not including the education portion), how would you rate the overall value you receive for your tax dollars?



Question options

Good Fair Poor

Mandatory Question (98 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q8 | What municipal services, if any, would you like to see enhanced, or where would you like to see the City dedicate more resources? (Assuming that this could potentially result in a modest tax increase)

Anonymous

11/22/2023 05:59 PM

I would like to see the city put more money into active transportation in line with the TMP and public transportation.

Anonymous

11/23/2023 09:54 AM

Maintaining/repairing aging infrastructure

Anonymous

11/27/2023 01:11 PM

Roads! When riding a bike, The sidewalks are less bumpy than the roads! Horrible for bikes

Anonymous

11/27/2023 03:22 PM

Affordable Low income housing

Anonymous

11/27/2023 03:36 PM

It would be wonderful to have an aquatic centre here in Stratford as many residents use St Mary's and New Hamburg.

Anonymous

11/27/2023 04:00 PM

Policing and road maintenance

Anonymous

11/27/2023 04:08 PM

waste/garbage every home using this service, why is it so expensive now and worse service

Anonymous

11/27/2023 04:52 PM

Road and Path maintenance.

Anonymous

11/27/2023 05:21 PM

Homeless shelter and increased services for unhoused citizens

Anonymous

11/27/2023 05:39 PM

Water quality

Anonymous

11/27/2023 06:18 PM

all by-law staff could issue fines for all daily parking infraction issues at all schools and non city centre areas enforcing laws already on the books this could enhance the city coffers

Anonymous

11/27/2023 07:08 PM

indoor pool minimal free garbage weekly recycling

Anonymous

11/28/2023 09:29 AM

Enough affordable housing for everyone; less performative meetings (meetings that are purely for propaganda where the decision was already made long ago via corruption ie: Tom Patterson/bus routes/glass plant/market square/cooper site and so on). That old mode of propaganda does not work alongside the internet (ie Facebook groups about Stratford) and merely sews dissent. Faux openness and participation (pretending to be democratic) is destructive of community. Wouldn't it be more simple to shift to a propaganda model where community was promoted over corporate interests of the council and their social network?

Anonymous

11/28/2023 10:41 AM

I think the city faces a huge issue with housing and mental health issues. I think that there have been reduced resources available for people who have chronic addiction, mental health, lack of housing and lack of affordable food and housing. I think we have to dedicate more resources to dealing with the social issues that exist in our community. This involves: policing, supportive interventions for the rough housed, the homeless, those with poor housing, those with addiction, more support/treatment for families with children who are suffering trying to provide healthy foods....perhaps we need to defer some spending on beautification of our city...redirect those dollars to other services...perhaps we need to not use \$50,000 to reduce goose poop!

Anonymous

11/28/2023 01:00 PM

Homelessness and (real) Affordable Housing (50% of market value, not 70 or 80%) Policing enhanced/ adjusted where there exists visibility. ie ,Cops walking about, watching traffic from visible positions.... not just hiding away somewhere in their cars where no one sees them.

Anonymous

11/28/2023 06:14 PM

support for climate change mitigation strategies, making Stratford a leading city in climate change mitigation, innovation, getting off fossil fuels, alternative energy, support for electric charging, supporting a plastics ban, mandating reusable packaging for take out from restaurants, setting up recycling deposits for those items that don't go in our bins -e.g. terracycle bins, more dog poop recycling stations, celebrating sustainability, developing a plan for re-use of public lands for affordable housing, affordable housing initiatives, tiny homes for homeless, stratford bucks for spending here and encouraging our local entrepreneurs, holding community information meetings for climate change - inviting guest speakers - a climate change weekend at the rotary with guests, getting Stratford Festival to create a

program of tickets and community participation for residents and business owners to encourage more local affordability and inclusion in festival programming and activities, attracting new business to Stratford that are sustainable and forward looking with regard to climate change, engagement with our Indigenous Peoples - creating a protocol for the duty to consult and accommodate, support for the slow food market in market square in summer and indoors in winter, bring back skating on the river, developing the grand trunk site....and more

Anonymous

11/29/2023 02:49 PM

Investments to ensure our city meets its 2030 GHG reduction goals

Anonymous

11/29/2023 08:27 PM

Initiatives to provide affordable housing or supportive housing projects.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 09:16 AM

Transportation - Pedestrian, cycling

Anonymous

12/01/2023 01:02 PM

No tax increase is my vote. I feel like the City of Stratford reps forgot how to budget. Do better. We certainly have a VERY broken system which needs to be addressed.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 01:14 PM

Stop looking for new outlets to spend more money. Until all the chaff is removed from current spending, no "new" resources.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 01:21 PM

Since I don't want tax increases, I am NOT looking for enhancements.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 01:36 PM

Spending money more wisely. Expanding transit would increase users, get rid of on demand. Buy a road resurfacing machine that recycles old asphalt, way faster, cheaper and only one operator

Anonymous

12/01/2023 02:41 PM

Road maintenance, snow removal dedication increase, sanitation overhaul(garbage collection process), increase of medical/social resources.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 02:58 PM

Nil

Anonymous

12/01/2023 04:15 PM

Recycling pick-up - would prefer every week to every other. Recycling bins in the downtown. Bike Lanes/infrastructure. Snow removal increased. Continued, improved development of downtown and the west side of Huron Road.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 06:43 PM

Water, sewage, road maintenance

Anonymous

12/01/2023 09:28 PM

Transit: go to 7 day regular service

Anonymous

12/01/2023 11:00 PM

More attention to parking passes downtown for locals. Specifically for locals who live/reside downtown not only for those who simply work downtown. As well, more police watch downtown.

Anonymous

12/02/2023 07:50 AM

Snow removal

Anonymous

12/02/2023 09:17 AM

N/A

Anonymous

12/02/2023 12:32 PM

Roads Curbs I rather have nice street to drive on then pretty flowers

Anonymous

12/03/2023 10:13 AM

Better maintained roads, sewers, bridges, and cutting other services to reduce property taxes

Anonymous

12/03/2023 12:30 PM

I would like to see more funds directed to social services administration, homelessness administration, and all programs that contribute to the health and well-being of those experiencing poverty and homelessness in our community.

Anonymous

12/04/2023 06:47 AM

Make the railway center which is closed as museum

Anonymous

12/04/2023 10:11 AM

Worst snow removal in Southern ontario. Need to hire competent workers and fire the lazy ones not doing they're job.

Anonymous

12/04/2023 04:17 PM

Garbage collection

Anonymous

12/04/2023 09:40 PM

Road repair and replacement

Anonymous

12/04/2023 09:55 PM

Creating better protected bike lanes. Installingsidewalks where none exist.

Anonymous

12/04/2023 11:42 PM

Reduction in greenhouse gas use. Better prevention of homelessness and care for those that become homeless.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 07:54 AM

Public housing.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 09:52 AM

The city has to take a firm stance on eliminating homelessness; its continuation is a blight on Stratford's reputation as a good place in which to live.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 10:32 AM

We've got to do better on housing planning. The focus on single, detached homes, built in subdivisions that are car dependent and removed from amenities, has got to stop. There's got to be an all out effort to incentivize in-fill, "in-law suites", lane-way housing. The \$800,000 homes going up on Worsley, and the \$1.2 million dollar condos planned for Ontario and Nile are worse than useless.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 10:49 AM

Maintenance of infrastructure; affordable housing initiatives such as coops or partnerships with developers to create affordable/geared to income housing. Supports for helping people overcome homelessness.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 04:00 PM

Supporting smaller arts groups that bring an economic benefit to the community, helping the unhoused find accommodation, supporting people with mental health and addictions.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 05:00 PM

N/A

Anonymous

12/05/2023 05:56 PM

Infrastructure. Paving of residential streets that are heavily used (eg. Glendon, Delamere and Devon).

Anonymous

12/05/2023 08:18 PM

allocated funds to enhance a climate mitigation and adaptation plan

Anonymous

12/05/2023 08:47 PM

Housing, Library, Social Supports

Anonymous

12/06/2023 07:51 AM

Proper drainage of walking trails around Lake Victoria and in TJ Dolan, so they are not flooded after rain Fix sidewalks and roads Increase time Washrooms open if good weather in spring or fall and add a port a potties when washrooms closed. Porta potties added to near T J dolan

Anonymous

12/06/2023 09:31 AM

No municipal services added!

Anonymous

12/06/2023 01:04 PM

Infrastructure and roads, snow clearing, asset management

Anonymous

12/06/2023 05:56 PM

The police station must be made accessible. It is the law.

Anonymous

12/06/2023 07:22 PM

Better public transit that is convenient and reliable with a lower cost as it is overpriced we should encourage people to use it not deter them with bad service. Better snow removal Garbage pick up included in our taxes (one bag per household)

Anonymous

12/07/2023 09:37 AM

Road maintenance is very poor. Housing obviously is a massive concern - enough "focus groups"! Time to act. We need a shelter or safe STAFFED encampment area or mini home area. Look to the example of other cities who are making this happen.

Anonymous

12/07/2023 02:48 PM

Enforcement of speed limits on my street. Speeding especially by trucks is out of control on Vivian Line.

Anonymous

12/07/2023 07:17 PM

Street safety, traffic speed reduction and road maintenance.

Anonymous

12/08/2023 03:28 PM

None !!!!

Anonymous

Start by firing anyone whose making more then \$90,000 yearly salary

12/08/2023 03:49 PM

it's ridiculous [REDACTED] makes what [REDACTED] does and yet does nothing. [REDACTED] is the worse [REDACTED] lies constantly and everyone has complained how bad he is yet somehow has a job. Better spread of resources for extra curricular activities like the old grove maintenance, and sports fields.

Anonymous

12/08/2023 05:46 PM

Recycling programs, reuse programs, snow removal, sidewalk maintenance, bus services on the weekend, bike lanes throughout the city, economic development support

Anonymous

12/08/2023 06:40 PM

A year round municipal pool that does not require a YMCA membership Daycare access improvements. My kids will age out before this goes into effect, but the lack of care and access here prohibits parents (usually moms) from returning to work and limits the number of young families the city could be attracting

Anonymous

12/08/2023 07:10 PM

Municipal pool in Stratford, more daycare options, before/after school programs

Anonymous

12/09/2023 09:52 AM

More resources for children, including a west end splash pad, a indoor public pool, more daycare spaces

Anonymous

12/09/2023 09:58 AM

Would happily pay more to add better facilities eg a new YMCA or recreational pool for my child.

Anonymous

12/09/2023 12:44 PM

I have reviewed the Draft Budget 2024 and the proposed potential increase of 8.27% is way too high, especially after the dramatic increases in 2022 and 2023. These increase are too high and will be impacting home owners on limited fixed incomes. Unfortunately, at this juncture the city needs to address the homeless population by providing not for profit subsidized housing, not the so called 'affordable' with rents at 80% of market rents, as well as social services to support them. Again pressure on the provincial government is necessary, including increasing OW and ODSP rates.

Anonymous

12/09/2023 12:49 PM

Stratford Public Library

Anonymous

12/09/2023 07:56 PM

Promote more environmentally home renovation options for residents (ie home energy loan program repaid via property taxes)

Anonymous

12/09/2023 07:57 PM

Roads Bylaw enforcement

Anonymous

12/09/2023 08:00 PM

Mosquito control is #1 after last year. Also bike lanes, walking trails, and year round or extended public garbage bins for us dog walkers. Would prefer waste pick-up be biweekly and recycling be weekly.

Anonymous

12/11/2023 06:10 AM

Road work. The pot hole patch jobs are always poorly done (and inefficiently- doing our road 2-3 times a season) do it properly the first time!

Optional question (70 response(s), 28 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q9 | What municipal services, if any, would you like to see reduced, or where would you like to see the City dedicate fewer resources? (Assuming that this could potentially result in a modest tax decrease)

Anonymous

11/22/2023 05:34 PM

Less consultants

Anonymous

11/22/2023 05:59 PM

None

Anonymous

11/24/2023 01:44 PM

Stop plowing sidewalks in the winter, stop funding for lights on and other random 'touristy' type events

Anonymous

11/27/2023 03:22 PM

Cooper Project

Anonymous

11/27/2023 03:36 PM

I think we have enough Arenas for the sport Hockey.

Anonymous

11/27/2023 04:00 PM

The amount sent on flowers and donated to the festival.

Anonymous

11/27/2023 04:08 PM

public transportation buses are empty!

Anonymous

11/27/2023 04:38 PM

Reducing the number of city employees

Anonymous

11/27/2023 04:52 PM

Not 100% sure but I think we are over policed. The parking meters have to go!

Anonymous

11/27/2023 05:21 PM

Twenty percent reduction in flower gardens, boxes, etc.

Anonymous

11/27/2023 06:18 PM

no reduction of services less assistant managers

Anonymous

11/27/2023 07:08 PM

weekly garbage collection staff / consultants

Anonymous

11/28/2023 09:29 AM

I do not want to support any sports teams or events. I do not want to support any project where the former and/or current mayor will profit indirectly. Also, it worries me that this is being asked. It points to my previous comment that we need specific, reachable goals toward a clearly articulated city plan for the next decades. The planners should include not just economists and social scientists but also philosophers and front-line workers.

Anonymous

11/28/2023 10:41 AM

I have cited two examples above. We may need to reduce or par back on some services or up user fees for others...I have not yet had time to read the entire budget but will do so in the next few days...conference fees have been raised for the mayor and city councillors and for various staff. Perhaps there needs to be reduced attendance or virtually attendance as it was during Covid. Perhaps we send fewer delegates and those who attend come back to share what they have learnt...Is there a way to consolidate departments to reduce management staffing, given that those positions have the higher salaries? Are consultants all ways needed or can staff with areas of expertise guide decision making?

Anonymous

11/28/2023 01:00 PM

Fire Services. Do we really need to spend that much money on a City that has so few fires. I live a block away from Erie St. and you would think that some days the whole City is on fire. I realize that they provide "emergency" services for car collisions etc. but someone really needs to look at the necessity of so many firefighters and their inherent cost for a city this size. Are we over protected so that our fire fighting services work like an insurance policy ? Pay the big buck every year just in case there's actually a fire?

Anonymous

11/28/2023 06:14 PM

I am not interested in reducing taxes - we need more taxes, especially from the wealthy - to care for people and planet we need much more in the way of public resources not less - we need to support food, housing, climate change justice and not leave people out, we need to work on basic minimum income measures, housing, food access, etc.....and could we work on better doctors accessibility - we need doctors - it's crazy that we don't have enough family doctors to serve the population - let's be innovative, how about a community clinic or two or more?

Anonymous

11/29/2023 02:49 PM

Sell the airport

Anonymous

11/29/2023 08:27 PM

Get rid of the airport - it only serves the rich, the majority of residents don't benefit from having an airport. We are also close enough to KW or London. We could find a place in Stratford for a helicopter landing pad for emergency purposes.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 09:16 AM

Services that only support a specific small user group

Anonymous

12/01/2023 01:14 PM

Again, provide every tax payer a FULL DETAILED financial report (don't hide payments in accounts that you know was over payments and you don't want the taxpayer to know)

Anonymous

12/01/2023 01:21 PM

Stop funding airport. Stop funding and providing in kind services to Destination Stratford. Stop funding and providing in kind services to Lights on Stratford. Stop funding and providing in kind services to developing Sports Tourism.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 01:36 PM

Studies and flowers. Redoing paid jobs that weren't done properly, and paying a second time Choose a better (ot the old one) garbage and recycling company

Anonymous

12/01/2023 02:41 PM

Anything that requires increased landscaping needs in areas that specifically have a high tourist traffic rates(Flowers downtown, practicality of shops downtown that do not cater predominately to tourists), not only allowing, but also incentivizing construction or utilization of locals based goods or services. Ellams has been abandoned and delapidating for years, and it is on extremely prime city property. What, do the property managers have international

sovereignty on that land space or something? And the Golden Bamboo on Ontario is literally rotting into the ground. Turn these into something that will be resourceful for the city, and can increase economic flow, or build something else that CAN. This city has a decent abundance of redundant unused, misered space...use it!

Anonymous

12/01/2023 02:58 PM

Heating the Lions pool with natural gas

Anonymous

12/01/2023 03:24 PM

Less money on consultants, Stop the DEI nonsense

Anonymous

12/01/2023 04:09 PM

Subsidization of arts, sports and community groups. Also stop the completely useless and counterproductive practice of having snowblowers clear the sidewalk only to have the snowplow completely fill those same sidewalks with snow again. That is a TOTAL WASTE OF TAXPAYER MONEY! Get your act together and coordinate the road and sidewalk aspects of snow clearing.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 04:15 PM

Garbage pickup - would prefer biweekly. Sidewalk snow removal. Reduced parking lots/spots.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 06:43 PM

The council salaries

Anonymous

12/01/2023 09:12 PM

Fire department

Anonymous

12/01/2023 09:28 PM

111 CAO'S OFFICE ; 112 HUMAN RESOURCES ; 231 STRATFORD POLICE SERVICE - 2250 PARKS PATROL ; G-102-1021-4040 CONSULTANTS; 3602 AIRPORT ADMINISTRATION: CONSULTANTS, FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS ; 872 COMMUNITY SUPPORT & GRANTS. Generally, stop using consultants so much, delay some projects.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 11:00 PM

Dedicate fewer resources to tourists. As well, Stratford Pride Community Centre. Since its opening I haven't seen nor heard much news or potential help they've accomplished.

Anonymous

12/02/2023 07:50 AM

Community services annual flower beds (plant some perennials) We pay far too much money for tourism and now Lights On! I am a

supporter of Lights On but way too much money for a 5 week 4 day a week festival (weren't they given another \$150,000 this year and reduced from 7 days a week to 4? Seems more geared to tourists than locals) I also no longer think we need the downtown patio extensions

Anonymous

12/02/2023 09:17 AM

One notices at the complex casual staff sitting in the back office waiting -could they not be cleaning chairs etc in between their other intermitent duties

Anonymous

12/02/2023 10:30 AM

Lightson Stratford. Really?? \$150000 for some lights??? +another \$150000 from the city funded tourism office??? COME ON!!

Anonymous

12/02/2023 12:32 PM

Not possible we are receiving little services as is or poor services at best

Anonymous

12/03/2023 09:01 AM

Reduce library budget and staffing.

Anonymous

12/03/2023 10:13 AM

Cut services to everything except fundamentals that everyone needs and uses like water, power, and roads

Anonymous

12/03/2023 11:46 AM

Parks budget, yes they look nice but an 8% increase in tax after an 11% increase last year is too much. Aesthetics shouldn't take priority over affordability/cost of living.

Anonymous

12/03/2023 12:30 PM

I would like to see high-level municipal staff salaries decreased and these funds redirected to providing support for those currently experiencing poverty and homelessness in our community.

Anonymous

12/04/2023 10:11 AM

City bus. 75 percent of the time they drive around with nobody in them.

Anonymous

12/04/2023 04:17 PM

Beautification, salary freeze

Anonymous

12/04/2023 08:37 PM

Smaller buses , stop busing on demand use smaller buses for weekends ...wasting tax dollars on huge buses running around empty is a waste of tax dollars smaller buses on weekends would help in

leaving a better environment footprint also

Anonymous

12/04/2023 09:55 PM

Destination Stratford

Anonymous

12/04/2023 11:42 PM

Any expansion of natural gas infrastructure.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 10:32 AM

I have so few interactions with the City where the exchange is visible and tangible. I assume there are places where you could squeeze some greater efficiencies... but the City, taken as a whole, is an essential service. You squeeze it too tight and it's no longer a functioning community. It's a small thing but, for what it's worth, I've often wondered why I can pay for my parking from a phone app, but can't pay my fine online.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 10:49 AM

None

Anonymous

12/05/2023 05:00 PM

Again, I would like to see just a streamlining of all services.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 05:35 PM

Less frequent bus service in town.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 08:18 PM

less emphasis on beautification and more on increasing native species

Anonymous

12/05/2023 08:27 PM

Stop plowing all city residential sidewalks. Make a bylaw that snow be removed by homeowners, rental building owners, etc, etc. Only major business sidewalks be plowed.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 08:47 PM

Police, Fire

Anonymous

12/06/2023 07:51 AM

Eliminate money spent on Consultants Eliminate or reduce Destination Stratford and invest stratford Eliminate positions like Communications

Anonymous

As I do not know all the municipal services that are available I will

12/06/2023 09:31 AM

need to review them all but if we are giving money to people to do nothing that is one service that should be reviewed and revamped!

Anonymous

12/06/2023 01:04 PM

Stop funding external arms length organizations (ex. Invest Stratford, Destination Stratford). They should be able to stand on their own, and have the ability to apply for grant funding. The tax payers should not be funding organizations that don't directly impact their quality of living in Stratford.

Anonymous

12/06/2023 04:41 PM

Transit....large buses, nearly always empty, driving around Stratford makes no sense! Assign volunteer retired persons to travel all city bus routes for each day of the week and tally the number of riders.

Anonymous

12/06/2023 05:56 PM

Attending forums, meetings in other cities.

Anonymous

12/06/2023 07:22 PM

Stop handing money to events like lights on. The market square is not attractive it's a concrete jungle and should have been designed with more permanent seating and shade areas. It's never pleasant to go there even in an event it is a wind tunnel in winter and a heat sink in summer. Very bad design.

Anonymous

12/07/2023 09:37 AM

No more recruiting of big businesses. No more shady business like the glass plant debacle. No more destruction of farmland and annexation of land. MAKE DEVELOPERS PAY for all costs associated with their builds UNLESS they are building RGA properties such as simple apartment buildings. You want to build more homes for wealthy people? Then pay your way. It should never be up to taxpayers to fund development of new subdivisions for the rich.

Anonymous

12/08/2023 03:28 PM

I believe that in the budget for the present year that at least six new administrative positions were instituted. I was opposed to this because of cost and lack of need for these positions. I would be in favour of reducing the number of City employees in administrative positions and at the very least not do any new hiring.. Our taxes are already very high and many taxpayer in Stratford can simply not afford any increase.

Anonymous

12/08/2023 03:49 PM

You already do a ■■■ job if you reduce any services the town will not function it barely does already.

Anonymous

12/08/2023 04:34 PM

Spending on useless projects The cooper site for one

Anonymous

12/08/2023 05:46 PM

Travel allowances, regional group memberships

Anonymous

12/08/2023 06:40 PM

Police services and salaries. By law salaries. Better use of existing infrastructure ex don't build a new police station, use the library or Scotia bank building and move the library to a larger space

Anonymous

12/08/2023 07:10 PM

N/A

Anonymous

12/09/2023 08:01 AM

quit raising the water meter service charge and the sewage fixed service charge. we already pay this in the sewage charge.

Anonymous

12/09/2023 09:52 AM

Public transit

Anonymous

12/09/2023 09:58 AM

Nothing

Anonymous

12/09/2023 12:44 PM

Depending on what you define as municipal services - I see core services as water, roads, garbage removal, transit, library, police, fire, etc. they need to remain although the police line item jumped significantly. Fewer resources could go towards supporting tourism and have those projects funded by existing businesses. Why are we funding the local hospitals - again that should be provincial and I question the community grant program. Climate change funding, diversity, equity and accessibility (except for compliance of physical structures) should be limited/decreased and goals achieved by changing policy and educated employees as part of ongoing management practices. New infrastructure or capitol maintenance should comply with climate change goals of lower emissions, etc.

Anonymous

12/09/2023 12:49 PM

No service reductions, rather I would prefer to see more operational efficiencies.

Anonymous

12/09/2023 07:57 PM

Police (make way to much \$) Garbage (horrible job-don't outsource)

Anonymous

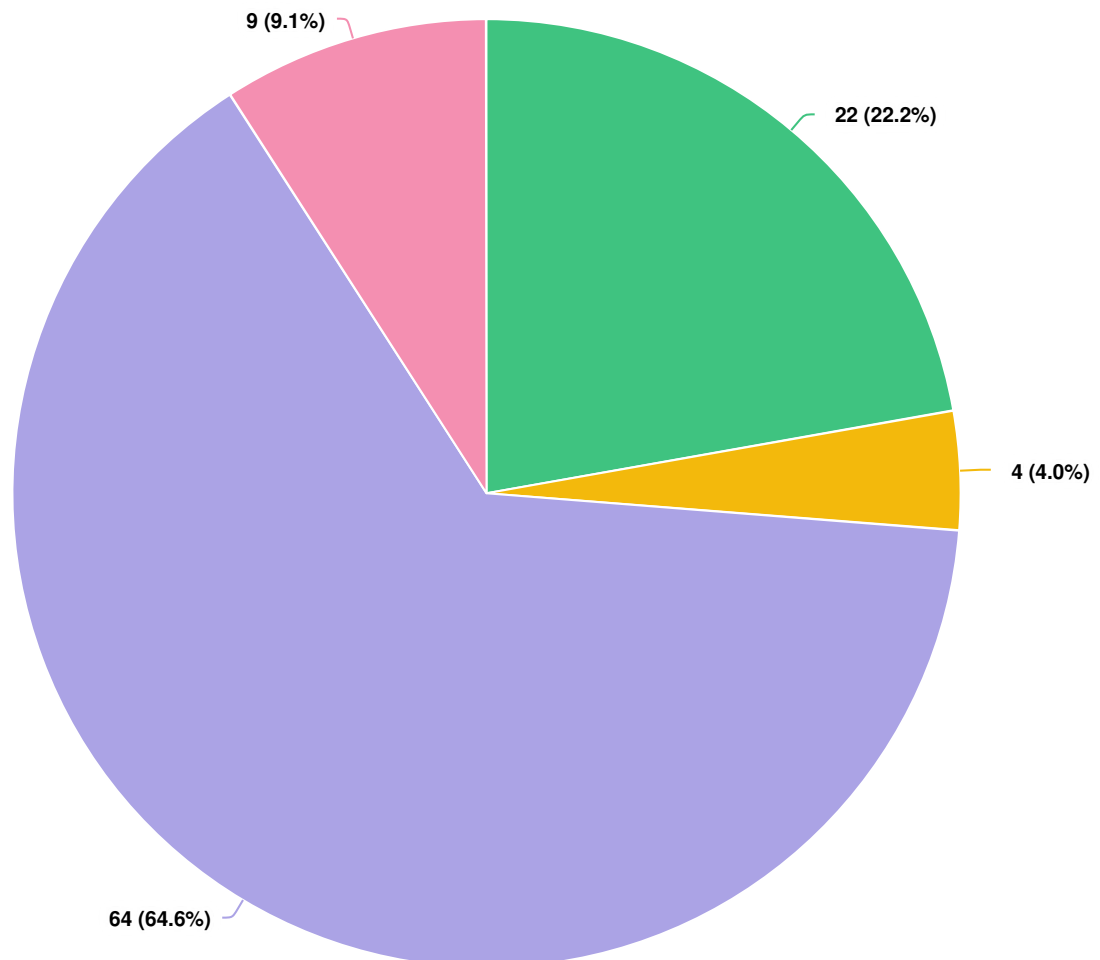
12/11/2023 06:10 AM

Garbage pickup every week is completely unnecessary now that we
have composting!

Optional question (71 response(s), 27 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q10 Some services are paid partially by user fees and partially from taxation, such as recreational facility rentals, transit, and waste management. Do you think this combination approach is appropriate?



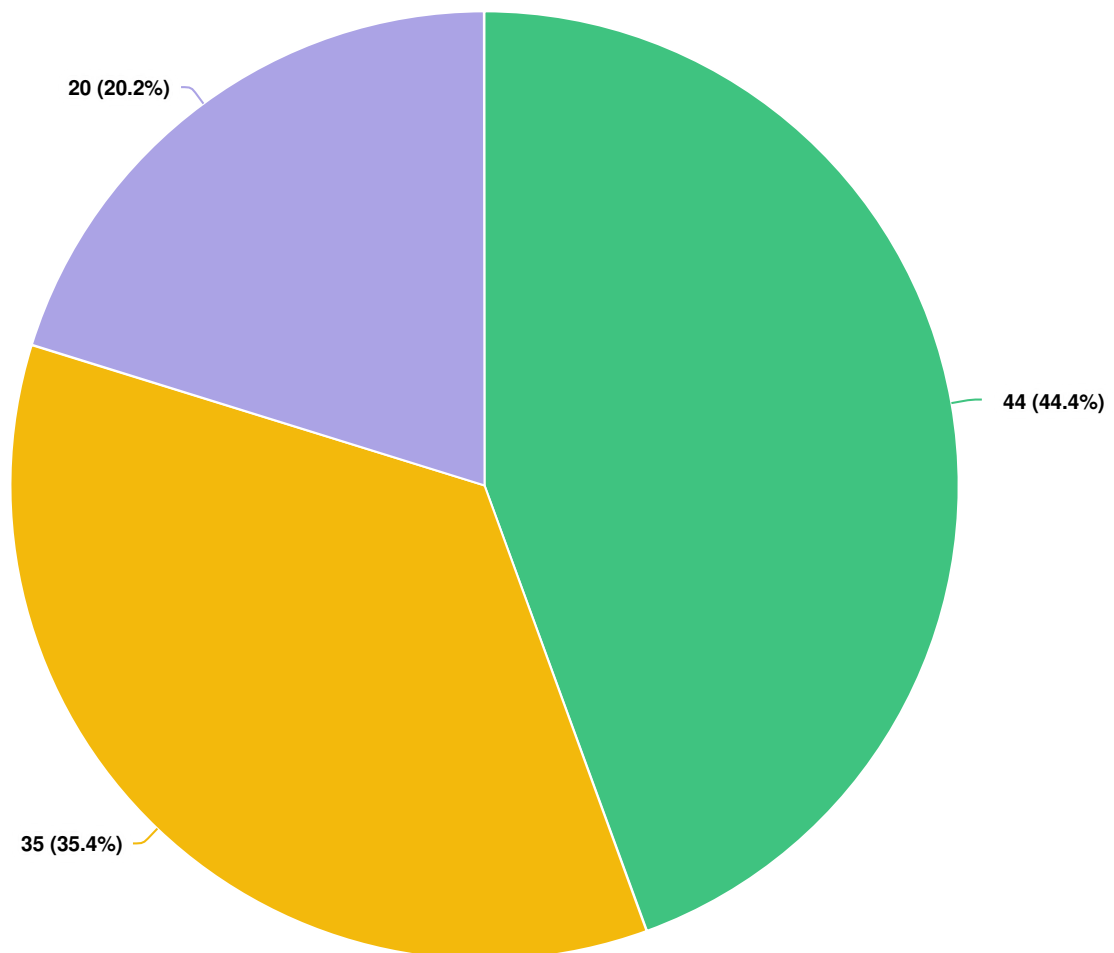
Question options

- No, I think all services that have a user fee should be fully user-pay to reduce property taxation subsidization
- No, I think all services should be paid by taxation, and user fees reduced or eliminated, which would result in the tax levy increasing further
- Yes, I think some subsidization from the tax levy is appropriate, like how it is done now
- Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (98 response(s))

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q11 | The City provides subsidized rates for certain community services, user groups and offers community grants to qualifying organizations. Do you support the use of taxation dollars for this type of community subsidy even though it may mean higher fe...



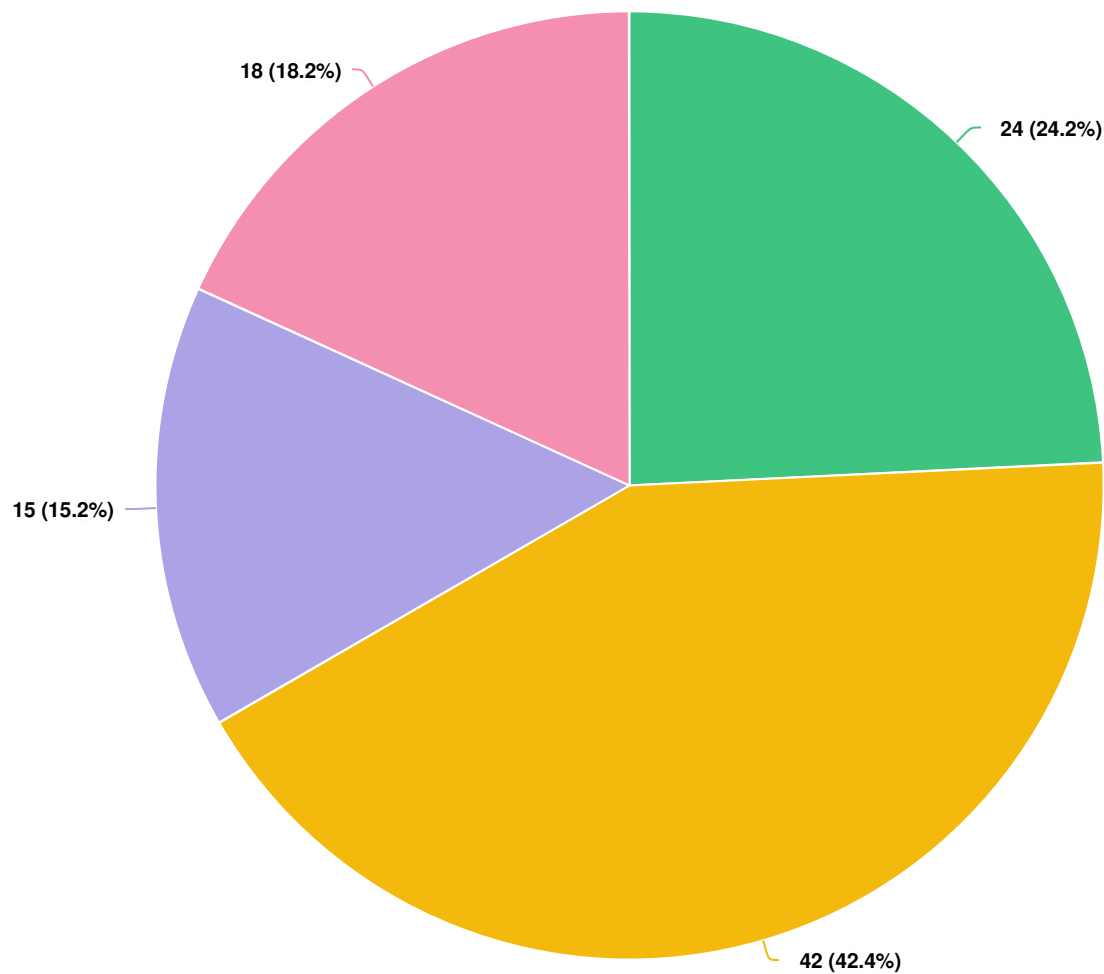
Question options

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (98 response(s))

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q12 To maintain levels of service the City has, until recent years, generally increased property taxes at or less than the rate of inflation. With Canada's current 31-year inflation rate high of 7.6%, costs for standard operations have increased. There...



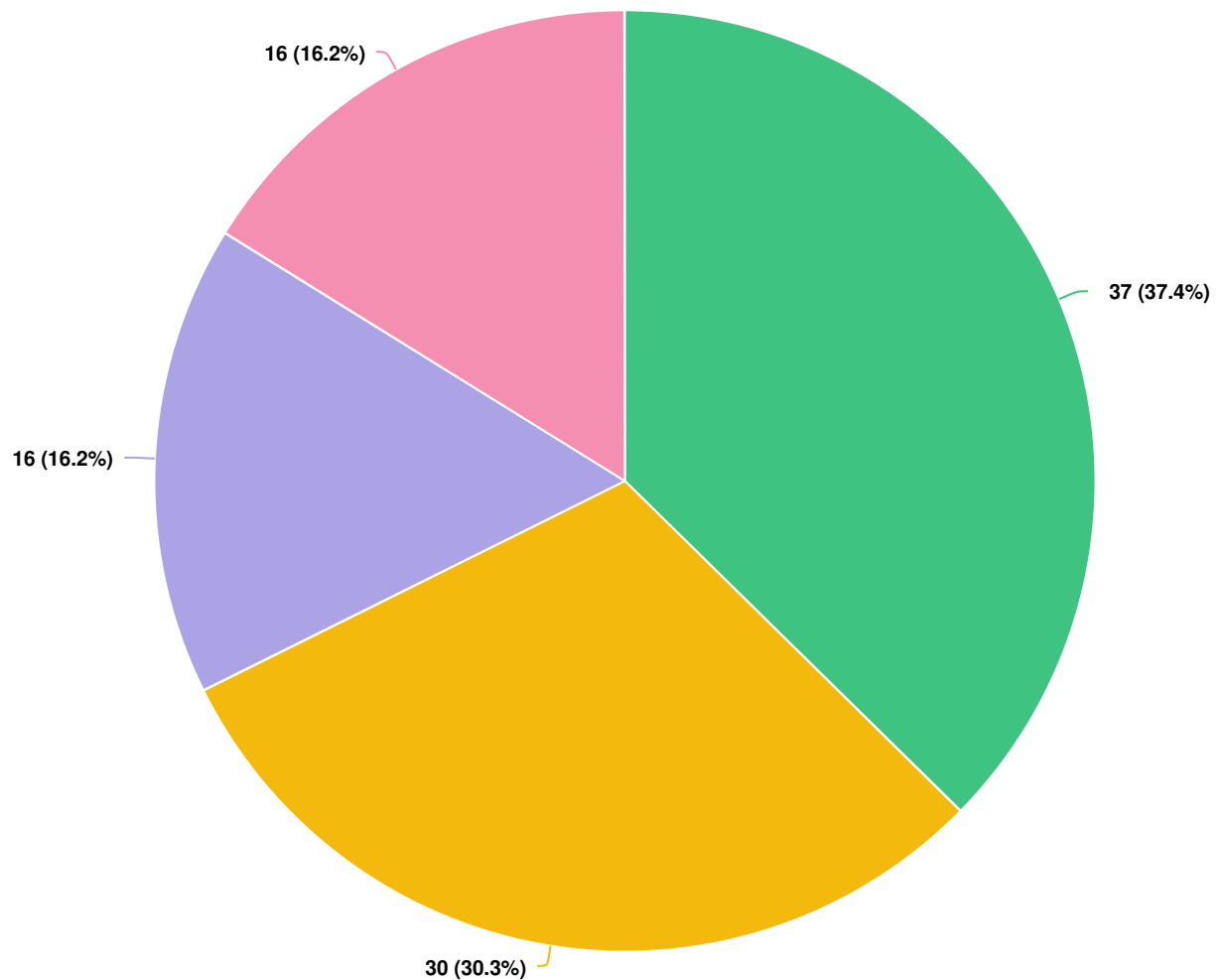
Question options

0% increase 4% increase (estimated 2023 rate of inflation) 7% increase Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (98 response(s))

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q13 Do you support increasing your local taxes to fund identified strategic priorities, such as affordable housing, climate change or accessibility initiatives?



Question options

Yes No Maybe/Unsure Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (98 response(s))

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q14 | If there's any other feedback you would like to provide us on the City of Stratford's 2024 budget, please include it below:

Anonymous

11/22/2023 05:34 PM

Taxes are Too HIGH in Stratford. We are not Nlagara on the Lake

Anonymous

11/27/2023 01:11 PM

I would be interested in the breakdown, percentages, where exactly is the money going

Anonymous

11/27/2023 03:36 PM

Some of our streets corners have become quite busy therefore they have become difficult to cross. More pedestrian crosswalks are needed. This summer I did not use the Lions Pool for myself to do Aquafit nor to take my grand daughters swimming . It is too dangerous crossing Waterloo at William St.

Anonymous

11/27/2023 04:08 PM

increases in taxes only when you increase service, your planning department is so over rated, cant get any business done in town, your heritage committee acts like they are in charge but no financial responsibility your staff need to be more customer service orientated

Anonymous

11/27/2023 04:52 PM

It would be nice to focus on connecting the multi use trails and paths in our community.

Anonymous

11/27/2023 05:21 PM

Thank you for asking.

Anonymous

11/27/2023 07:08 PM

Stratford's property taxes are high, but services are low compared to other municipalities. It is unclear where our money goes.

Anonymous

11/28/2023 10:41 AM

It may be unrealistic to support or request a 0% increase in taxes but, in general, most citizens of Stratford are already struggling given the increase costs of basic needs. An increase will decimate some families and they stand to loose their housing, their livelihoods or they will not be able to afford heating, gas/car payments, basic necessities. We are at a critical point for many citizens. We are seeking a large number of businesses in our core cease to operate due to the effects of the pandemic. We see more and more rough housing cropping up. We have an increase in use of food banks and meal services in our community have more people attending. Significant increases in user fees may negatively influence people

and may reduce usage.

Anonymous

11/28/2023 01:00 PM

Do a better job with the money you get. Get rid of unproductive staff and reduce funding to services that are more user based. Start to get more for your money with good management and planning. Reduce overlap and wastage.

Anonymous

11/28/2023 06:14 PM

please let's be leaders in climate change mitigation and innovative businesses and work aggressively toward sustainability as fast as we can and justice for all in terms of housing, food and wellness

Anonymous

11/29/2023 02:49 PM

The city has declared a climate emergency - the city needs to begin to invest GHG reductions in its corporate operations but more importantly also at the broader community level.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 09:16 AM

Do what is needed.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 01:02 PM

From experience, community members are feeling the pinch financially. I am curious to know how increasing taxes will make things better. The bus system sucks. A round about, not necessarily needed is being built. Affordable housing, not available, with long wait lists. No community programs for teenagers/age appropriate activities. I am curious to know how increasing property taxes will benefit the regular every day family. PLEASE keep in mind, we have worked through tax increases AND NOTHING has changed. We still have a property that is not touched and year after year the plan is to create, at tax payers dollars, and the only thing that comes from this is another committee. Prove that you can balance the budget like everyone in the community, same pay, higher costs, but still finding a way to get by because that is what is expected.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 01:14 PM

Government and some taxpayers have lost in their thinking the difference between what we need and what we want. In the past 3 years my property taxes have gone up 10.5% but my income has actually decreased. I'm not alone with this problem. NEED BEFORE WANT AND THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT BE THE FINAL SAY IN WHAT THEY THINK WE NEED.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 01:21 PM

Ensure when doling out money that proper, visible to community processes are followed. Just learned you gave additional money to Lights on Stratford which is a for profit business!

Anonymous

12/01/2023 01:36 PM

Get st.mary's and perth south I think it is to pay more for police instead of us. Share the cost of a new police station with them

Anonymous

12/01/2023 02:22 PM

There was a time when it was an honor to be on city council, voluntary sacrifice of time etc; but it has become like a paid job, which causes increases in taxes as the stipend rises.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 02:41 PM

Knowing that the majority of changes needed, are rooted in public opinion, and culpability of current officials(whom have made an abundance of missteps, and wrong turns), will more than likely fall upon deaf ears anyways, I simply implore that as a taxpaying citizen for many years, to implement ethics, and morality in your decision-making, above ALL. Citizens are a city's greatest asset, and even if their opinions do not matter now, they will eventually. Do better, as I know you can. Please.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 02:58 PM

No thanx

Anonymous

12/01/2023 03:24 PM

Taxpayers are having a tough time. it's time concil stops wasting money

Anonymous

12/01/2023 06:43 PM

The council should put the tax paying citizens first and the tourists and festival second. They're using the services we're paying for and we're not getting the basic services we need.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 09:12 PM

Raise tourist taxes NOT locals.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 09:28 PM

1. City needs to settle on presenting year to year budget comparisons in the same format; ie. don't mess around moving from cost centre to cost centre. 2. Stop comparing us to other minicipalities for justifications - Stratford is unique 3. Start budget processes earlier, engage and inform citizens earlier (in August/September for in person) 4, Start with Values, Mission Statement, Then review every service to see how they fit AND determine minimum acceptable service levels. Find ways to measure service performancs on an ongoingh basis for every service.

Anonymous

12/01/2023 11:00 PM

Less in tourism. Less in tourism. Less in tourism.

Anonymous

12/02/2023 09:17 AM

There needs to be a reduction in the current collection of garbage
.Other cities have instituted efficiencies re the frequency of collection
.A review of this area would perhaps bring about savings

Anonymous

12/03/2023 10:13 AM

Lower taxes and stop pretending that our town is responsible for
saving the planet, end the climate "emergency"

Anonymous

12/03/2023 11:46 AM

Across the board wage increases for city staff and organizational
structure of municipal staff should be scrutinized. Are there people in
management positions but not actually managing people? It happens
in large corporations, so I'm sure it is no different at municipal levels.

Anonymous

12/03/2023 12:30 PM

I fully support all work currently being done toward affordable housing
and homelessness support, however, it is essential for the City of
Stratford to recognize the unsustainable structure currently in place
that sees people experiencing homelessness put into short-term
motels. For meaningful progress to be made to end homelessness,
funds need to be allocated to developing a functioning homeless
shelter where people can receive shelter, meals, access to hygiene,
and social support needed to improve their circumstances long-term.
It is also vital that the city acknowledges the insufficient resources
and support for local social service workers that is creating a
relentless cycle of social worker burnout that reduces that number of
working providers in this community. I encourage the City of Stratford
to work in collaboration with Provincial and Federal governments to
asses how to better support support workers whose efforts are
indispensable to the long-term goal of ending homelessness in our
community.

Anonymous

12/04/2023 06:47 AM

Please bring go service back to toronto one train a day reaching
union before 9 am and coming back from union after 5 pm

Anonymous

12/04/2023 10:11 AM

We pay very high taxes in stratford as it is, expecially for the very
poor service. Make cuts. Get rid of useless employees. Make
employees actually work. Instead of buying 4 door optioned trucks
buy bare bone regular cab work trucks. Change firefighters shifts to
12 hour like the police so we don't pay people to sleep.

Anonymous

Hard working tax payers cannot afford to build on the Cooper Block

12/04/2023 08:37 PM

right now stop with the nonsense and start running this small town/city as it should be run get the budget in line to reflect the real picture and stop pretending this is a big metropolitan city

Anonymous

12/04/2023 09:38 PM

I fail to understand why so many by-laws are always ignored , so common to see all the entitlement that residence think is acceptable. If fines were increased and applied would not the added income more then off-set the wages, etc to apply and leave addition new money for the city operating budget. There is a movemnet to increase parking fees but it has no purpose if not enforced. Toronto does this and has recently really increased the fines with an eye to a huge amount of new money that they need, Don't we also need money.

Anonymous

12/04/2023 09:55 PM

Transit should be free.

Anonymous

12/04/2023 11:42 PM

Look for win-win scenarios: electric buses need less maintenance, are quieter, and produce zero GHG and particulate matter (will likely reduce sick days for public transport employees and riders)
<https://electrek.co/2023/04/13/new-data-suggest-electric-school-buses-can-improve-attendance/>

Anonymous

12/05/2023 07:54 AM

More bike and active transportation infrastructure subsidized by parking revenue.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 10:32 AM

This survey is welcome, as far as it goes. You'd generate more goodwill, and a better sense of where your public is at, if you took a page from the housing department's consultation on homelessness. There were the apparently unavoidable PowerPoint presentations (which are NOT an effective tool for engagement), but once we got past that there were some very informative, engaging, participatory table top discussions that had the attendees up and moving from table to table for guided discussions of some aspect of the City's housing services. It was an informative, engaging evening. We need more of them.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 10:49 AM

A service review May highlight areas where duplication or redundancy is happening which can reign in costs. Focusing on continuous improvement and taking calculated risks may also positively impact operational costs. Adding flexibility to the union contracts will help control overtime costs. Altering benefits packages may result in cost savings.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 05:00 PM

You seem to take it for granted that it is impossible to maintain the current level of services provided by our tax dollars unless our taxes stay at their current level or increase. What you're offering is a Hobson's choice: basically, we must accept already very high (or increasing) taxes, unless we don't mind services being reduced. Interestingly you don't even offer 'the City must STREAMLINE (not REDUCE) its services, so that municipal taxes can remain the same, or even come down.'

Anonymous

12/05/2023 05:56 PM

Property taxes in Stratford are getting out of reach for the average person and seniors. Be careful not to drive them out of their homes. We need to attract more industries to Stratford by way of incentives and advertisement and in order to attract more workers we need to make housing more affordable and keep the property taxes reasonable. Our Mayor and Council need to work on this.

Anonymous

12/05/2023 08:18 PM

our city declared a climate emergency, thus the budget must reflect that or it was meaningless

Anonymous

12/06/2023 07:51 AM

Allow survey questions to be left blank if no opinion Give a spot to add email to receive the results of survey that will be given to councillors. Less wordy surveys.

Anonymous

12/06/2023 09:31 AM

I do not support any tax money being used for so called 15 minute cities and the climate BS initiatives.....

Anonymous

12/06/2023 01:04 PM

Any budgetary considerations need to be for the benefit of the entire community, or safety/security of the Corporation. Unless otherwise required by legislation, all other projects and budget increases need to be set aside.

Anonymous

12/06/2023 05:56 PM

I can't stress enough how important it is that the downtown police station be made accessible! I've fought for this for years and it's deplorable this city ignores such a vital location. I pray it makes it into the budget.

Anonymous

12/06/2023 07:22 PM

The fact that the city's affordable housing is not even affordable to many is a joke. Housing should not be a burden to municipalities and needs to be a federal government responsibility. We the tax payers cannot afford tax rate increases. I have no idea what this city does

with the money from its tax base, there are many more subdivisions and therefore a higher tax base but our services are poorer than ever. Time for an overhaul of the bureaucracy at city hall, we have too many councillors and the mayors job should never have been made full time. For a city this size it's ridiculous we don't have a leisure centre and that the rotary was built without a pool. Our YMCA is awful and expensive there is plenty for tourists to do but it's time that the citizens of Stratford had some decent recreation facilities and not just for hockey but for all.

Anonymous

12/07/2023 09:37 AM

We have a good life here in Stratford - let's ensure that it stays that way. Please stop the spread of subdivisions built on the farmland that we will need to feed ourselves in future, and stop the unending quest for "growth" that just erodes and weakens the magic that is Stratford.

Anonymous

12/08/2023 03:28 PM

We can not afford any increase.

Anonymous

12/08/2023 03:49 PM

Fire [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] !! We'd save money and get someone whose suited for the job.

Anonymous

12/08/2023 04:34 PM

Stop the financial bleeding that this city is experiencing

Anonymous

12/08/2023 06:40 PM

Having moved from Kitchener Waterloo, please don't take any money from the library! You have the most wonderful library programming of anywhere I have ever lived.

Anonymous

12/08/2023 07:10 PM

Almost all families (who are able) in Stratford travel 20+ minutes to take their children to an indoor, year-round swimming facility. For a city to be lacking this resource is quite surprising.

Anonymous

12/09/2023 08:01 AM

quit hiring all these new people at new positions. take paycuts. tighten the belts in all levels of cityhall

Anonymous

12/09/2023 09:52 AM

We need for resources and facilities for young families.

Anonymous

12/09/2023 09:58 AM

Better daycare options. (Centers not profitable so need to be non profit) and license for home daycares. The YMCA is awful. Please fix it there's no where decent to go for swimming lessons in town.

Anonymous

12/09/2023 12:44 PM

It took an inordinate amount of time to really try and understand the draft budget document supplied especially since the 2023 budget numbers and totals were not included. Infographs would have been useful and a much more user friendly approach is needed. I gave up drilling down through old documents. Unfortunately I could not attend the open house on Dec. 4th, as I intended to, in part because of the timing of the event from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. right over the supper hour. Hopefully, there was better information. I often find that if one knows about opportunities to get more information or to participate, the hours are not often when a person is available to attend or outside the 'normal' working hours. Communications with residents still needs to improve substantially and for significant issues, mailing out newsletters should be considered. More coverage could now be provided in the new local newspaper as well as improving/increasing coverage in the Beacon Marketplace. It is more important to communicate across multiple platforms than ever given the fractured nature of where people get or don't get information now. Do not assume that people will and/or can access information from your website which does need improvements. Actually I do not recall seeing a line item for communications. Ultimately, I need better information about Budget 2024 and hope that the next phase of developing it provides a lower increase and better information on the allocation of funds.

Anonymous

12/09/2023 07:57 PM

Please No more tax !!! We already pay way to much and receive horrific levels of services (ie police roads garbage snow removal) (don't even get me started on the BS facebook post from [REDACTED] on snow removal incredible unprofessional) I don't care about pretty flowers downtown I just want to feed my family and pay my mortgage

Anonymous

12/09/2023 08:00 PM

Not sure how much control the city has over this, but please bring the GO train route to Toronto back. We used this routinely.

Optional question (57 response(s), 41 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

SUMMARY OF OTHER COMMENTS RECEIVED FOR 2024 BUDGET SURVEY

Due to a reporting/summarizing limitation, the responses to questions that had the option of "Other – Please Specify" did not get grouped with the questions in the survey report. Staff are investigating this for future iterations but ask that these responses be considered as additional feedback for the question noted.

Q1. I participate in the City's annual budget process (6 'Other' responses):

- This is my first time. due to recently getting into municipal politics.
- 1st time, moved here in 2019
- First time
- I don't know as the City has ever invited me to participate, and what I mean by that is that the onus is on me to be checking "Engage Stratford" and looking for notices on the City's Facebook page... has the City ever thought of having it's own e-newsletter as an option? i.e., something that reaches out to me?
- When I see it advertised but the city doesn't do a good job of that either.
- First time - newer resident

Q2. I would be interested in participating or engaging in the following activities related to the annual budget process (select all that apply) (4 'Other' responses):

- It would be nice if the City could spend time (and money?) educating and helping citizens become aware of the long term consequences of the budget process. This would require separating the short term political theatre from the long term civic education process.
- I only want to attend public information sessions if in fact there's an intentional process for engaging the attendees in a true conversation. Take a page from the housing department's consultation on homelessness. Once we got past the PowerPoint presentations (which are NOT a tool for engagement) there were some very informative, engaging, participatory tabletop discussions that had the attendees up and moving from table to table for guided discussions of some aspect of the City's housing services. It was a true discussion. I don't want to attend an "information session" at which the communication is all one-way, data heavy, and overwhelming.
- Advocating for accessibility in the budget process.
- Reading information about what is in the budget and trying to understand how funds are allocated and where my tax dollars are going. I would like more user friendly communications in this regard and have it available in local newspapers, mail outs to residents, etc.

Q4. The City is required by law to balance the budget. A number of strategies are available to accomplish this. Of the following, which would you prefer the City use to balance its annual budget? (select all that apply) (28 'Other' responses).

- Wages?
- Stop spending taxpayer dollars on unnecessary consulting and pipedreams like the Cooper Project.
- Introduce new user fees for some City services that currently have no fees reduce the cost of labour, maintain wages, especially over the 100k, no new raises, free salaries, reduce beautification, reduce special interest spending, public transportation... the buses are EMPTY! get smaller buses, service sr/students only
- Divert our excessive police funds to mental health support. Review the excessively high paying wages and really determine if that job can be done by a lower paid person. Allow citizens to offer volunteer services that matter.
- Top heavy management structure could use less people managing people lease or purchase 60 Erie Street for Police headquarters
- decrease staff and especially consultants
- Take more time (for example start now for next year at the same time you debate budget this year). Spend a lot of time thinking about how what you cut/raise/introduce causes and what those causes cause. What are the 5 and 10 and 20 and 50 years plans for the city? Where are we going?
- I don't think in this economic time, to increase fees is wise. May be reduction in staffing or finding ways to improve without over spending
- Stop funding special interest groups/charities as they should be privately funded. Provide a FULL DETAILED copy of the past years budget and actual totals to show where all the money comes from and how it was spent.
- Stop paying to have studies done on stupid things that should be a le to be done in house. No more consultants, that really just get ignored anyway
- Withdraw any, and all potential future municipal funds from the Cooper Block site project plan("community hub") boondoggle. Reduce starting salaries of any general high ranking city official title, effective immediately, and continuing this indefinitely, going forward. Compile, and implement an official ethics committee, consisting ONLY of Stratfordian volunteers, whom fit the following criteria; -- They must be over the age of 18, and under the age of 65. They must not currently have a yearly net income, exceeding \$50,000. They must have no familial, business, or social connections to ANY current member of city council. They must have no current, nor former political authority, whatsoever. They must have full complete access to review the municipal budget, and ensure that ANY spending, or planning of future spending of municipal funds, are done firstly ONLY in accordance with putting the IMMEDIATE needs of residents of Stratford, ahead of ANY cost that does not DIRECTLY affect Stratford residents. Post-

approval of the members of the ethics committee review of the municipal budget, a survey vote will be issued openly to every citizen of Stratford over the age of 18, to determine if the municipal budget appears effective(exceeding 50% approval rating), or ineffective(below 50% approval rating). If it passes, then it must be adhered to, and the ethics committee's purpose will be done, until the following year. If it does not pass, it must be revised, pending feedback, via public forum discussion input. Any, and all raises, or pay increases of any city official, whose annual net salary exceeds \$50,000, must be entirely performance based, and incentivized. This should be calculated via their direct contribution percentile that has either resulted in increased municipal funding allocation increase, or municipal fund spending decrease, so long as in doing so, these do not conflict with the guideline of the ethics committee. Help reduce congestion of local police, by implementing city coordinated proactive crime reductions measures, and increase public awareness, and involvement. An example of this would be to orchestrate an effort to decrease theft, and vandalism, by implementing publicly monitored equipment(such as a bicycle, or vehicle) that can be tracked, or surveyed, in order to identify, and stop assailants whom knowingly, and willingly target these, on a regular basis, thus lowering the amount of public theft, and destruction that occurs, and the need for post-incidental police intervention. This would both allow better dispersal of the officers we have, limit the amount of officers needed, and help decrease the already high demanding workload on officers that could devote their time to more pressing endeavours, whilst helping the community feel more safe, and secured. Other cost-effective pilot programs could be implemented, following the success of these projects, later on as well. These are just a few ideas of many, that the public would undoubtedly back(and HAS, via public opinion on social media), and ensure positive public result, and limit the demonstrously inflating bureaucracy redundancy, that's plaguing our fair city, and it's wonderful citizens.

- Merge the Fire Service communicators with the police service. Eliminate senior departments' foremen, supervisors driving city owned vehicles to their private residences in & out of the city. If they're required, drive their personal vehicles to their office's, switch to a city vehicle parked there then drive it to the area of concern. Why am I seeing city trucks, unmarked police vehicles, etc. parked out of city, "on call doesn't cut it", make it a taxable benefit to that employee. Lowers fuel, insurance, wear & tear. Buy vehicles by local tenders if close, not Hamilton.
- Reduce the level of services specifically in tourism. Parking infractions imposed on ALL despite where they live or if they are travelling. Parking infractions should not only be delegated to locals.
- Other cities of similar size have reduced the number of vehicles they own and do not allow staff to drive back and forth to their residence at lunch or overnight .Why should taxpayers pay for gas and wear and tear .The fact that you drive around town and even places outside our city and see Stratford vehicles in the driveway has to be an expense that could be curtailed immediately . One also

wonders if the fire dept. needs the number of small vehicles they own .How do the above compare to other similar sized communities . I also think that there needs to be a concerted effort to review the number of contracts that are let and see if there could be some reduction of same

- Cut the fat!!
- Reduce the level of services (e.g. reduced hours, frequency), Increase user fees (e.g. ice, room and facility rentals, transit, bag tags), Introduce new user fees for some City services that currently have no fees
- Reduce city staff, stop hiring staff. Inefficient and bloated staffing needs to be addressed like all levels of government.
- Review and amend current by-laws to best reflect the current needs of the Stratford community and thereby reduce the need for by-law enforcement. (Line 252)
- Without impacting people and give more good service to people
- Reduce the level of services (e.g. reduced hours, frequency). Make cuts. Way to many city workers making to much money to do no work. Too many lazy employees. I have friends that work for the city and they said the worst part is getting used to the extremely slow pace everyone works at. I work in a lot of city buildings. There would be no problem laying off 20 percent of public works to start.
- I think you have to consider all your options. But, that said, user fees are a heavier burden to the less well-off. I would not support adding or increasing user fees for services that tend to be more used by the economically disadvantage.
- Reduce councillors' and mayor's salaries. Streamline the bureaucracy and service delivery--in order to avoid needing additional tax increases (re question 5).
- Cut use of consultants
- Stop trying to grow Stratford - the growth will destroy all that is beautiful about this community. Use those resources to support and strengthen what's here now.
- Stop spending money on flower beds and useless tourist stuff and look after the people that live here not increase pricing. Do you not see how many houses your allowing to be built when they come you will have more money.
- Reduce the level of services (e.g. reduced hours, frequency). reduce council salary. they are over paid for what they do.
- Improve efficiency and reduce waste in your processes.
- Lobby provincial governments to increase funding and reverse downloading. Increase public awareness and education about the provincial governments role in increasing our local taxes. You did not provide an option to identify priorities or what areas to cut funding such as Economic Development and Tourism, Destination Stratford ,, BIA or Community Grants

Q6. Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with the services that your tax dollars currently support (2 'Other' responses):

- question 5 is missing option of less admin staffing taxes stay same or increase for and services stay the same or better less vehicles leaving the city limits after hours
- Satisfied, BUT we regularly see City of Stratford employees' vehicles idling when they are doing jobs like flushing hydrants or just having a break (?)--this is a basic and shamefully unnecessary use of gas.

Q10. Some services are paid partially by user fees and partially from taxation, such as recreational facility rentals, transit, and waste management. Do you think this combination approach is appropriate? (9 'Other' responses)

- Don't know enough to comment
- I think things should be subsidized but that the proportion paid by user fees should be higher, using a sliding scale depending on user's financial resources
- depends on the service
- User fees? garbage and snow plowing my street I pay 1200.00 a year extra for now. Many times I see big buses traveling around 1 or 2 people only. A "fair" price (competitive with other local private locations) for rental facilities if government even should be in the rental business. Residents already pay fees for garbage, use of a bus and rental areas.
- Taxes should not cover recreation facility rentals. That should be 100% user fee
- Some mix of fees and taxation is a fact of life. I don't agree with a wholesale "user-pay" approach, especially when the "user" is a less well-off member of our community who, proportionally, is getting hit much harder than the economically advantaged.
- Please allow a no response to questions
- I think if the city actually was innovative in these subsidized areas, I wouldn't mind paying for them either via taxation or user fees...but as they stand now you don't run these with the mindset of a prodigal business venture so they're not innovatively delivering exemplary services.
- User fees yes-but not garbage tags

Q11: The City provides subsidized rates for certain community services, user groups and offers community grants to qualifying organizations. Do you support the use of taxation dollars for this type of community subsidy even though it may mean higher fees or taxes for others? (20 'Other' responses)

- Not sure, can't comment.
- depends on the service / group / organization
- I think we need to continue to scrutinize the grants and subsidized rates we offer to qualifying organizations. We may need to defer financial support or even eliminate some funding if we can not afford to support all the groups that seek funding.

- Would like to know which groups or organizations before I could agree or disagree.
- Maybe I should attend a meeting so I know which organizations are being supported
- Yes, if a registered charity
- Unsure/not enough info.
- To level the fairness, all such required fees ought to come from general taxation.
- I neither agree or disagree.
- I support programs that help the less fortunate I think anything done to support Stratford Festival and Destination Tourism should be reviewed
- careful scrutiny needs to be applied
- Massive difference between \$2000 for a spay neuter program and \$300000 for lights.
- Yes, I support it, but I don't think an increase in subsidy is necessary at this time.
- limit the number of qualified services, groups, organization Stop favoritism and select qualified organizations that budget properly
- Without information about who these "qualifying organizations" are, it's not possible to answer this question.
- If it's for people who deserve it yes but if it's for welfare freeloaders NO.
- I'm not sure - I would like more information on who is benefiting. What kind of organizations?
- This is a complicated question without the detail and logic. I do not know what we are supporting. I do support certain subsidies especially in the form of shared use of resources i.e. building space. As a society we need a more coordinated approach to provide the needed social services. It is way too piecemeal. I do not necessarily support the community grants but again not sure why they exist. I have questioned why some that have been awarded and announced in the local newspaper.
- Depends on the groups and services, in general okay with this use of tax dollars

Q12: To maintain levels of service the City has, until recent years, generally increased property taxes at or less than the rate of inflation. With Canada's current 31-year inflation rate high of 7.6%, costs for standard operations have increased. There is an even greater increase in inflation for infrastructure and maintenance at around 17%.Based on your expectations for service levels, what is your acceptable level of tax increase in 2024? (18 'Other' responses)

- Whatever is required to come to grips with maintaining our aging infrastructure
- 1-2%
- 2 %

- Keep at 4% or close to and find ways to actually get more out of City employees and reduce a really fat City payroll.
- whatever is deemed necessary to appropriately care for people and planet
- Higher than 7%
- Confusing question, unclear. Taxation should not be seen as an automatic overall increase by (somewhat) relevant inflationary measures, but based on real need for service levels. Biggest need is for city hall and elected representatives to determine what is adequate service levels and start from there. Exercise would be: "what happens if we keep budgets to last year static? what happens if we add 2%, 5%, 7% ? How are service levels affected?
- 2% along with some belt tightening .For example is the current rate of Supervisory personnel to staff within equivalent industry ratios ?
- People are struggling. As close to 0 as possible.
- I expect lower taxes, inflation Impacts everyone, not just the city. People need relief, not to be nickel and dimed more by the city
- 1%
- 10%
- 3%
- The increase should be based on the needs of the asset management plan. Forget about everything else and focus on the need to maintain.
- 5.8% The average bw projection and actual
- 4% or less and the same basic service levels As previously mentioned, the proposed rate is too high and the increases in 2022 and 2023 were substantial and in line with inflation. Municipalities need to fight back against Ford and get more funding/services from the provincial level. Downloading onto property owners is not equitable. Raise provincial taxes equitably. In the interim focus on core services and maintaining/increasing efficiencies i.e. I did note software enhancements that make sense and trim where you can as per some of my other suggestions.
- 2%

Q13: Do you support increasing your local taxes to fund identified strategic priorities, such as affordable housing, climate change or accessibility initiatives? (16 'Other' responses)

- Not if the larger portion of our tax base goes to administration
- Nothing has been affordable Promises have benefits made for affordable house, but people still struggle. Wait lists are long. So, no to increases until things are justified
- No to affordable housing and climate change. Accessibility initiatives may need some support.
- No, you would just waste it on more studies
- Yes, with the caveat of climate change. That a federal responsibility, that should work with provincial and municipal co-operation, and voluntary participation.

- Again unclear. Increase for Affordable Housing - YES; Increase for Climate Change: - NO (feds should be helping); Increase for accessibility initiatives: YES, on case by case basis.
- Yes, if it is legitimately affordable housing. Not what a politician or our Mayor considers "affordable".
- Yes for affordable housing and accessibility initiatives Yes depending on what climate changes are being looked at I worry about what 'strategic priorities' might be ie Grand Trunk development and ongoing use of 'consulting firms for everything'
- Important priorities that should be implemented at expense of recreation decreases or staffing /vehicle reductions .
- Depends. Housing yes. Tourism no.
- The city could take all of everyone's money and they would still not be able to make any noticeable impact on the "housing crisis" or "climate change". Please stop wasting everyone's money on things that are beyond your control and abilities, end the fake declaration of a climate emergency and stop wasting our resources on issues that are beyond our control
- Yes BUT only if we are not funding unending navel gazing sessions. Take ACTION based on best practices from other communities. And ensure that there is benefit to the community from the action you take - ie. provide safe and SUPPORTED housing AND enforce rules around public behaviour / tent encampments etc.
- Yes but first you need to get the people in charge of those fired as they don't know what there doing currently.
- Only if done correctly to actually help those issues
- I support increases for not for profit, subsidized housing at realistic rents not the current definition used of affordable housing. At this time unless grant funding (as commented on previously) is used I do not support substantial increases in residential property taxes for climate change or accessibility.