
The 2016 Business Plan and Budget Process – Fall Public Engagement

Recommendations

That the information be received.

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline the fall public engagement plan for the 2016 Preliminary Business Plan and Budget.

The goal is to create a more integrated, transparent, and accountable process that will help City Council and the Administration make more informed decisions on how best to allocate resources to the proposed projects, programs, and services in the 2016 Business Plan and Budget.

Report Highlights

1. The fall public engagement activities will be an opportunity to pilot a new online citizen budget tool.
2. In 2015, the online citizen budget will be used to educate residents on the 2016 Preliminary Budget, and to reconfirm what we heard from the public through earlier engagement activities.
3. A variety of techniques will be used to increase participation including making the online citizen budget available at the Saskatoon Fall Home Show (October 23 – 25, 2015) and online at saskatoon.ca (October 19 – November 13, 2015).
4. Various community groups and stakeholders will be encouraged to take the online citizen budget on the road to their members.

Strategic Goal

The information contained in this report aligns with all of the City's Strategic Goals because the Business Plan and Budget process impacts all seven goals.

Background

At its April 20, 2015, meeting, Executive Committee considered a report from the City Manager outlining a five-phased approach to the 2016 Business Plan and Budget. A series of subsequent reports addressing public engagement were presented to Executive Committee from May to August, 2015. Refer to Attachment #1 for a copy of The 2016 Business Plan and Budget Process and the five-phased approach.

- At its May 19, 2015, meeting, Executive Committee approved a special Town Hall, public engagement meeting on June 15, 2015.
- At its July 22, 2015, meeting Executive Committee received a report that provides the results of the 2015 Civic Services Survey which is conducted annually.

- At its August 19, 2015, meeting Executive Committee received a report that outlined the results of the June Public Engagement activities and provided comparisons with the 2015 Annual Civic Services Survey.

The results from all public engagement activities are used as feedback into the annual business plan and budget process, and to provide high quality services to meet the dynamic needs and high expectations of our citizens.

Report

Fall Public Engagement:

City Council and the Administration consider several factors when building the City's annual budget including our growing population, inflation, capital investments, Council priorities, performance measures, and public input. The public input received during the earlier engagement phases were used by the Administration as input into developing the 2016 Preliminary Budget.

This is the final phase of the 2016 Business Plan and Budget process as outlined in Attachment #1. As a result, the Administration is finalizing a fall engagement plan as a final step to inform and engage the public before City Council debates and approves the 2016 budget. The primary goals are to:

- invite the public to learn more about how the Administration prepared its 2016 Preliminary Budget; and
- introduce the Administration's proposed budget while still providing an opportunity for the public to provide feedback for City Council to consider during their final budget deliberations in November/December 2015.

To accomplish these goals in the fall, the Administration will use a 3rd party online citizen budget tool (also known as an interactive budget simulator).

Shaping our Financial Future: Online Citizen Budget

Many municipalities are using an interactive budget simulator as a method for educating the public and conducting online consultations. In 2015, the Administration will use the Online Citizen Budget to educate residents on the budget process, inform residents of costs and trade-offs, and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to community engagement.

The Online Citizen Budget will:

- offer an opportunity to reconfirm earlier public input on where the City should spend more, less or about the same on a variety of civic services.
- allow participants to view the proposed expenditure assigned to various Business Lines/Services and indicate if they would increase, decrease, or maintain the proposed amounts as shown in the 2016 Preliminary Budget.

Participants use a sliding scale to increase, decrease or keep expenditures the same. Once users have assigned their values, the simulator will inform them of the budget impacts resulting from their selections. Residents can input their current property

assessment, creating a personalized estimate of the direct impacts to them - based on the scenarios they select. All participants will be encouraged to submit their responses so we can capture community feedback.

The input will be used to assess if the 2016 Preliminary Budget is generally addressing citizen needs and expectations for various programs and services. In addition, City Council can use feedback to assist in identifying any potential gaps to be considered during the final budget deliberations in November/December 2015.

Shaping Our Financial Future – Bolstering Participation

Participation is key to any successful engagement activity and critical to improving the quality of decisions made. As a result, a variety of techniques would be used to increase participation in the Online Citizen Budget.

a) Leveraging off of an Anchor Event

Rather than organizing our own public event which has not achieved our desired participation rates, the City is reimagining what an engaged community can look like in the future. As a pilot program, the City is leveraging off of an anchor event in the community that already attracts a large number of participants.

The City will have booth space at the Fall Home Show offering us an opportunity to reach a large number of Saskatoon residents who may not otherwise participate in a City organized engagement event. The Show attracts 4,000 – 5,000 attendees over three days (Friday, October 23 to Sunday, October 25, 2015). The event showcases products and services to potential and existing homeowners. Visitors to the show are likely a receptive audience for the 2016 Budget by virtue of being a current or potential taxpayer. The educational materials and video series already developed will be made available along with the Online Citizen Budget.

b) Keeping it Digital

We recognize that not all Saskatoon residents may be willing or able to pay the admission fee to attend the Saskatoon Fall Home Show. So, it is important the City offers an alternative for residents to participate and provide feedback on the 2016 Preliminary Budget. The Online Citizen Budget will be made available on saskatoon.ca and on the Shaping Saskatoon webpages from approximately October 19 to November 13, 2015.

c) Taking it on the Road

Our approach to taking it on the road would be to empower various community partners and stakeholders to take the 2016 Preliminary Budget on the road. These groups would be given access to the Online Citizen Budget and various promotional materials to encourage their members and participate.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

The 2016 Business Plan and Budget includes a variety of public and stakeholder engagement opportunities in five major project phases. The results of all our engagement activities are provided on our website at www.saskatoon.ca/financialfuture.

The topic of this report is to outline additional engagement opportunities to take place during the fall leading up to the final budget deliberations in November/December 2015.

Communication Plan

The Shaping our Financial Future Online Citizen Budget and various engagement opportunities would be 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, etc. Electronic artwork and social media messages would be provided to the Mayor and City Councillors to share with their constituents.

Financial Implications

The estimated cost for the proposed engagement strategy is approximately \$15,000. The project will be funded through existing operating budgets.

Other Considerations/Implications

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

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

Weekly results of the fall public engagement activities for the Online Citizen Budget will be compiled and shared with members of City Council and publically on our website at www.saskatoon.ca/financialfuture starting on the week of Monday, October 26 and ending the week of Monday, November 16, 2015. This will be followed by a tabulated report during the week of November 23, 2015.

Public Notice

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

Attachment

1. The Business Plan and Budget Process (May 19, 2015)

Report Approval

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

The 2016 Business Plan and Budget Process

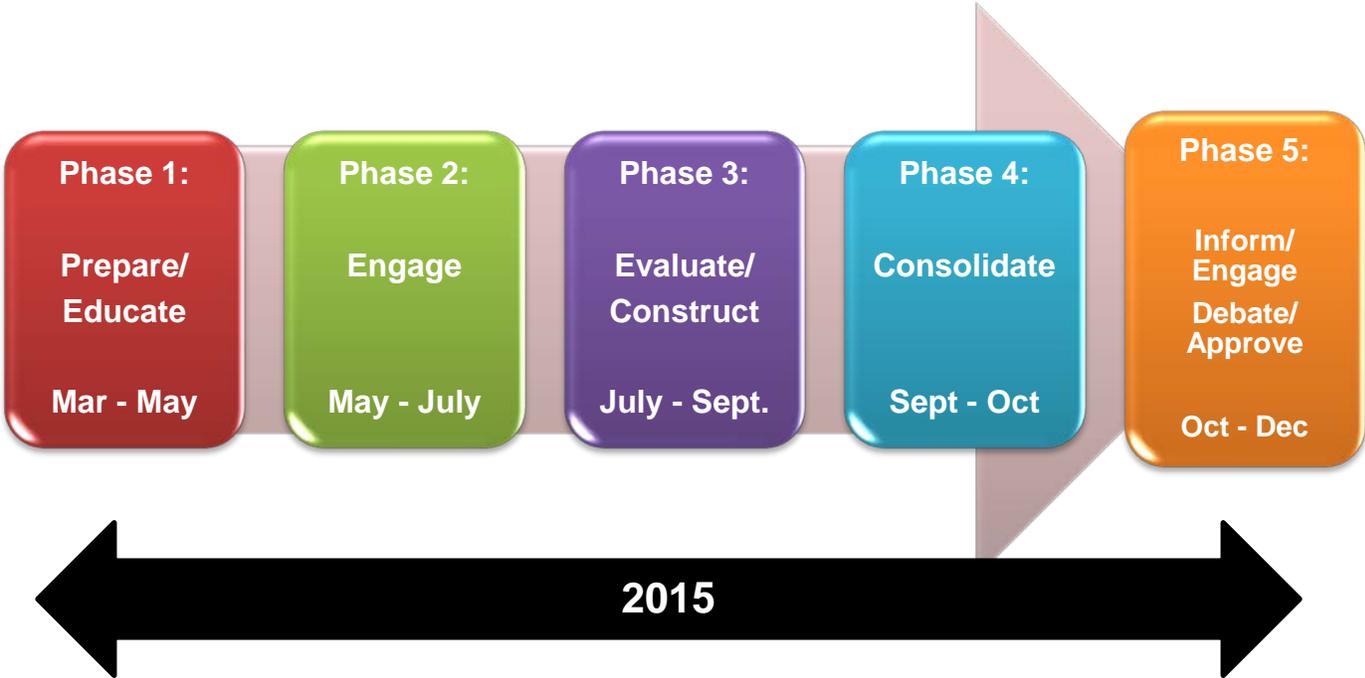
1. Introduction

In February 2015, the City of Saskatoon created an administrative committee to manage the 2016 Business Plan and Budget process, called the Business Plan and Budget Coordination Committee. The primary objective of the internal committee is to lead and coordinate the entire process. The committee reports directly to the City’s Leadership Team, and through the City Manager to Executive Committee. The process includes various phases that will focus on different elements of the business planning and budgeting process.

2. Components/ Phases

Figure 1 illustrates the five phases or components of the 2016 Business Plan and Budget process. Although the phases are distinct and each one will have a primary focus during different months of the year, there will be some overlap. For example, engagement will be included during each phase, but it will receive greater emphasis in Phases 2 and 5. Education will also figure prominently in all phases but will receive special emphasis in Phase 1.

FIGURE 1:
Phases of the Business Plan and Budget Process



Phase 1: Prepare/Educate

- This phase is currently underway and includes the preparation of background information, research of fiscal issues and service changes, and the development of public education and engagement tools.
- This phase also includes an economic outlook to get a sense of the economic climate facing Saskatoon in 2015 and 2016.
- This phase also includes the launch of the new budget process.

Phase 2: Engage

- This phase is where the engagement process begins. It will include the use of broad engagement tools (e.g., Civic Services Survey, and a digital survey) to get the community's input on general issues related to the 2016 Business Plan and Budget.
- This phase would also include the opportunity for Council to have direct input from citizens.

Phase 3: Evaluate & Construct

- During this phase, the Administration would evaluate and utilize public feedback to help construct the 2016 Business Plan and Budget.

Phase 4: Consolidate

- During this phase, the Administration will work to consolidate all budget inputs and finalize the 2016 Business Plan and Budget.
- This phase will also include the development of interactive public engagement tools.

Phase 5: Inform/Engage, Debate/Approve

- During this phase, the public will have the opportunity to provide input on the proposed 2016 Business Plan and Budget. An online citizen's budget tool will be available so the public can play a more active role in the budgeting process and see how their own decisions would impact the City budget. Administration will table the proposed Business Plan and Budget at the October 19, 2015, Executive Committee meeting, which will be six weeks prior to Council deliberations.
- This phase also includes Council's deliberations on the 2016 Business Plan and Budget and will include any adjustments that Council makes to the Business Plan and Budget.

3. Deliverables

The Business Plan and Budget Coordination Committee will work with internal departments and external stakeholders to deliver the following information:

- Coordination of Council Priorities
- Performance Measures and Targets
- Economic Outlook
- Budget Supporting Documents (fiscal trends, input factors, etc.)
- Public Engagement Products and Tools
- General Business Plan and Budget Presentation

- Complete Budget Documents

4. Timeline of Key Events for the 2016 Business Plan and Budget

The immediate next steps for the 2016 Business Plan and Budget are as follows:

- April 20, 2015: Process Launch with Executive Committee.
- April 27, 2015: Council considers Priorities, Performance Measures and Budget Process.
- May 11, 2015: Civic Services Survey and launch of additional engagement tools.
- May 23, 2015: Proposed Performance Measures News Conference and unveiling of an interactive site.
- June 17, 2015: Interim Fiscal Update on the 2016 Business Plan and Budget.
- June 17, 2015: Proposed Public Engagement with Members of Council on 2016 Business Plan and Budget.
- July 22, 2015: Executive Committee considers issues and options to address Budget fiscal issues.
- August 19, 2015: Summary of Public Engagement results.
- October 19, 2015: Administration Tables Preliminary 2016 Business Plan and Budget.
- November 30, 2015: Start of Council Budget Deliberations.

Additional milestones and decision points will be communicated to Executive Committee and the public once the information and timelines are confirmed.