

---

---

# 2017 Business Plan and Budget Process – Public Engagement Results

## Recommendation

That the Governance and Priorities Committee refer this report to the 2017 Business Plan and Budget deliberations.

## Topic and Purpose

This report outlines the results of the public engagement activities for the 2017 Business Plan and Budget.

## Report Highlights

1. Overall, citizens support increases in service levels or spending on road maintenance, affordable housing, transit, snow and ice management, and traffic management.
2. According to the 2016 Civic Services Survey, citizens prefer a combination of user fees and property taxes as the most appropriate way to pay for services and balance the City of Saskatoon (City) operating budget.
3. From May 13 to June 24, 2016, there were over 2,600 unique visitors to the Online Citizen Budget site and 803 citizens submitted their online budget.
4. The majority of respondents who participated in the in-person surveys would like to see increased service levels for road maintenance, transit, affordable housing, planning and growth, recreation and culture, and snow and ice management. Surveys were conducted at various locations across Saskatoon.

## Strategic Goal

The Business Plan and Budget process impacts all of the City's Strategic Goals. Therefore, this report addresses all of these goals.

## Background

At its April 18, 2016, meeting, the Governance & Priorities Committee considered a report from the City Manager outlining a four-phased approach to the 2017 Business Plan and Budget. The report identified the major engagement opportunities that would be made available during Phase II (May – July 2016) of the process.

## Report

City Council and the Administration consider several factors when building the City's annual budget including: the population, inflation, capital investments, City Council priorities, performance measures, and public input. The following information summarizes the Shaping our Financial Future engagement results that will be considered by the Administration in building the 2017 business plan and budget.

## Summary of Results

The major engagement opportunities offered between May and June 2016, included the Civic Services Survey, Online Citizen Budget, and in-person surveys.

## 2017 Business Plan and Budget – Public Engagement Results

As Table 1 highlights, the combined engagement results from all activities show citizens generally support increases in service levels or an increase in spending on road maintenance, affordable housing, transit, snow and ice management, and traffic management.

<b>Table 1: Consolidated Engagement Results</b>	More	Same	Less	
Road Maintenance	<b>63%</b>	32%	5%	Strong support for more
Affordable Housing	<b>44%</b>	<b>40%</b>	19%	Moderate support for more
Transit	<b>42%</b>	<b>42%</b>	16%	Moderate support for more
Snow & Ice Management	<b>44%</b>	<b>49%</b>	7%	Moderate support for more
Traffic Management	<b>40%</b>	<b>49%</b>	11%	Moderate support for more
Police	33%	<b>51%</b>	16%	About the same
Community Grants	28%	<b>53%</b>	19%	About the same
Recreation & Culture	31%	<b>56%</b>	13%	About the same
Parks	21%	<b>69%</b>	10%	About the same
Garbage & Waste Reduction	19%	<b>72%</b>	9%	About the same
Planning for Growth & Development	33%	<b>27%</b>	<b>41%</b>	About the same or less
Fire	15%	<b>31%</b>	<b>54%</b>	About the same or less

More details are offered in Attachment 1, which provides consolidated results for 12 service categories by a percentage of responses. Attachment 2 complements this information by providing the number of responses for each engagement activity.

### Civic Services Survey

The 2016 Civic Services survey was conducted between May 9 and June 3 with a total of 500 telephone and 803 online respondents. The detailed results are the subject of a separate report, but the following briefly summarizes the data specific to providing input into the budget.

As Table 2 illustrates, most citizens prefer a combination of user fees and property taxes as the most appropriate way to pay for services and balance the City's 2017 operating budget. These findings are largely consistent with results for the 2016 budget.

<b>Table 2: Budget Balancing</b>	Telephone	Online
Combination of property taxes and user fee increases	<b>47%</b>	<b>29%</b>
Not sure/prefer not to say	16%	31%
Reduce service levels / Discontinue a service	17%	18%
Increase existing user fees	10%	7%
Introduce new user or service fee	5%	11%
Increase property taxes	4%	4%

Furthermore, Table 3 indicates that most citizens prefer to see increased service levels for road maintenance and affordable housing. However, there is modest support for increased service levels for snow and ice management, traffic management, transit, and to a lesser extent growth planning and policing. These findings are similar to the 2015 survey.

## 2017 Business Plan and Budget – Public Engagement Results

<b>Table 3: Spending Preferences</b> Excludes those who responded “Don’t Know”	<b>More Service</b>		<b>Same</b>		<b>Less Service</b>	
	Phone	Online	Phone	Online	Phone	Online
Road Maintenance	<b>70%</b>	<b>70%</b>	27%	26%	2%	2%
Affordable Housing	<b>54%</b>	<b>53%</b>	32%	28%	8%	9%
Snow & Ice Management	<b>46%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>46%</b>	2%	2%
Traffic Management	<b>44%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>47%</b>	3%	4%
Transit	<b>43%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>37%</b>	5%	6%
Planning & Growth	<b>38%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>45%</b>	8%	11%
Police	<b>33%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>47%</b>	7%	8%
Recreation & Cultural Programs	23%	22%	<b>62%</b>	<b>62%</b>	11%	9%
Community Grants	20%	21%	<b>59%</b>	<b>43%</b>	13%	21%
Garbage Collection	14%	17%	<b>80%</b>	<b>75%</b>	5%	4%
Fire	13%	15%	<b>82%</b>	<b>76%</b>	2%	3%
Parks Maintenance	13%	13%	<b>80%</b>	<b>75%</b>	5%	7%

For more detailed information, refer to the 2016 Civic Services Survey report. Attachments are available at [saskatoon.ca/financialfuture](http://saskatoon.ca/financialfuture) for more details.

### Citizen Budget – Online

For the second consecutive year the Administration launched an online budget tool called “Citizen Budget”. This tool was open to the public on May 13 to June 24, 2016.

During this period, Citizen Budget had over 2,600 unique visitors and a total of 803 online budget submissions, compared to 2,448 visitors and 503 online submissions in 2015. This is an increase of 60% for online budget submissions. Although the results cannot be considered statistically reliable, the sample size matches the 2016 Civic Services Survey online, and the demographic breakdown of respondents by age and Suburban District Area are generally comparable.

<b>Table 4: Online Citizen Budget</b>	<b>Invest More</b>	<b>Combined Total</b>
1. Road Maintenance	Invest up to 4% more	<b>13% more</b>
2. Community Grants	Invest up to 3% more	
3. Snow & Ice Management	Invest up to 2% more	
4. Recreation & Culture	Invest up to 2% more	
5. Garbage & Waste Reduction	Invest up to 1% more	
6. Parks	Invest up to 1% more	
	<b>Invest Less</b>	<b>Combined Total</b>
7. Transit	Invest up to 1% less	<b>6% less</b>
8. Planning for Growth & Development	Invest up to 1% less	
9. Affordable Housing	Invest up to 2% less	
10. Police	Invest up to 2% less	
	<b>No Change</b>	
11. Traffic Management	No change	
12. Fire	No change	

As summarized in Table 4 on the previous page, results show citizens would increase spending in half of the service categories including: road maintenance, community grants,

snow and ice management, recreation and culture, garbage and waste reduction, and parks.

Attachment 3 provides a more detailed summary of Online Citizen Budget Results. All of the Online Citizen Budget comments provided for each of the 12 service categories are available at [saskatoon.ca/financialfuture](http://saskatoon.ca/financialfuture).

Citizen Budget – On the Road (In Person Survey)

To ensure the broadest reach and to provide opportunities for everyone to provide input, the Administration took the Citizen Budget to various locations throughout the city to conduct in person surveys. Locations included were: Sobeys, Saskatoon Farmers’ Market, and Market Mall. The results from this engagement activity are not statistically reliable and cannot be considered representative of the citizens of Saskatoon. Furthermore, respondents did not necessarily provide input on all 12 service categories. Therefore, total participation varies for each. Nonetheless, the responses from this activity still provide important input into the process.

When considering the total participants in each question, Table 5 shows the majority of respondents would like to see increased service levels for road maintenance and transit. Similar to the 2016 Civic Services Survey, a moderate amount of citizens would like to increase service levels for snow and ice management, as well as planning and growth. They also identify a potential increase in service levels for affordable housing and recreational and culture.

<b>Table 5: On the Road</b> Excludes those who responded “Don’t Know”	More Service	Same	Less Service	Total
Road Maintenance	89%	6%	5%	132
Transit	84%	12%	4%	108
Affordable Housing	78%	10%	12%	85
Planning & Growth	77%	17%	4%	69
Recreation & Cultural Programs	77%	15%	8%	60
Snow & Ice Management	76%	19%	5%	98
Traffic Management	69%	26%	5%	70
Parks Maintenance	60%	32%	7%	60
Police	52%	27%	21%	67
Community Grants	56%	24%	20%	59
Garbage Collection & Waste Reduction	56%	38%	6%	61
Fire	26%	63%	11%	62

Attachment 4 provides details for On the Road Citizen Budget Results. However, demographic information is not available for the in-person surveys.

**Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement**

In addition to reaching out to the broader public, in 2016 invitations were sent to 1,477 individuals who signed up for the Citizen Advisory Panel on [saskatoon.ca](http://saskatoon.ca). The invitation was sent on Sunday, May 22 asking them to participate and submit their input using Citizen Budget. Although Administration is not able to confirm how many completed and submitted the input on the budget, we can say that 1,008 (68.2%) opened the email and 569 (38.5%) clicked through to the survey.

### **Communication Plan**

The Shaping our Financial Future engagement opportunities were promoted through news media, website advertising on saskatoon.ca and Shaping Saskatoon, social media posting on Twitter and Facebook, City Page advertisement, ads to various organizations and community groups (Community Associations, business leaders, etc.), posters at the leisure facilities and libraries, and in person at events such as the Civic Pancake Breakfast.

### **Financial Implications**

The cost (excluding the Civic Services Survey) for communications and engagement is approximately \$18,000, and the project is funded through existing operating budgets.

### **Other Considerations/Implications**

There are no policy, environmental, Privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations.

### **Public Notice**

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

### **Attachments**

1. Consolidated Results: Shown as a Percentage (%) of Responses
2. Consolidated Results: Shown as a Number (#) of Responses
3. Online Citizen Budget Results (May 13 to June 25, 2016)
4. On the Road (In-Person Survey) Citizen Budget Results

### **Report Approval**

Written by: Carla M. Blumers, Director of Communications  
Reviewed by: Catherine Gryba, General Manager, Corporate Performance  
Department  
Approved by: Murray Totland, City Manager

2017 Business Plan and Budget Process – Public Engagement Results.docx