
2018 Business Plan and Budget Process – 2017 Citizen Budget Results

Recommendation

That the report of the A/General Manager, Corporate Performance Department dated August 21, 2017, be received as information.

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the 2017 Online Citizen Budget survey results which is conducted annually to obtain citizen feedback on spending priorities. The results are used by the City of Saskatoon (City) as feedback to build the business plan and budget, and to provide high quality services to meet the needs and expectations of citizens.

Report Highlights

1. The Online Citizen Budget tool was open from May 29 to June 25, 2017 and had over 1,596 unique visitors to the site with 554 citizens submitting their responses.
2. Overall, participants in the online tool support maintaining about the same level of service/spending for most service categories with the exception of an increase in affordable housing.
3. Citizen Budget results are similar to those in the 2017 Civic Services Survey. The majority of citizens who participated in the Civic Services Survey prefer to keep service levels/spending about the same for most categories. Both road maintenance and affordable housing show a slightly higher preference to increase service/spending.
4. The combined engagement results from the Online Citizen Budget and Civic Services Survey show that citizens prefer to keep service levels/spending the same for all categories with the exception of road maintenance and affordable housing. However, the percentage of citizens who identified a preference to increase service/spending for road maintenance is significantly lower than the previous year.

Strategic Goal

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

Background

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. Administration has been conducting an annual Online Citizen Budget Survey since 2015 to obtain public feedback on spending priorities. The last Citizen Budget was conducted in 2016.

Report

The following information summarizes the results of public feedback provided through the Online Citizen Budget tool and related information from the 2017 Civic Services Survey that will be considered by the Administration in building the 2018 Corporate Business Plan and Budget.

Combined Results Online Citizen Budget and Civic Services Survey

As Table 1 highlights, the combined engagement results from the Online Citizen Budget and Civic Services Survey shows that the citizens prefer to keep service levels/spending the same for the majority of the 12 categories.

Excludes those who responded "Don't Know"	More	Same	Less
Road Maintenance	52%	42%	6%
Affordable Housing	49%	35%	16%
Transit	37%	44%	19%
Planning for Growth & Development	30%	47%	23%
Community Grants	20%	51%	30%
Snow & Ice Management	39%	52%	9%
Traffic Management	36%	52%	11%
Police	31%	54%	14%
Recreation & Cultural Programs	20%	60%	20%
Parks Maintenance	18%	67%	14%
Garbage Collection	15%	74%	11%
Fire	13%	79%	8%

- The percentage of citizens who identified a preference to increase service/spending for Road Maintenance is significantly lower than the previous year (52% in 2017 vs. 63% in 2016).

Citizen Budget – Online

For the third consecutive year, the Administration used an online budget tool called "Citizen Budget". The tool was open to the public from May 29 to June 25, 2017.

During this period, Citizen Budget had over 1,596 unique visitors and a total of 554 online budget submissions, compared to 2,600 visitors and 803 online submissions in 2016. Although the results cannot be considered statistically reliable, the sample size matches the 2017 Civic Services Survey phone study (500 surveys), and the demographic breakdown of respondents by age and Suburban District Area are generally comparable. Attachment 1 provides a summary of the Online Citizen Budget results for 2017.

Table 2 displays the results from the Online Citizen Budget, showing that citizens would mainly prefer to keep service levels/spending about the same for the majority of the 12 service categories.

	More	Same	Less
Affordable Housing	39%	33%	28%
Recreation & Cultural Programs	27%	40%	34%
Road Maintenance	41%	43%	16%
Snow & Ice Management	37%	43%	20%
Police	23%	43%	34%
Parks Maintenance	34%	43%	23%
Traffic Management	30%	44%	27%
Garbage Collection	23%	57%	20%
Fire	20%	61%	19%
Transit	30%	30%	40%
Planning for Growth & Development	24%	36%	40%
Community Grants	20%	37%	42%

- The percentage of citizens who identified a preference to increase service/spending for Affordable Housing is significantly higher than the previous year (39% in 2017 vs. 19% in 2016).
- The percentage of citizens who identified a preference to decrease service/spending is significantly higher than the previous year for Planning for Growth & Development (40% in 2017 vs. 25% in 2016) and Community Grants (42% in 2017 vs. 17% in 2016).

Attachment 2 provides a more detailed summary of the Consolidated Results Shown as a Percentage of Responses for 2016 and 2017. Attachment 3 provides a summary of the Consolidated Results Shown as a Number of Responses for 2016 and 2017.

As summarized in Table 3, results show citizens would invest approximately 2% more in 4 categories, invest 1-3% less in 4 categories, and maintain investments in the remaining 4.

	2017	2016
	Invest up to	Invest More
Road Maintenance	2% more	4% more
Community Grants	3% less	3% more
Snow & Ice Management	2% more	2% more
Recreation & Culture	No change	2% more
Garbage & Waste Reduction	No change	1% more
Parks	1% more	1% more
Transit	1% less	1% less
Planning for Growth & Development	2% less	1% less
Affordable Housing	2% more	2% less
Police	2% less	2% less
Traffic Management	No change	No change
Fire	No change	No change
Summary of investments	7% more 8% less	13% more 6% less

All of the Online Citizen Budget comments provided for each of the 12 service categories are available at saskatoon.ca/financialfuture.

Civic Services Survey

The 2017 Civic Services survey was conducted between May 15 and June 9 with a total of 500 telephone and 805 online respondents. The detailed results are the subject of a separate report. However, as shown in Table 4 most citizens mainly prefer to keep service levels/spending about the same for the majority of the 12 service categories. Both road maintenance and affordable housing show a slightly higher preference to increase service/spending.

Table 4: 2017 Civic Services Survey – Service Level/Spending Preferences

Excludes those who responded "Don't Know"	More		Same		Less	
	Phone	Online	Phone	Online	Phone	Online
Road Maintenance	58%	55%	39%	41%	1%	2%
Affordable Housing	54%	45%	33%	32%	7%	11%
Snow & Ice Management	41%	39%	55%	55%	3%	4%
Traffic Management	39%	38%	55%	55%	4%	5%
Transit	35%	37%	51%	44%	7%	9%
Planning for Growth	33%	29%	53%	47%	10%	17%
Police	29%	37%	64%	53%	5%	6%
Community Grants	20%	16%	57%	48%	15%	25%
Recreation & Cultural Programs	19%	14%	67%	64%	10%	16%
Garbage Collection	14%	11%	80%	80%	5%	7%
Parks Maintenance	11%	11%	81%	73%	6%	13%
Fire	10%	10%	84%	80%	3%	3%

For more detailed information, refer to the 2017 Civic Services Survey report available at saskatoon.ca/financialfuture.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

Invitations to participate in Citizen Budget were sent on Tuesday, May 30, 2017, to 1,596 individuals who signed up for the Citizen Advisory Panel on saskatoon.ca. Although Administration is not able to confirm how many individuals completed and submitted input on the budget, we can say that 821 (52.1%) opened the email and 381 (24.0%) clicked through to the survey. Attachment 4 provides a summary of the 2015 to 2017 Online Citizen Budget participation results.

Communication Plan

The Online Citizen Budget engagement opportunity was promoted through news media, the City's website and social media profiles, City Page insertions, posters at the leisure facilities and libraries, and in-person at the Annual Civic Pancake Breakfast. The results will be made available on the Shaping our Financial Future webpage on saskatoon.ca.

Financial Implications

The cost for communications and engagement of the Citizen Budget online tool is approximately \$9,600, 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. Online Citizen Budget Results (May 29 to June 25, 2017)
2. Consolidated Results: Shown as a Percentage (%) of Responses
3. Consolidated Results: Shown as a Number (#) of Responses
4. 2015 to 2017 Online Citizen Budget Participation

Report Approval

Written by: Sue Martin, Communications Consultant
Maeghan Carstairs, Communications & Engagement Manager

Reviewed by: Carla Blumers, Director of Communications
Jeff Jorgenson, A/General Manager, Corporate Performance
Department

Approved by: Murray Totland, City Manager

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“Approved by Jeff Jorgenson, Acting GM, CP Department & Murray Totland, City Manager, August 11, 2017”