



2026 Capital & Operating Budget Phase 1: Public Engagement Report

Background & Objectives

Background

A municipality's annual budget is an important policy document that dictates how the City will collect and allocate resources to best improve and maintain City services and infrastructure for the community.

The City of Belleville's budget is broken down into two components: capital and operating. While residents have always been welcome to take part in the budget process by providing their feedback to their council representatives, there has been a significant effort in recent years to encourage more thorough public engagement in the process.

The first phase of the engagement process for the 2026 capital and operating budgets consisted of a short, high-level Preliminary Budget Survey to gauge residents spending priorities. Questions in the survey looked at ranking and prioritizing City services. Feedback collected during this phase will be used to develop guidelines for budget preparations.

The second phase in the engagement approach will come closer to the finalization of the budget and will be a more specific survey of the proposed capital and operating budgets. These surveys will break down each budget and allow residents to weigh in on the specific items identified by staff in their draft budgets.

Objectives

The goal behind this year's communications and engagement strategy was as follows:

- Provide residents with additional educational material and resources around the budget process.
- Encourage direct engagement from as many residents as possible.
- Provide council and staff with public feedback to help shape a budget and plan that best serves their residents.



Engagement Strategy

Timeline

- July & August – Presentation of preliminary survey results to Council and obtain operating & capital budget guidelines.
- October – Draft Capital Budget posted and public survey released to obtain feedback.
- November – Capital Budget Council meeting and presentation of feedback received.
- January – Operating Budget posted and public survey released to obtain feedback
- February – Operating Budget Council meetings and presentation of feedback received.



Tactics

Communications has used a number of channels to inform and engage the public through this first phase of engagement, including:

- New 2026 Budget Webpage
- Online Survey
- Budget 101 Document
- Comment Card
- Direct Mailouts in Tax Notices
- Media Release
- Email to News Subscribers
- Website Alert
- Social Media (Paid & Organic)
- Community Press Ad
- InQuinte/Quinte News Ads
- Digital Billboard
- Roadside Signs
- QSWC Marquee & TV Screens
- Newsletter

Results & Metrics

Communications around the 2026 Preliminary Budget Survey have garnered the following results:

Webpage

Total estimated views of webpage during survey period (May 13-June 6):

- Belleville.ca/Budget – 236 (35% increase compared to previous period of April 18-May 12)
- Get Involved 2026 Budget Webpage – 36
- News Release – 99

Social Media

Social media metrics during survey period (May 13-June 6):

- Facebook (Organic) – 2 Posts Total with Average Reach of 1,396 and Engagement of 19
- Facebook (Paid) – 1 Boosted Post with Reach of 15,863 and Engagement of 771
- Twitter – 2 Organic Posts Total with Average Reach of 203 and Engagement of 11

Digital

- Email to News Subscribers – Reached 393 Subscribers
- Belleville Updates Newsletter – Reached 385 Subscribers
- InQuinte Ad – Ran for 1 Week with 15,376 Total Impressions and 44 Clicks

Print

- Community Press Ad – Total Reach of Approx. 18,553 Belleville Households
- Informational Buck Slip – Mailed to Approx. 22,000 Belleville Households in Tax Notices

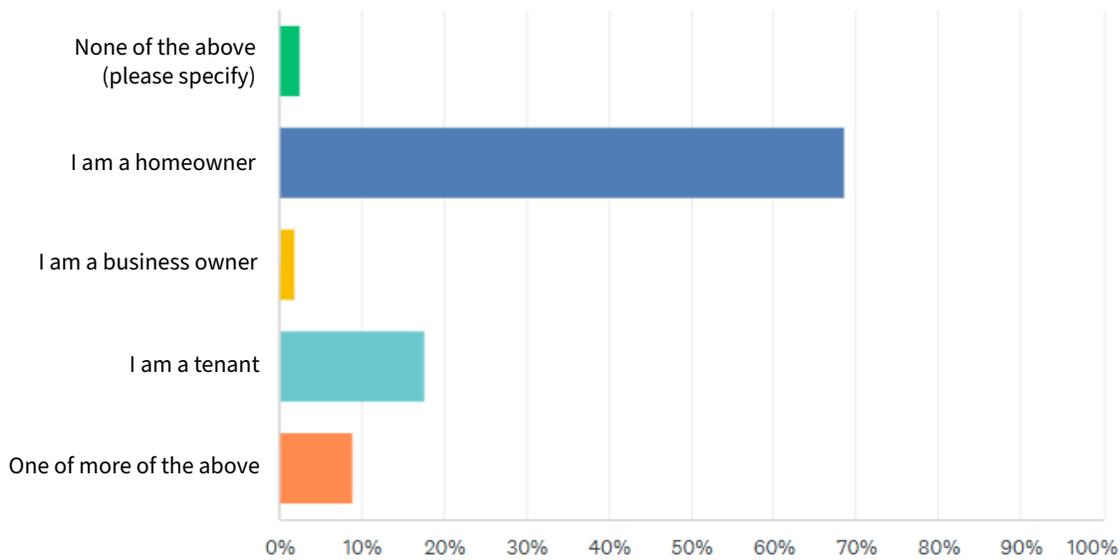
The results above were collected using Google Analytics, Meta Business Suite, Twitter Analytics, iCreate reporting and annual average daily traffic (as last reported in 2014).



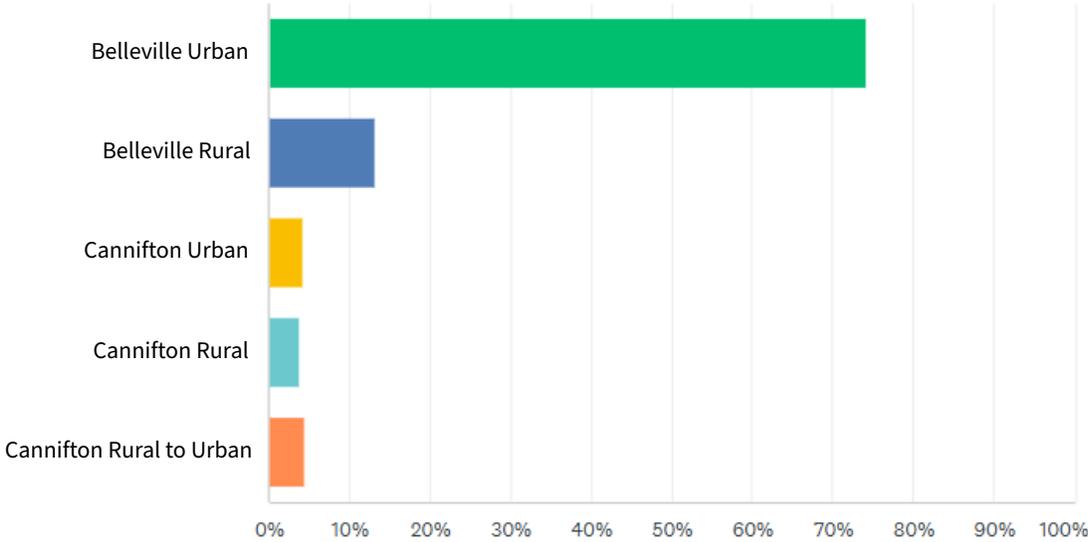
Survey Summary

The 2026 Preliminary Budget Survey ran from May 13 to June 6. Below is a summary of the 705 total responses and feedback received through the survey period. Highlights of comments under “Please Specify” for question 8 can be found beneath the question. See Appendix A for detailed responses.

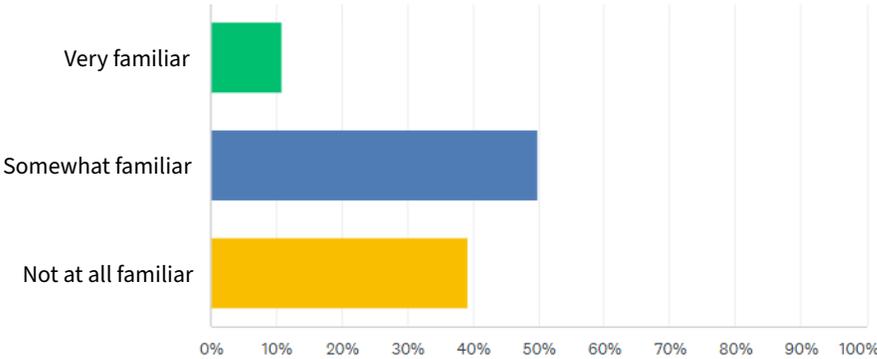
Q1: Do you live and/or own a business in Belleville?



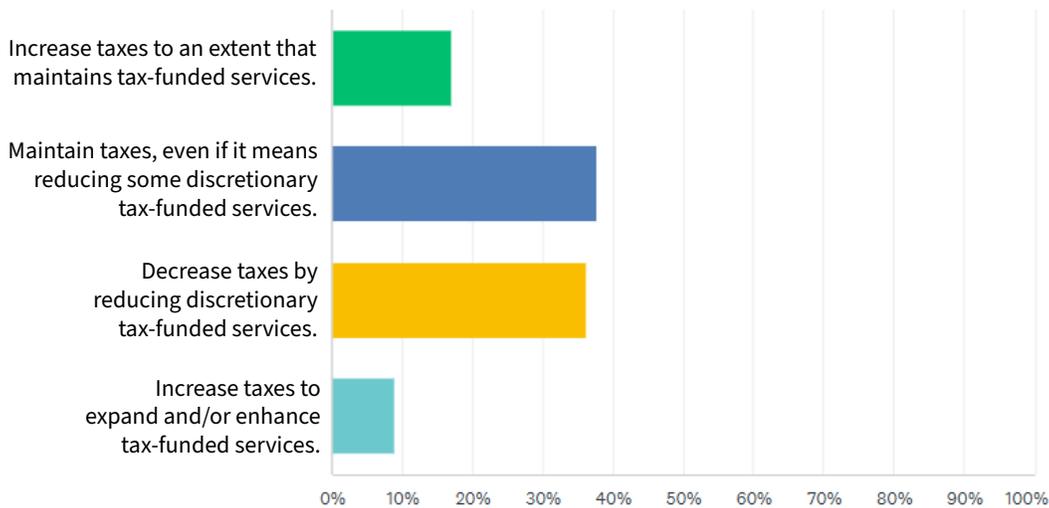
Q2: Which tax billing area do you live in?



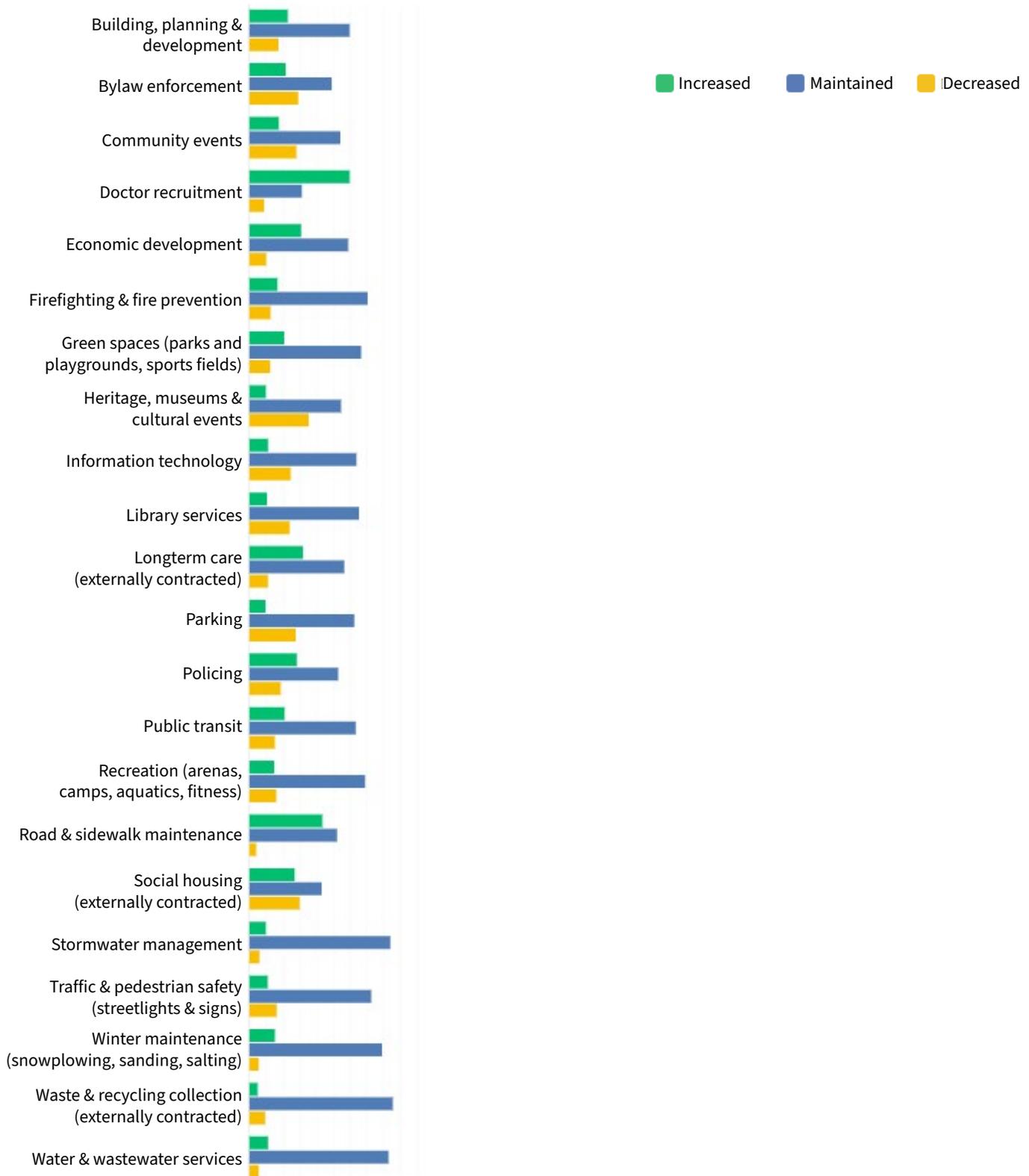
Q3: How familiar are you with how the City develops the annual Capital and Operating Budgets?



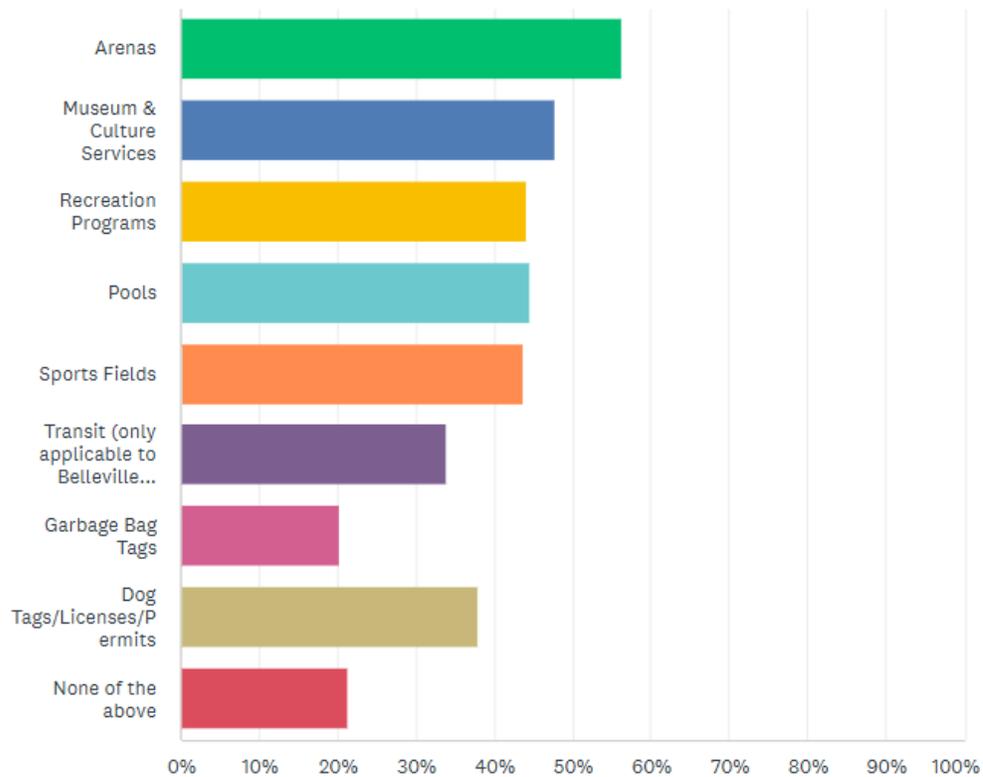
Q4: Due to the increased cost of maintaining service levels and supporting infrastructure, the City must balance property taxes with increasing demand for services. The City has a number of options when balancing the budget, which includes the management of discretionary services. Please indicate which of the following statements below comes close to capturing your point of view:



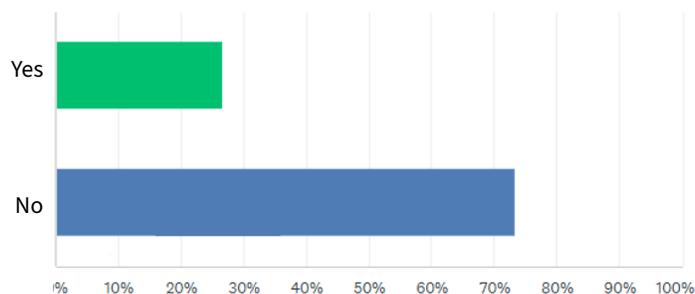
Q5: For each of services listed below that are directly or indirectly provided by the City, please indicate whether the level of service should be increased, maintained, or decreased...



Q6: The following services are partially funded user fees. Please identify which service(s) you would support an increase in user fees to reduce reliance on property taxes (select all that apply)...



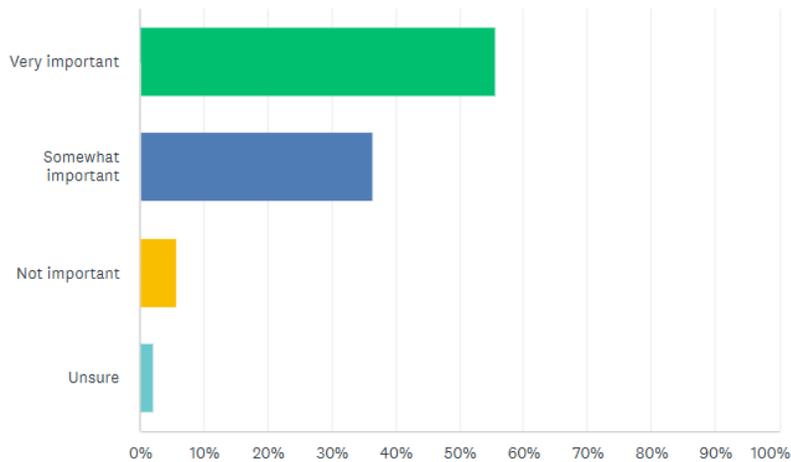
Q7: The City intends to update its 2025 Departmental Operating Plan in the annual budget process. This document provides a comprehensive overview of past accomplishments, strategic objectives, operational goals, key initiatives, key performance indicators, and budget projections for the upcoming year. Based on the City's existing Key Performance Indicators, are there additional performance indicators and/or activities that you would like the City to regularly report on?



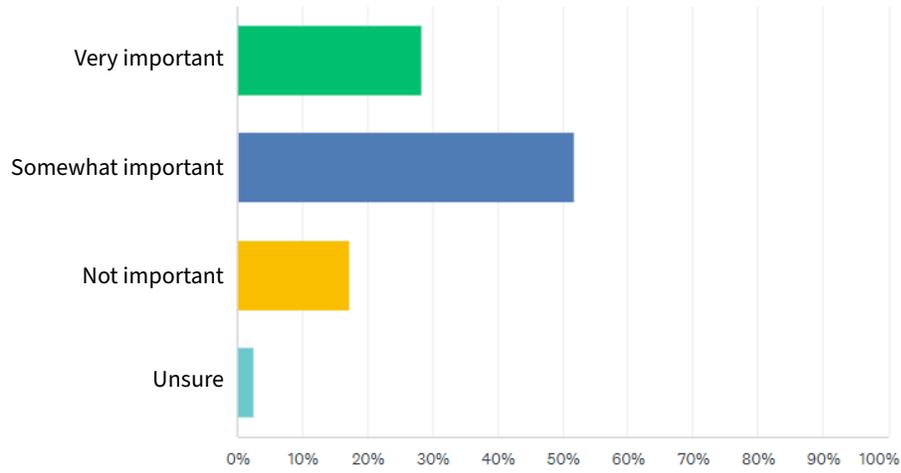
Respondents are seeking performance metrics that:

- Enhance transparency by clearly outlining how tax dollars are allocated and identifying opportunities for cost savings and operational efficiencies.
- Increase public understanding of the use and effectiveness of safety services, including Police, Fire, and By-law Enforcement.
- Showcase the City's initiatives and measurable outcomes in addressing homelessness and social challenges to support informed funding decisions.
- Track and improve the City's responsiveness to infrastructure needs, focusing on road, sidewalk, and general maintenance quality.
- Measure and report on progress related to housing affordability, economic development, and overall community growth.

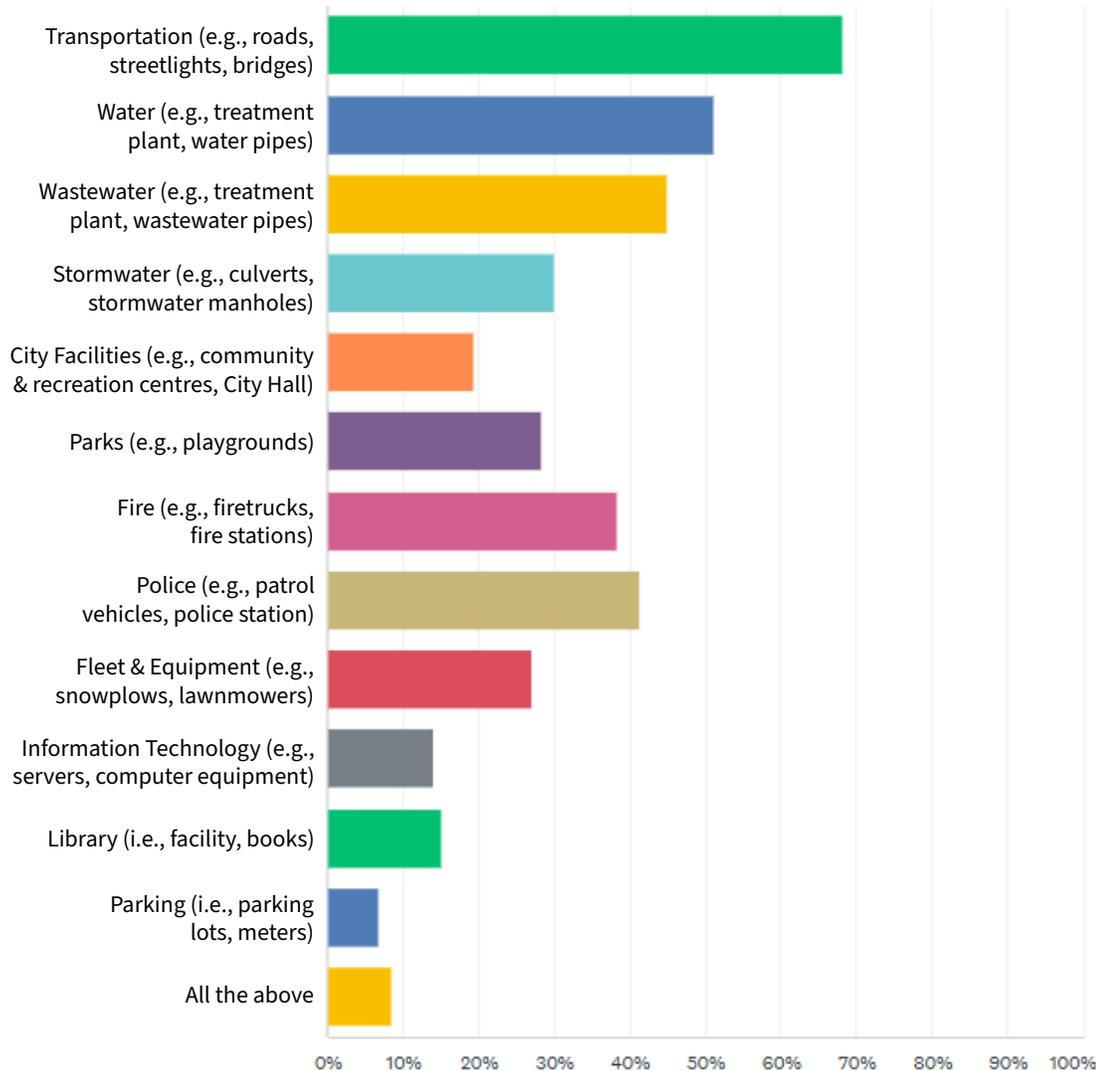
Q8: The Capital Budget is the City’s plan for making large investments in infrastructure. Capital expenses include major maintenance to public buildings, construction or purchase of new buildings, purchase of major equipment, significant road resurfacing projects, water and wastewater infrastructure, and more. In your opinion, how important is maintaining existing infrastructure in the community? For reference, the 2025 capital budget provides information on spending by infrastructure service areas.



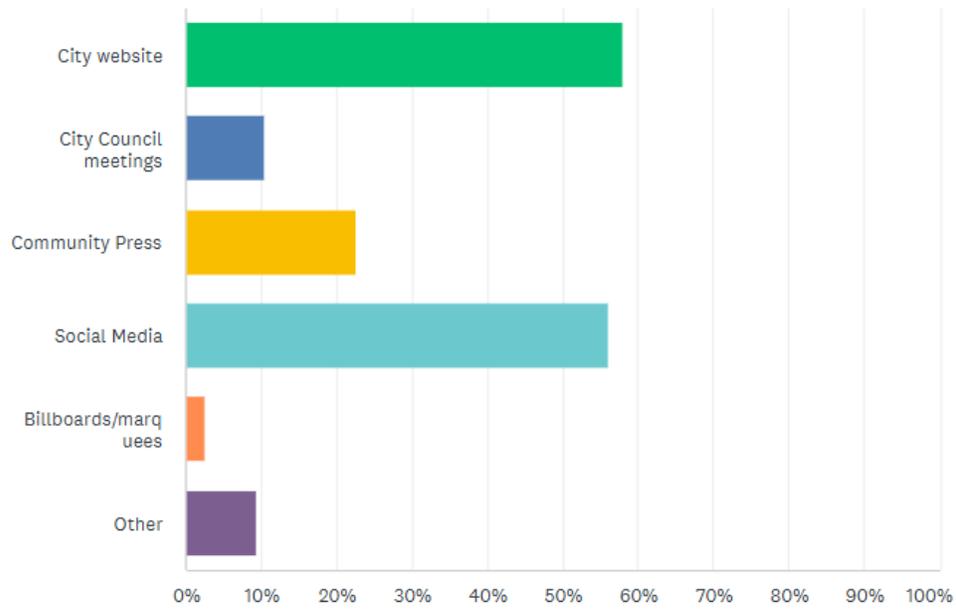
Q9: In your opinion, how important is adding new infrastructure to the community to service growth?



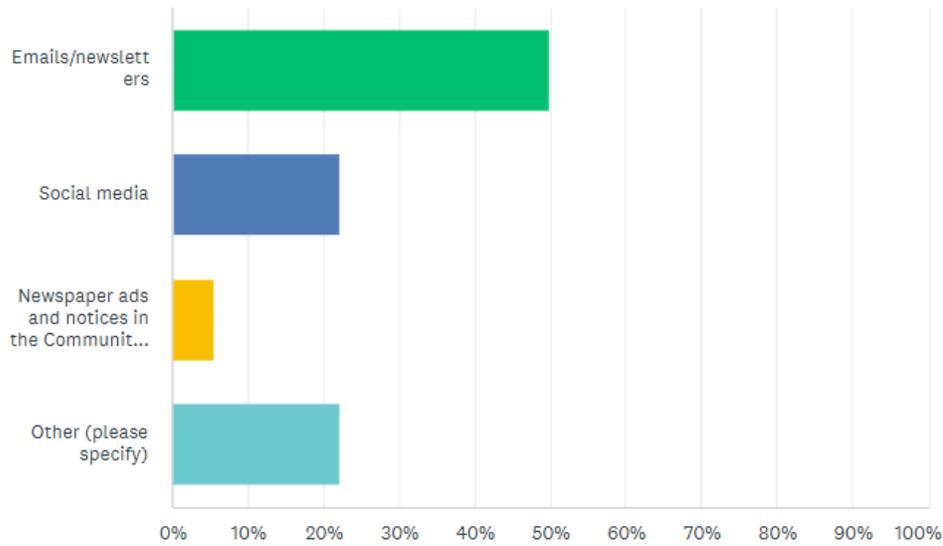
Q10: In accordance with the Asset Management Plan, the City must prioritize Capital projects and annually update its 10-year capital plan. In your opinion, select the most important infrastructure areas (select all that apply).



Q11: Where do you receive information about the City's budget?



Q12: If the City were to increase communication efforts on the budget, how would you prefer to receive that information?



Appendix A

Below is a detailed look at the responses from question 7 of the survey.

Q7: Based on the City's existing Key Performance Indicators, are there additional performance indicators and/or activities that you would like the City to regularly report on?

- Please let us know exactly how much money you waste on hiring {redacted} and {redacted} as "police" who primarily just sit in their car all day ignoring obvious crime that they see in broad daylight.
- new full time jobs and average cost per bedroom/apartment to rent
- No tax increase at all
- Look for saving in existing department. Other municipality have found other ways to deliver services without reducing them or increasing taxes.
- fix your site so we can actually see the previous report
- Should be a updated report on where all the city's taxes are paid out to. The cost to fund things like parades, cultural festivals Should be made public.
- -cost of Police services -cost of work orders submitted and resolved by city employees -cost of specific park operations such as lawn and field maintenance -snow removal cost per mile Fire services cost per employee head, same for parks, pools maintenance Basically in a nutshell, drive down data to reflect individual department performance by developing measurable metrics. With purpose to be transparent in costs and efforts to improve efficiency. I believe Belleville is a well run city and think it can do more to analyze costs in order to maintain efficiency (what are we doing right) and examine/improve where we can improve. Nutshell=are we getting what we pay for and how can we improve.
- How many new home projects have been started and completed in a year. How many new businesses have started slash how many of closed. What projects are planned for the year and / what are actually completed.
- Yes , the city needs to be held accountable for the spending of taxpayer dollars, we spend so much on consultants (wasteful) that we should have one to find all the wasted money by council, city employees, and such .
- I would like more clarity on the funded employee wages
- Transit winter sidewalk snowplowing pedestrian safety
- The should report on all for transparency
- no
- Report speed camera income
- Albert Street needs paving very badly
- Staffing Levels must be reduced annually with review. Upon retirement/attrition, not all jobs require filling.
- I'd like to know more about any measures to reduce waste in the budget or to alleviate the burden on the tax payers.
- Use rate for public transit, more performance indicators from the environmental services department.
- I would like to know why my property taxes continue to increase, but there is absolutely no new services that benefits my area. I live on Bristol Place

- I just want there to be more housing, more jobs, and more small businesses. By increasing housing and businesses you make more jobs
- Need to cut waste and the size of the municipal government.
- Would like to get discretionary spending, each service/branch's cost benefit analysis to see efficiency and cut down "wastage". All paid city functions/personnel need to be as efficient as private business personnel, if not more. Give cost cutting goals to each department and focus on essentials only in this hard economic time. This is a make or break year if city wants to retain/increase economic activity here.
- Policing and Fire
- Please make splash pad park in staikos or riverside in Cannifton are. We are paying large amount of tax but we are not getting enough facilities
- Would love a report on the excessive levels of management jobs and excessive levels of pay. The city could save a lot of money by removing a minimum of 20% of unjustified jobs by having the courage to review departments for waste and double and triple coverage supervisors
- No
- Make publicly available on a monthly basis this photo radar data. Do not become like Toronto with one on every corner. Hire more cops give meaningful tickets which carry demerit points and make people's car insurance go up to slow them down. The cameras feel like a money grab.
- Belleville is increasing property taxes to the point it's getting ridiculous, how high are they going to go? A \$30 increase for nothing, you are taxing seniors out of their homes!
- Building, planning and development. Housing, transit. Inflow of number of residents.
- Parking enforcement revenue
- Stop all these East Indian culture parties that last for days...find a way where you can walk down front street in this friendly (lol) city without being assaulted...the roads are a joke...homeless people need to be in one area and stay there as people are getting so sick of the {redacted} they do...stealing..garbage everywhere and sorry even serial things happening downtown...it's disgusting! The city needs to report on where all the casino money, the dumb traffic ticketed machine money is going...the list just goes on and on! City workers..four of them are a team to move a hockey net...5 or 6 planting flowers one plants while 2 or 3 stand and watch...it's crazy!! But nothing will change another thing is changing all these speed limits..it's so annoying to see what this mayor and city does!
- Mean time to repair bad roads
- Luck
- Goal setting, creative brainstorming, innovation, efficiency management, integrity of public service, etc.
- Enforce city bylaws. Cutting their grass no parking on the grass and taking out their garbage.. The west end which was a very nice neighborhood is turning into a slum. Not abiding by the city bylaws. I have to.
- Anything that uses tax funds.
- How much revenue the speed cameras are generating for the city. That's why they are here.
- Staff health
- Social services - further efforts required to clean up our city physically of the garbage left behind by the homeless; assist in finding alternative secure housing, treatment centre when required, increase law enforcement to keep our city safe
- Effectiveness of the ASE program.
- Visitors to the city tourist
- Homelessness & addiction
- No
- Ensuring roads are safe to walk and drive on. Too many potholes and some roads need to be redone all together. (McDonald Ave, Emily St, etc.)

- why are our taxes being scrutinised, when the semi annual (?) amounts received from the casino alone, should be able to fund a lot of this.... also, parking and speed enforcement revenue should be taking care of this.. as a pedestrian only, more cams and red light cams are required... grab the revenue there
- The care and placement of our unhoused population
- Just give a breakdown of where money is going. For example administration costs/increases etc....as they are out of control as is.
- homeless crime and how to make it stop.
- lower taxes
- Traffic levels/volumes, speeding increases/decreases. Try all of this on HERCHIMER avenue between Bridge and Victoria.
- Where is the money going from the casino and the speed cameras
- Crimes.
- Road conditions, speed camera revenues budget transparency, why road maintenance isn't being done.
- City road maintenance! The roads to even get to businesses are atrocious! Frivolous repairs instead of paving.
- We need a review on waist full spending at the management leave of the city Why is there a many for 3 employees. The city could save a lot of money by redythe amount of management staff and actmake the do their jobs. Not teach on company time , Not run other committees on company time .
- Recruitment of new businesses and residents. In particular, promote local attractions, create festivals, events, and recreational activities and develop more attractive public spaces for community members to gather. Revitalize the downtown core, by embracing the city's unique history and culture, to create a distinct and appealing brand and leasing old buildings to new prospective businesses, Collaborate with local businesses to promote the city and its offerings. Lastly, utilize social media and digital platforms to promote the city's strengths and attract businesses,
- City of Belleville Employees Salaries, Road Maintenance costs
- KPI website would not load so unsure of which KPIs are available.
- Homes
- I would like to see where all the money went for the "hub". I can't believe the city was crazy enough to throw all the money into a building that was rotting. Higher taxes should not be the answer as people pay enough
- On tax increases
- Justifying taxes on property that have already been paid for using mismanaged securities to pay for government employee wages and outside contracts.
- costs to support the unhoused population of Belleville
- Drug and rehabilitation programs
- Homeless situation
- Money spent on the homeless.
- Number of children who go to school hungry. Number of homeless seniors.
- How many streets are beyond 35 years with no repair , replace.
- What city government is doing
- Where all the money from casino going ? How about those speed camera ? Towns a police state and being ruined with immigration and tourism. Tourism doesn't do anything for our citizens. Water smells {redacted}. This towns worse then I've seen it in my lifetime.
- Your link isn't loading properly I would request KPIs on environmental/sustainability aspects, and accessibility.
- Homeless issue and coexisting with wildlife. The city should not be hiring a creepy man to scare geese down at the waterfront and they should not be killing our beavers
- Budget miss use, due to (use it or loose it) mentality. example: snow plowing and sidewalk cleaning. Savings should forward to future project wish list.
- Welfare roll, housing and crime

- All of them
- management of homeless and mentally ill by crowding them into the downtown is appalling
- Where the money from the speed cameras is being spent
- How much budget and resources go to the homeless problem
- Ridiculous the amount of salary spent for city employees how about put some of that into gear to income housing and cut the top heavy employment in the city
- #residents unattached to a family physician #of acres of industrial lands sold
- Updating the city with cost and time to complete projects. Why the local contractors are not used for projects. Keeping community updated more often with changes behind the scene.
- New employee working for the city.
- While KPI's are a step in the right direction. I see no KPI's related to police services. Nor do I see any reporting on efficiency of spending. Which department budgets are over or under, what is the line item affected by spending variances. Especially when developing next years budget. I also would like to see the amount of spending related to foreign sourced goods and services, how much will the tariffs impact the budgets. Is there an initiative to procure from Canadian sources, where and when it makes sense.
- Report on things they have done. I rarely see results and wonder what if anything has actually been accomplished. And where did the funds go
- Under "Transportation and Operations Services" there is a KPI for "Percentage of resident driven work orders completed within 30 calendar days". This KPI is fine but a new KPI that focuses specifically on accessibility work orders would be a positive change and show that Belleville is appropriately focused on accessibility. Right now, this isn't clear as there are several accessibility issues around the city that are not attended to and complaints have been ignored. For example, last summer I submitted a request for a sidewalk beside a retirement home to be made accessible and my request went unanswered and unfixed. In addition to the new KPI, I suggest that a better intake process for issues be developed as my concern obviously fell through the cracks, which is terrible as the accessibility issue I raised is a pedestrian safety concern.
- Alignment with climate goals and decoupling economic activity with CO2 emissions.
- Where each council members spend their money, do they use tax payers money ? are they reimbursed for spending
- The plans to clean up the homeless encampments and eliminate them
- Extra spending
- municipal property tax rate compared to rest of Ontario including increases
- Contract bidding should be public and be given the option of saying simply no to the "top 3" when it's a job over priced. Coming in under budget should be automatically given back to the tax payers
- Increase transit to include daily two way transportation to Picton, Trenton & Napanee as well as the inclusion of household dogs and cats on leashes for the cost of an adult fare.
- Road Condition, Charges processed by POA Court, Resident Satisfaction at LTC, Total increase/decrease in permit/planning approval applications year to year.
- Report crime stats by area including the change in stats near the new Belleville hub
- Related To Social Services 1) Current state of Homelessness (demographics) and totals 2) How many homeless are also substance dependent 3) What is the cost in services provided, security, food, housing actual vs. budget 4) Plans to reduce drug abuse in our community through BPS Related to automatic speed enforcement: 1) what is the difference in cost of the units/maintenance, etc., vs. FTE for a police officer 2) Community Policing - what plans are in place for other areas to have CP - Parks/Recreation Areas, railway tracks and/or other areas of concern for public safety 3) What is the cost of CP, how many FTE's are employed or volunteer and what is their function.
- Property Tax Burden. As a recent home owner, I would like to keep my expenses as low as possible.
- no
- More activities for teens

- Casino revenue and where is it going? Who's being helped? Road maintenance is horrible!!!! Why? Street cameras are excessive and are unwarranted during off peak hours and non-school hours. Where is the revenue accountability for these tickets? Our city is no longer safe. What are you doing with this homeless situation? The Hub is a joke! Millions are being spent and ppl are getting hurt, violently attacked and what has council done? NOTHING! OUR TAXES ARE RIDICULOUS! It needs to Stop!!!!!! We are FED UP! BELLEVILLE is NO longer a desired city to live and I have lived here my entire life of 62 years!
- Where incurred income from speed cameras is allocated (should be reducing property tax and or removing garbage pickup costs)
- First off, thanks for bringing my attention to the dashboard - it's great and has a lot of excellent KPIs already! Here are some others to consider that would complement them: - Total Residential Dwelling Unit Construction Completions - Customer service standards like the Ontario government (see <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-government-service-standards> - "we acknowledge emails and online messages within two business days and answer them within 15 business days") - Transport: Ridership, Rides per capita, On-time performance. Financial performance is important, but so is optimizing for use. - Survey/feedback participation rates - Fire and rescue average response times - Average wait time of inbound customer service calls - Percentage of roads in fair or better condition Operating costs for governance and corporate management as a percentage of total municipal operating costs. Operating/total costs for fire services per \$1,000 of assessment. Operating/total costs for police services per capita. Operating/total costs for rescue services per \$1,000 of assessment. Property crime rate per 1,000 persons. Violent crime rate per 1,000 persons. Total crime rate per 1,000 persons.
- Finances
- Family Doctors Recruitment program
- Transit needs to be fixed Im late for work alot because transit is unreliable.

Appendix B

The comments below were received verbally and through social media:

- Taxpayer would like to see the budget increased for the mobility bus program. During the daytime there are 3 buses and 3 drivers, however after 4:30 there is only 1 bus/ driver. She would like to see another bus/ driver during the day as she has been denied many times (as well as other people) a ride to medical appointments even when she tries to book 2 or more weeks before the appointment. She would also like to see at least 3 buses/ drivers available after 4:30 pm daily. She feels seniors and people with disabilities are being discriminated against due to the lack of access to the mobility buses.
- Bring back water front all the bands an make some money
- Fix some of the roads in the east end for instance Ann St. Its horrible!!!
- Property taxes are ridiculous and joke bad road spending money where you should not be
- this is a joke right?
- Property taxes are getting ridiculous.....for what?
- I don't see the option for paycut for city council?
- it's a joke