

What We Heard Report

Budget Planning Survey 2025-2027

Conducted April 8-May 8, 2024

cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

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About the Project

When planning the budget, the Town estimates how much money will be spent (expenditures) to maintain public services and infrastructure, and how that money will be generated (revenue) to meet the anticipated expenditures. Once these estimates are made and plans are set, staff develop the budget for Council's consideration.

The objective of this engagement is to ensure the Town of Cochrane's business plans and budgets reflect the projects and level of service that our residents have come to know and expect. And in doing so, the Town is committed to ensuring that the services provided are aligned with the needs of the residents of Cochrane and delivered in an effective, efficient and financially sustainable way.

Methodology

Survey Population and Data Collection

Budget engagement was coordinated through an external consultant and available on Cochrane's engagement portal (letstalkcochrane.ca).

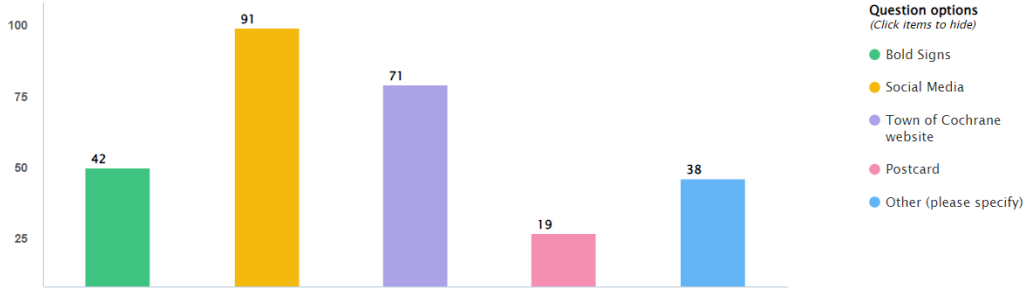
Feedback opportunities consisted of:

- A randomly recruited, probability-based, telephone survey to residents over the age of 18,
- Direct mail postcard sent to each residence in Cochrane including a link to the survey,
- An online survey on letstalkcochrane.ca that was open from April 8 - May 8, 2024.
- In person event with Council at the SLS Centre for the Chamber Trade Show on May 4&5, 2024.

Last year a total of thirty-nine (39) people completed the online survey collected by the Town of Cochrane. This year the Town of Cochrane collected a hundred and seventy-nine (179) responses from their online survey. **The total number of responses collected through all methods is five hundred and eighty-six (586).**

Survey Awareness

Survey participants were asked if they recalled seeing or hearing an advertisement for the survey. In total 91 participants saw the survey on social media, 71 from the Town of Cochrane website, 42 from bold signs and 19 from the postcard delivered to each residence in Cochrane. Under "other" participants listed the radio, newspaper, email and word of mouth as other ways they heard about the survey.



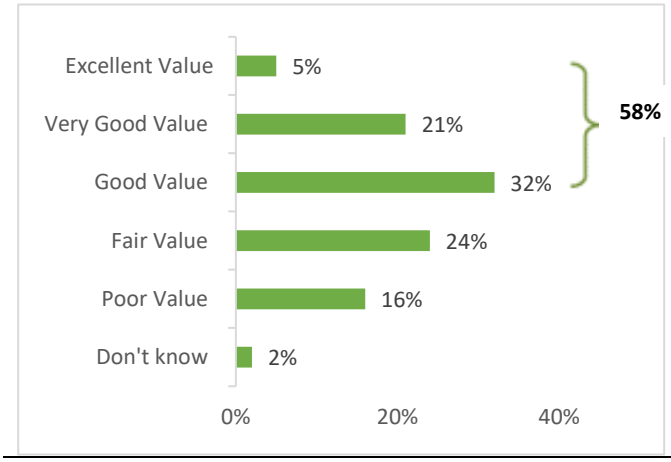
Budget Planning Survey Highlights

179 adult Cochrane residents completed an online survey from April 8-May 8. There was a good distribution of ages and income levels collected. Almost all respondents own their own home (96%) and a majority of respondents (55%) did not have children under 18 in their household. Most respondents work full time (56%) or are retired (26%).

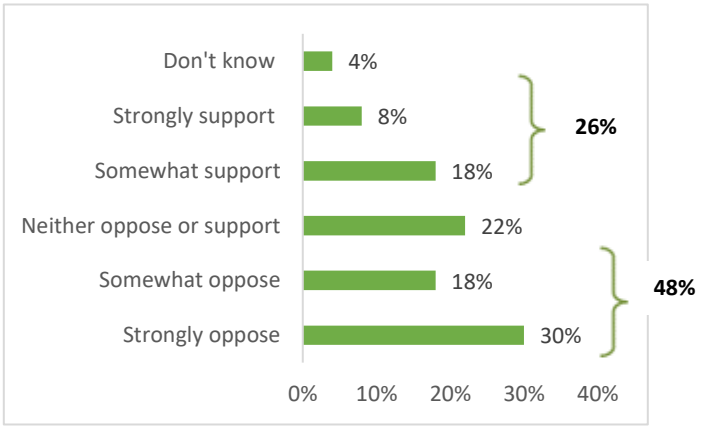
Service Value

- **A majority (58%)** of residents feel that they **receive good to excellent value** from municipal services and that the funding is worth it.
- 48% strongly or somewhat oppose a decrease in service levels.

Total Service Value for Taxes

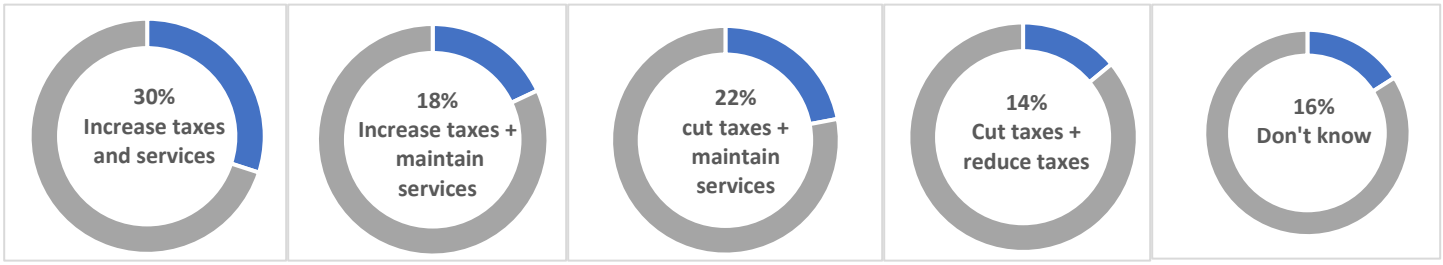


Decrease Service Levels to Minimize Tax Increase?



Preferred Tax Strategy

- 48% of residents approve of increasing taxes to improve or maintain services.

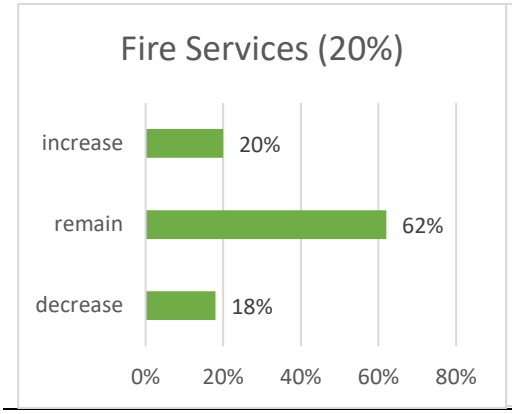


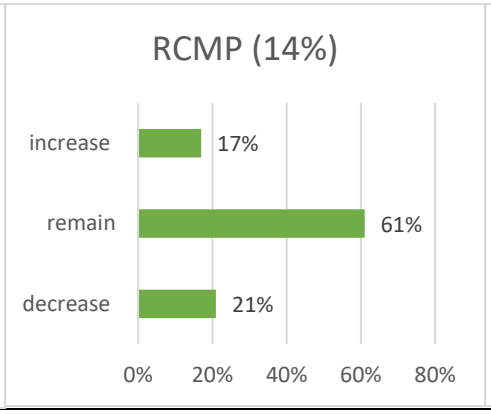
Most important priority facing Cochrane

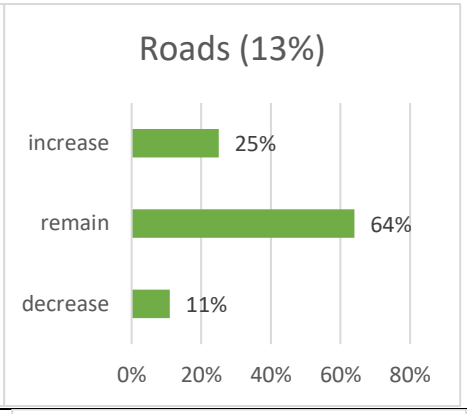
- Focusing on long-term fiscal sustainability (smooth tax strategies) (28%) and Planning for future growth (24%) were the top budget process priorities identified by respondents in the survey, representing 52% of responses.
- The least important priorities included preparing for and reacting to changes in the economy (8%) and investing in new and maintaining existing amenities (11%).
- 25% of respondents want Cochrane to find ways to lower or have properties taxes stay the same in the future.

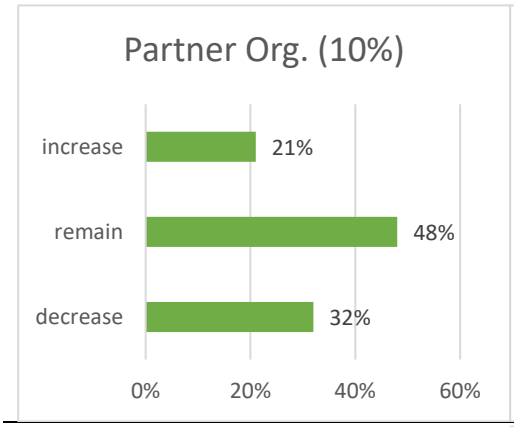
Desired Change to Variable Spending

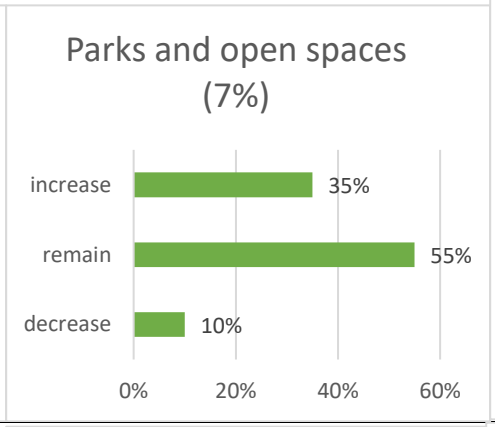
Whilst most respondents would prefer that their service levels remain the same**,** a notable amount would like to see a decrease in transit, municipal enforcement, and partner organizations. A notable amount would like to see increases in FCSS and Parks and Open Spaces.

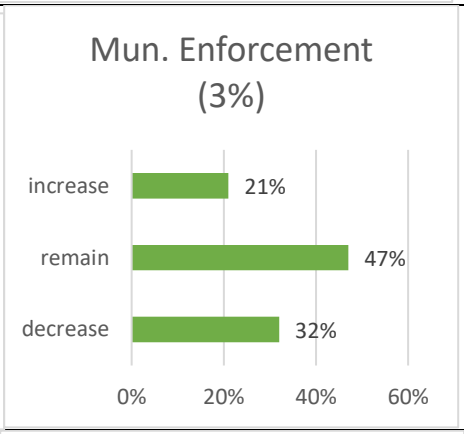


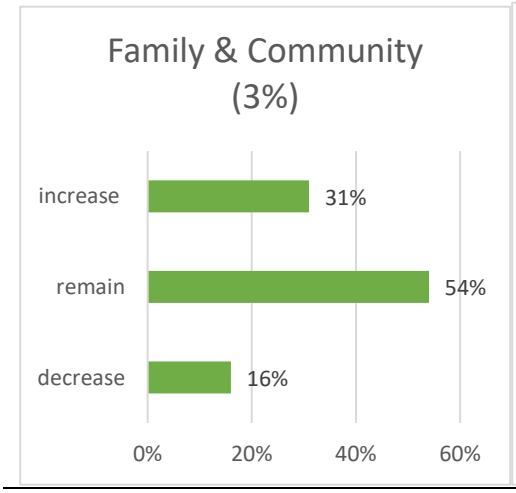


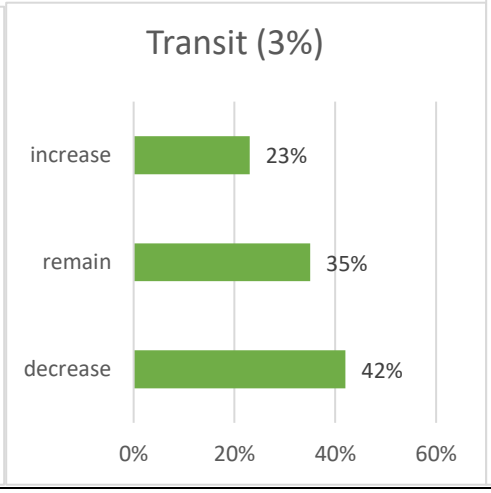


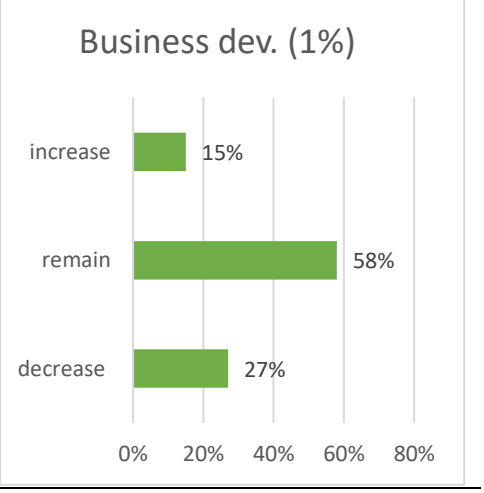






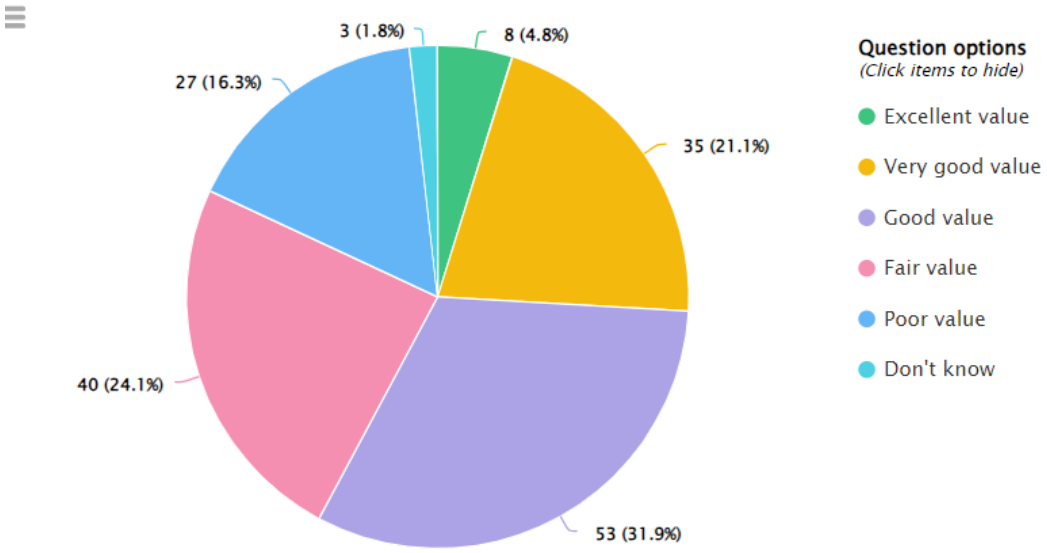






Perceived Value Received for Taxes Paid

Question 5: Thinking about the 67% used to fund municipal services, would you say you receive...?



A majority (58%) of respondents feel that they receive good to excellent value from municipal services, and that the funding is worth it. This is an increase of 2% from last year's survey response.

Why respondents feel this way

Overall respondents who felt they received "good" or "very good" value, appreciate Cochrane's level of service, with many reporting that they see a lot of things being built and maintained. Many comments related to effective maintenance of roads, pathways and cleanliness. Also, recognition around "decent services like garbage collection and street cleaning."

Those who responded with "fair value" felt that their basic services were met, but desired more investment in areas like economic development, entertainment, and parks and gathering spaces. There were a few comments with specific concerns such as not having park swings, issues with speeding in their area, or construction challenges. A few comments were around wanting 24/hour urgent care.

For those that responded with "poor value" responses included poor infrastructure management and a disagreement with spending choices, as well as an overall frustration with the increases in taxes. For respondents who could not rate the value, the following reasons were given:

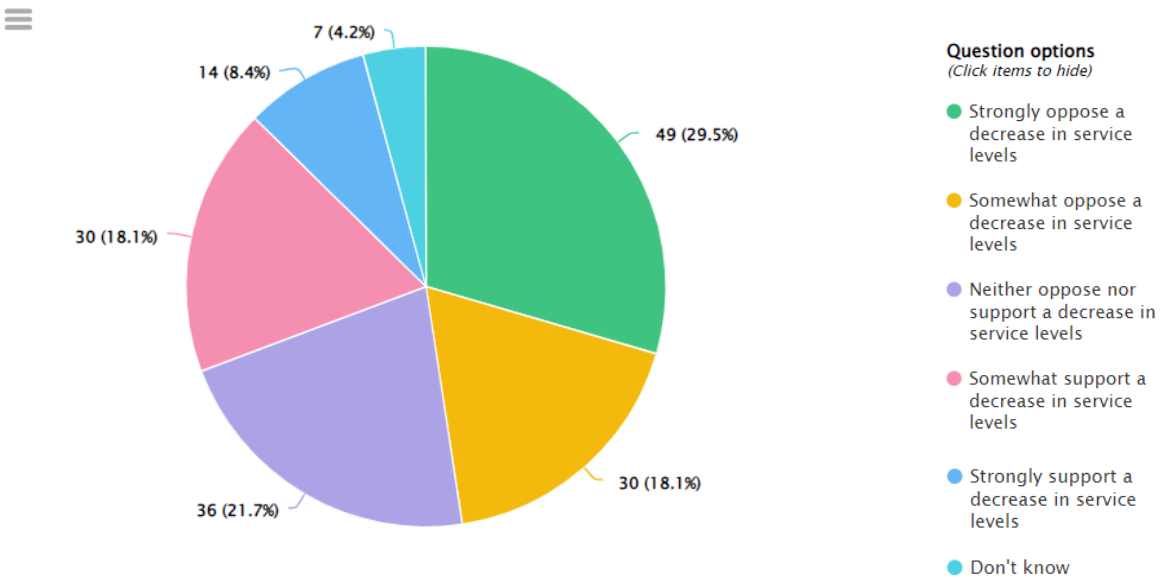
- Unsure of what municipal services are being provided other than water and waste collection and animal services.
- I am a new resident of Cochrane as of April 2024.
- I would require, in detail, the services that were supposedly provided with this 67% of tax payers property taxes.

Some examples of these themes are included below. For a full list of comments, please refer to Appendix A.

- “Cochrane has beautiful pathways and services for residents and tourists. It’s wonderful here. Snow is plowed in a timely fashion and our parks are clean and well maintained. I also feel like the town is good at communicating with residents.”
- “The town appears to run smoothly.”
- “A lot of things are being built and maintained.”
- “Cochrane appears to be well maintained compared to other towns in Canada. It's services keep the community clean and welcoming to visitors and residents.”
- “Cochrane is clean and well maintained. We have good services and business sector. I appreciate the new intersection at 1A and Hwy 22. Another vehicle bridge over the railway tracks is desperately needed in the downtown; traffic is backed up often and will only get worse as we grow.”
- “Roads sanded and cleared quickly as well as pathways. Good emergency services, recreational facilities and quick attention to emergency repair needs.”
- "Our sidewalks were redone last summer if there was any cracking, I appreciate that attention to detail."
- “There’s nothing to make me feel like I’m getting anything more than adequate base level municipal services.”
- “housing development is going faster than public space/environmental/town logistics development”
- “with all the ongoing development things seem to be taking longer and longer to complete resulting in many in progress projects at the same time.”
- “Parks, play grounds, gathering spaces, culture, diversity, where is it?”
- “Lack of infrastructure planning for explosive growth”
- “The question is loaded. I am getting good value however the taxes are too high. Please lower taxes.”

Overall Property Tax Preference

Question 7: The Town of Cochrane understands and recognizes residents' desire to keep tax increases to a minimum. In order to do this, the Town may need to consider reducing current service levels.



48% strongly or somewhat oppose a decrease in service levels.

Why respondents feel this way

Of the 48% that oppose a decrease in service levels, their reasons were mainly around being satisfied with the current state of services, but willing to accept minor tax increase to maintain the current level of service. There were also a few respondents indicating that they needed more clarity on which services might be impacted, and many cited a prioritization of essential services.

Some examples of response that reflect these themes are included below. For a full list of responses, refer to Appendix A.

- "I like the way things are and I am okay with a small increase if needed to keep it that way."
- "Happy with status quo"
- "I need to know where decreases would be in order to disagree or agree with this question. More information required."
- "I am unsure as to what services would be decreased."
- "Services are important to many, and also improve quality of life. We must be more than a town full of houses."
- "Cochrane is the size of a small city and growing. Need to start investing in infrastructure and support like one."

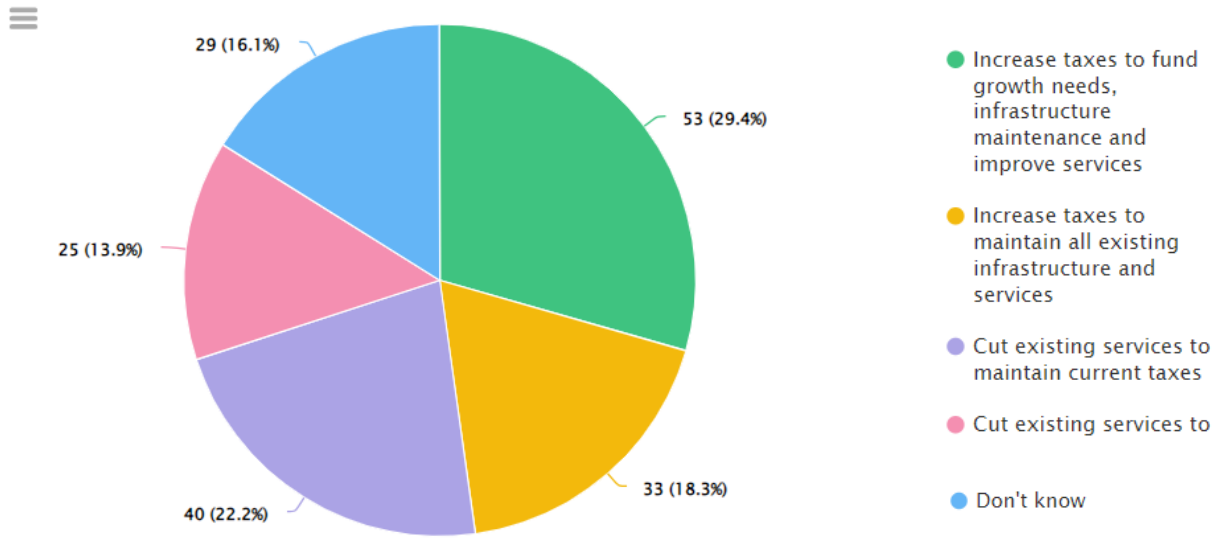
- "Due to the inefficient and wasteful spending. I would only support a reduction in services if tax dollars were being spent wisely and the cost of core services was increasing beyond the community's ability to pay."
- "There are some services that I would strongly oppose a decrease in (i.e. necessities for living and safety) but other 'luxury' services could be scaled back."
- "Service levels should not be decreased but not if taxes have to be raised more than 5% or the going inflation rate."

Of the 27% of respondents who would strongly or somewhat support a decrease in service levels, their reasons were mostly around financial strain and cost of living. An example of some of the comments are below. For a full list of responses, refer to Appendix A.

- “It would be great to decrease our taxes if there was something we could do to help offset the cost.”
- “Because people cannot afford to live right now, so put more money back in our pockets by stopping tax increases. Seriously, we are drowning here.”
- “Everything is so vastly expensive right now. To help support your citizens, a tax decrease would go a long way for support of the town's leadership.”
- "We don’t need some of the services at the level they are."
- "Cuts need to be made or more contracting out of services."
- "All 3 levels of government over-spend so it’s nothing personal nor specific for Cochrane. All 3 levels of government need to trim budgets and stick to the basics to stop the continual cycle of debt, borrowing, higher interest payments and higher taxes."
- “"I support consideration of reductions and the ability to provide some feedback on suggestions by council and subject experts within administration on proposed reductions."
- “The only direct town services I've required have been staff to answer questions, and they've always been quick. My street isn't maintained in winter (supposedly "developer maintained", which it isn't) so I don't see benefit there. I'd need to understand what services were up for reduction to better answer.”

Infrastructure Tax Strategies

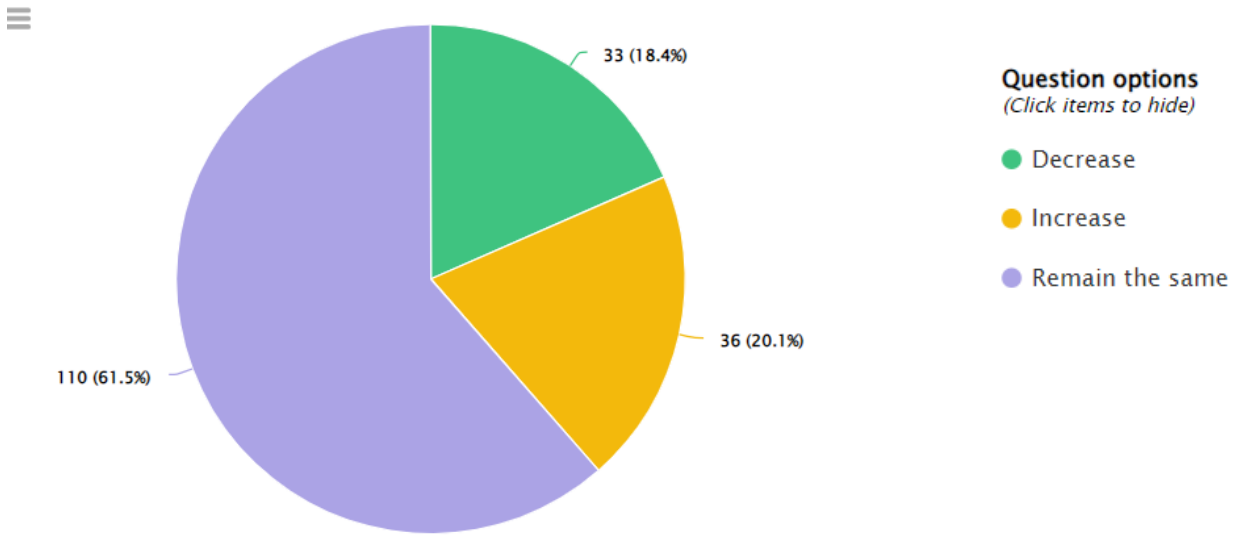
Question 9: Next, thinking about the Town of Cochrane infrastructure (roads, public buildings, etc.) and services overall, which of the following tax strategies best represents your preference?



48% of respondents would prefer to **increase or maintain infrastructure** and services, with **42%** preferring to **cut existing services to maintain or lower current taxes**. A notable amount were not sure (16%).

Fire Services (Proposed 20%)

Question 10: Fire Services - Percentage of variable budget: 20%: This includes fire response, as well as community prevention and inspection services and emergency preparedness.



A majority (62%) of respondents would prefer that the fire services budget of 20% ***remain the same***. Of the 20% of respondents that would prefer an ***increase*** in fire services spending, this is an essential service to the community was the main reason. Followed by in equal amounts:

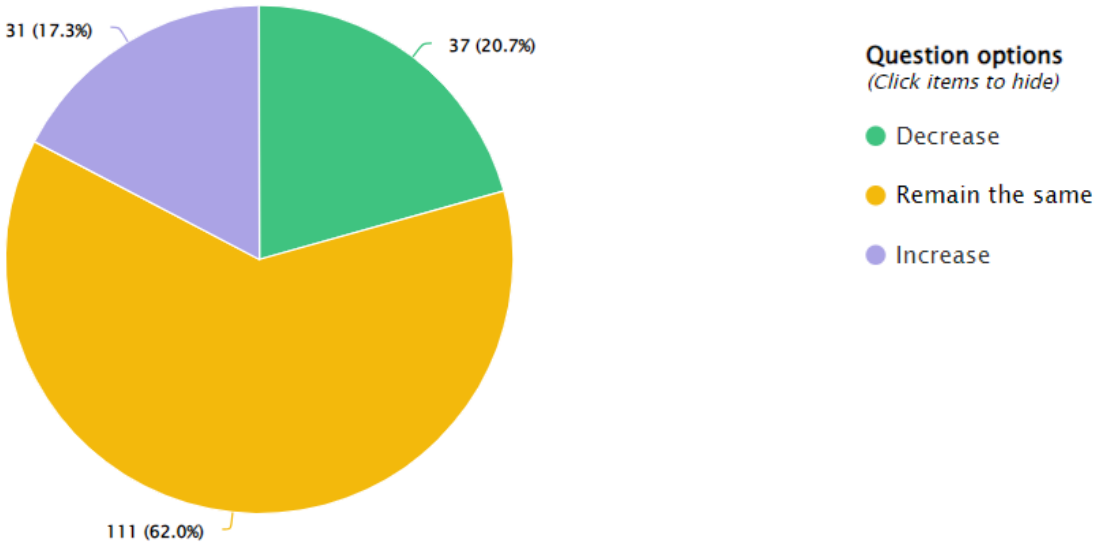
- Would like additional funding due to population growth,
- Would like to ensure the quickest fire response times and for the safety of residents in equal amounts, and lastly
- For the safety of residents

Of the 18% of respondents that would prefer a ***decrease*** in fire services spending, prioritize spending in other areas of need within the community was the top reason. Followed by

- To address spending on emergency services that may not be necessary given to demand**,** and
- Response times are adequate.

RCMP Services (Proposed 14%)

Question 11: RCMP - Percentage of variable budget: 14%. This includes RCMP contract and detachment administrative support.



62% of respondents would prefer that their current RCMP budget of 14% remains the same. Of the 21% that would prefer to see a ***decrease*** in spending, their top reason (by a significant amount) for feeling this way is **"**other**"** followed by (in almost equal much smaller amounts):

- Would like more traffic/speeding enforcement
- To keep up with population growth
- Would like to keep crime down

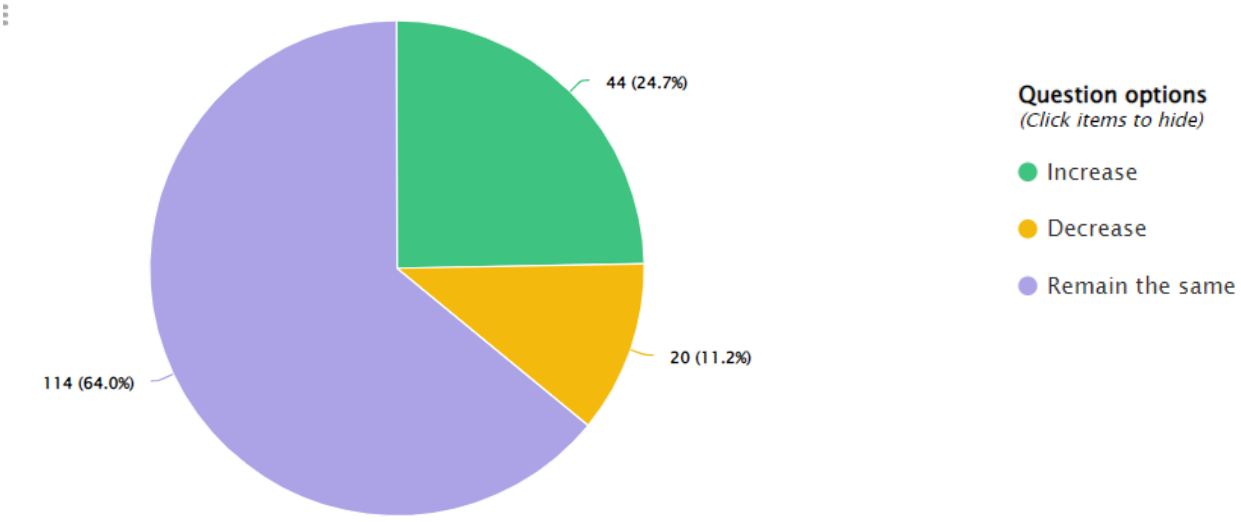
Some responses for **"other"** include feeling that crime is not a huge issue, and some would rather see funds routed to family services or bylaw services. Some respondents are unsure of what they do. Refer to Appendix B for a full list of responses.

Of the 17% of respondents that would like to see an ***increase*** in spending their top reasons were to:

- Keep up with population growth followed by
- Would like to keep crime down and
- Would like more traffic/speeding enforcement

Roads Services (Proposed 13%)

Question 12: Roads - Percentage of variable budget: 13%. This includes street, parking lot and alleyway seasonal cleaning, sanding, snow plowing and snow removal, as well as regular street and sidewalk repairs and maintenance.



64% of respondents felt the roads budget should remain at 14%. Of the 11% that would prefer a ***decrease*** in spending their top reason was residential areas and side streets could be cleared/cleaned less often followed by

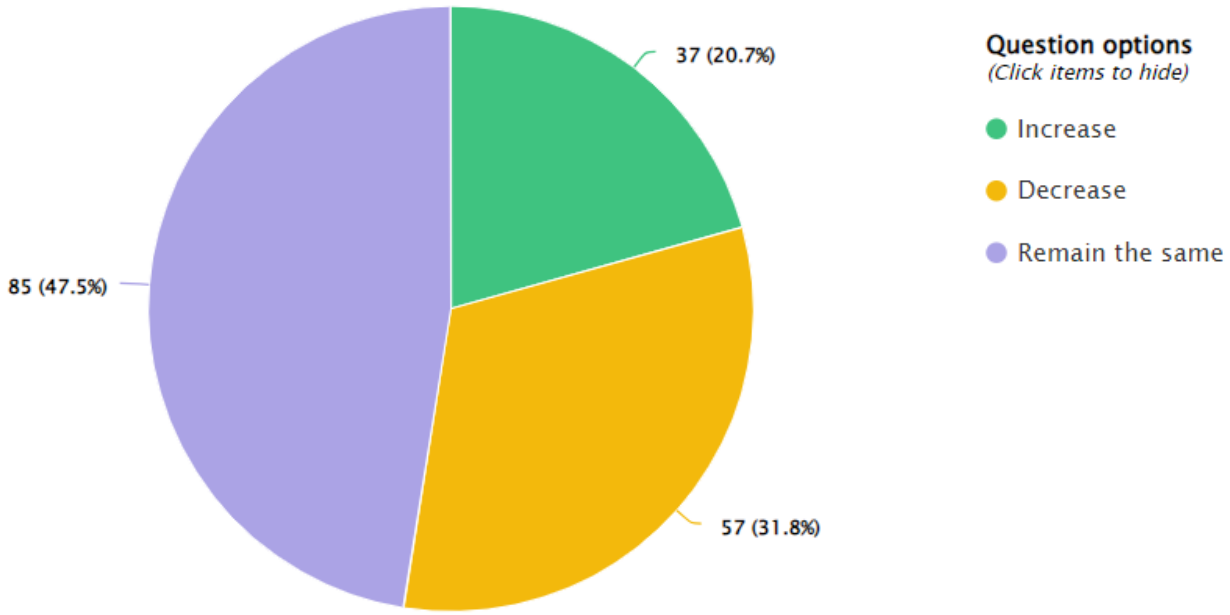
- Consider replacing and/or maintaining snow removal equipment less frequently
- Consider clearing roads less frequently during prolonged storms
- Consider waiting longer before clearing and sanding roads

Of the 25% that responded with an ***increase*** in spending, their top reason was they would like roads to be better maintained, followed by:

- Would like more or better snow clearing equipment
- Would consider clearing and sanding roads sooner or more often
- Would like roads cleaned and swept more often in the summer
- Would like residential areas and side streets to be cleared more often, and
- Would like drainage of roads to be improved
- Other

Partner Organizations (Proposed 10%)

Question 14: Partner Organizations – Percentage of variable budget: 10%. Includes organizations that are in partnership with the Town of Cochrane including Spray Lake Sawmills Centre, community grants and the Cochrane Public Library.



48% of respondents would like the budget for partner organizations to remain the same. Of the 32% that would like the budget to ***decrease*** their main reason was that the cost of these partnerships is larger than the benefits they provide. Other reasons were:

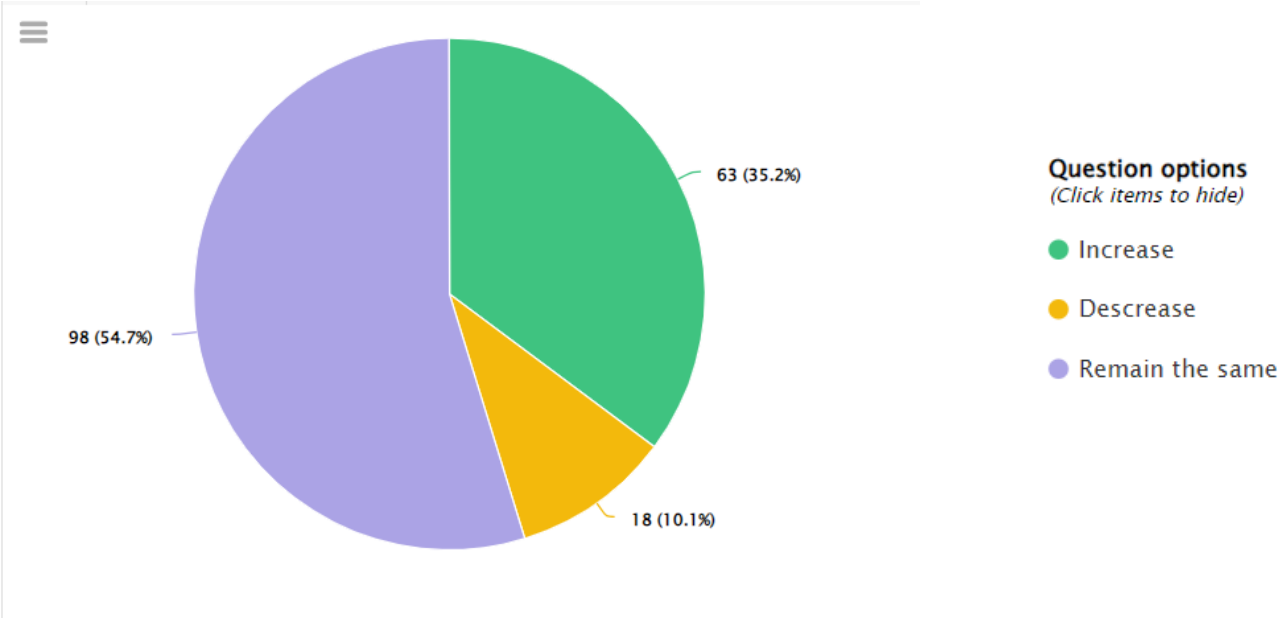
- There is a lack of accountability for these partners followed by
- Cochrane has enough facilities to meet the current needs of the community, and
- Residents can use private facilities

Of the 21% that would like to see an ***increase*** in spending their top reasons was to support population growth, followed by:

- Would like to see more programs offered
- Would like existing facilities updated
- To help make Cochrane an attractive place

Parks & Open Spaces (Proposed 7%)

Question 16: Parks & Open Spaces. Percentage of variable budget: 7%. Includes maintaining 440 acres of parkland, 43 playgrounds, 80kms of pathway, outdoor skating rinks, as well as the maintenance of sports fields and cemeteries.



54% of respondents would prefer that their parks & open spaces budget of 7% remain the same. This is consistent with last year's result. For the 10% that would prefer a ***decrease*** **i**n spending of parks and open spaces, their main reasons were:

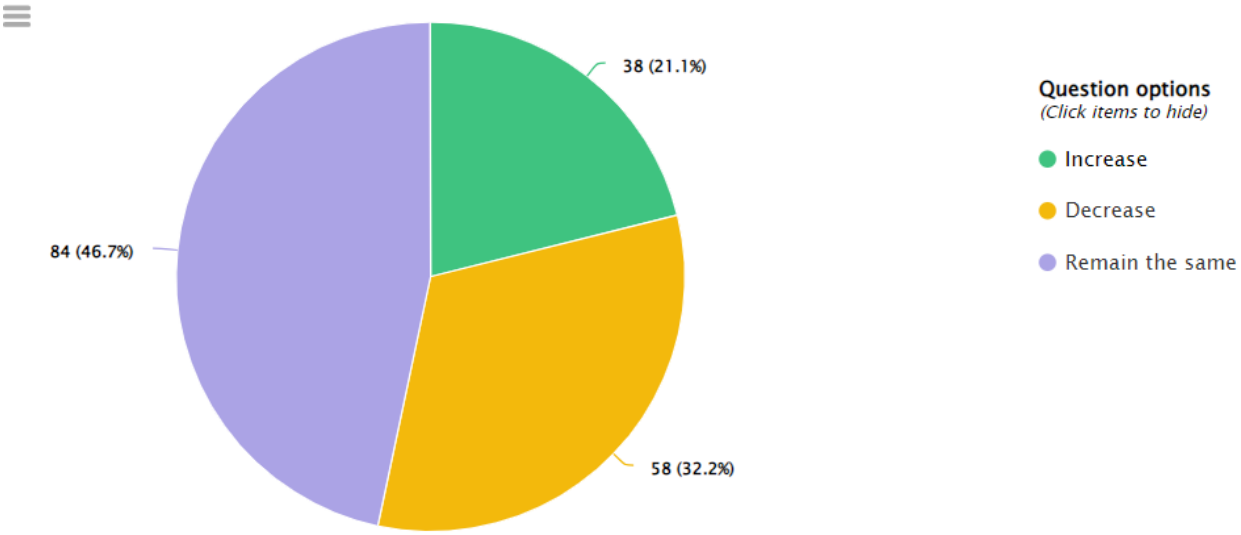
- This is not an urgent area of spending need
- We have enough playgrounds
- The maintenance of these areas is overdone.

35% of respondents would prefer to ***increase*** spending to better maintain our existing parks and open space infrastructure, followed by:

- We need more areas for leisure,
- Other,
- To better manage weeds, and
- We need more outdoor playgrounds.

Municipal Enforcement (Proposed 3%)

Question 17: Municipal Enforcement. Percentage of variable budget: 3%. This includes enforcement of community bylaws, education to reduce violations, traffic enforcement, development compliance and creating a safer space for all residents.



46% of respondents would like their municipal enforcement budget to remain at 3%. The main reason that 32% of respondents would like a ***decrease*** in municipal enforcement is because we don't need any more traffic/speeding enforcement, followed by:

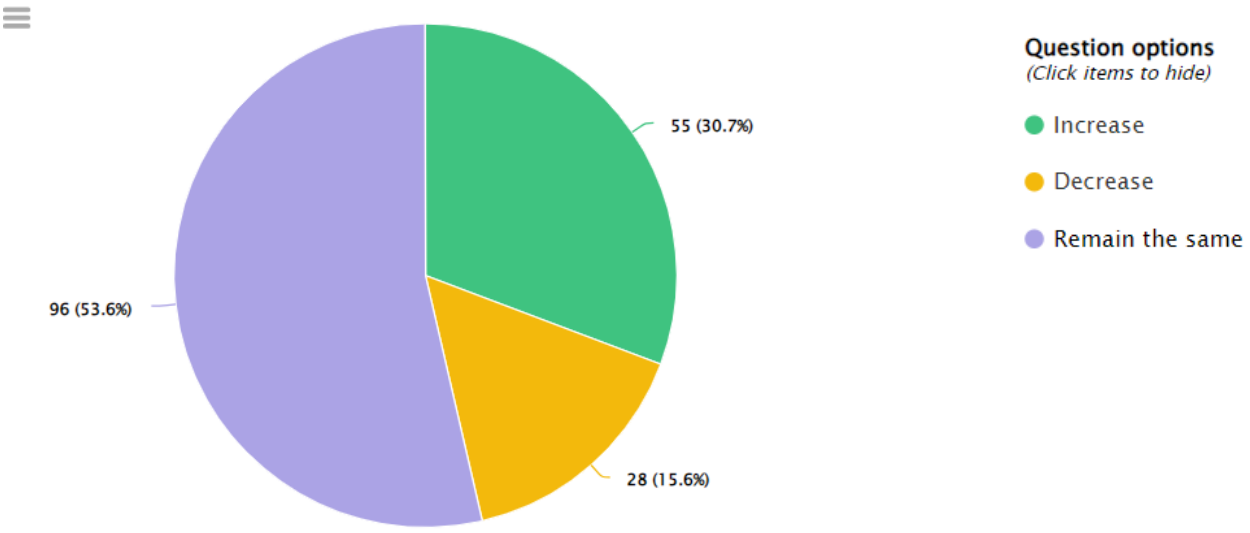
- Current enforcement levels could handle population growth
- Our roadways, sidewalks and pathways are safe enough
- Other

The two top reasons that 21% of respondents would prefer an ***increase*** in municipal enforcement spending is to do a better job educating the public on bylaws, followed closely by the following other reasons:

- Would like more bylaw enforcement
- To keep up with population growth,
- Would like more traffic/speeding enforcement
- To help improve the safety of roadways, sidewalks and pathways and
- Other

Family & Community Support Services (Proposed 3%)

Question 19: Family & Community Support Services. Percentage of variable budget: 3%. This includes connecting people and systems, preventative and early intervention programs, affordable housing and family resource network.



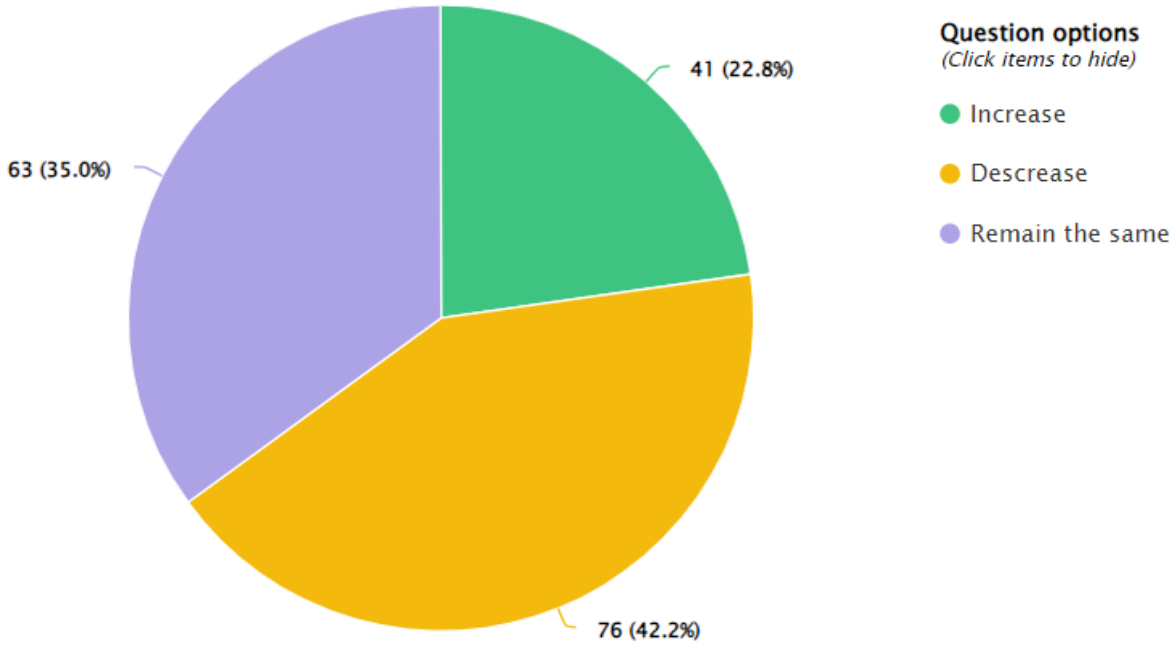
53% of respondents feel that their Family and Community Support Services budget of 3% should stay the same. With 31% of respondents preferring that the budget increase and 16% preferring the budget be decreased.

The top reason for why respondents felt that the Family & Community Support Services should be ***increased*** were to keep up with population growth and help provide affordable support services, followed by a lesser extent, would like better quality of existing service.

The top reasons why respondents felt there should be a ***decrease*** were would like more funding from other levels of government, followed closely by existing services could handle population growth.

Transit Services (Proposed 3%)

Question 21: Transit (Cochrane On-Demand Local Transit). Percentage of variable budget: 3%. This includes the COLT (Cochrane On-Demand Local Transit) services, which includes the E-Scooters, E-Bikes and Rocky View Handibus.



Respondents' feelings of the transit budget are closely distributed, with 42% of respondents preferring for the transit budget of 3% to be decreased. 23% of respondents would prefer an increase in transit, and 35% would prefer it to remain the same.

The top reasons for ***decreasing*** the transit budget were:

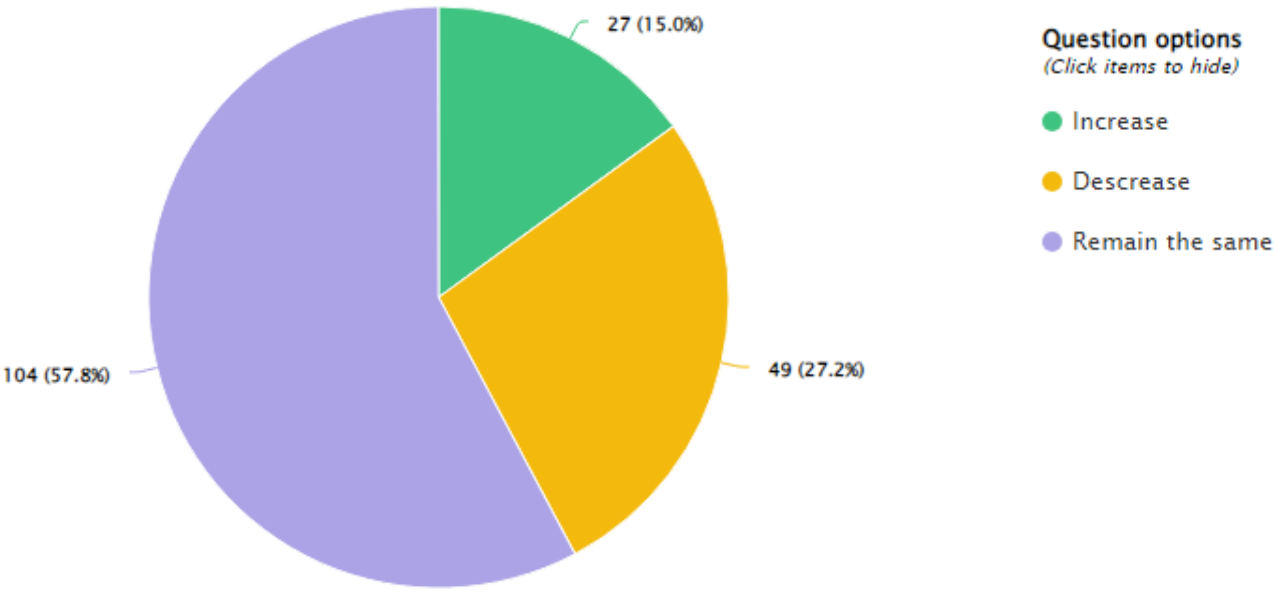
- We don't need e-scooter or e-bike program
- My household does not use public transportation
- Other
- Consider charging riders more for this service
- Existing buses should be adequate
- Current service schedules should be adequate

Top reasons for ***increasing*** the budget were:

- Would like to establish fixed routes
- Would like more busses and/or frequency of service, and
- Would like to extend the hours of service

Business Development Services (Proposed 1%)

Question 23: Business Development. Percentage of variable budget: 1%. Includes the promotion of the innovation sector, the strengthening of relationships with existing business groups, companies and major developments, as well as proactively planning and implementing initiatives to enhance Historic Downtown Cochrane.



73% of respondents would like the business development budget of 1% to increase or remain the same. With15% of respondents preferring to see a decrease in the business development budget.

The main reason to ***decrease*** the budget was because money could be used for other services.

The main reasons to ***increase*** the budget were to:

- Support businesses to succeed helps our economy to grow
- Attract outside investment to Cochrane
- Supporting small business is important to me, and
- Need to increase non-residential tax base

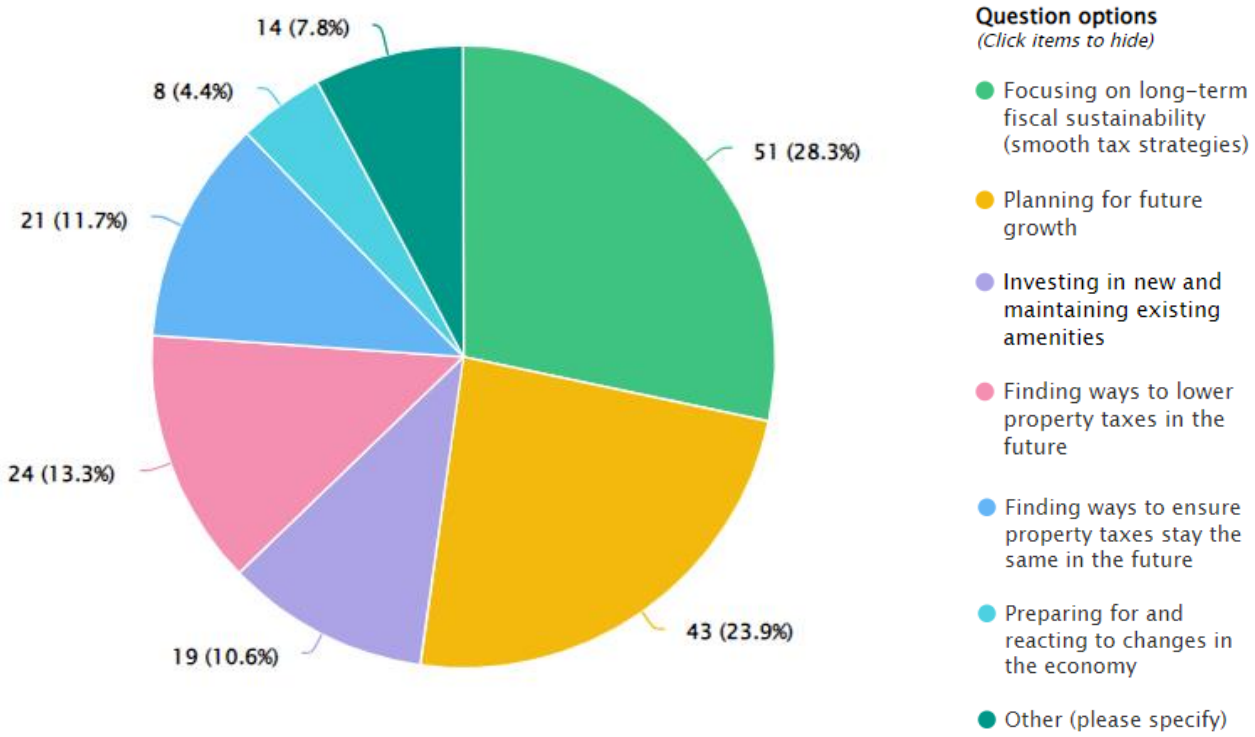
Additional Feedback

Question 25: What other projects or goals (if any) should the Town be thinking of when planning the budget for 2025 and beyond? These may result in a tax increase.

Some responses for additional feedback include improving the Highway 1A bridge, pathway connectivity, and traffic. There were also a few comments related to cutting unnecessary spending, implementing a comprehensive capital budget plan, and ensuring developers cover required infrastructure costs. Respondents also requested more recreation centres, high schools and community hubs and increased funding for arts and culture, youth sports and recreational opportunities, and improved public parks, including dog parks. Addressing affordable housing options, improving healthcare facilities and services and addressing parking issues in new subdivisions were also priorities for some. Please refer to Appendix C for a full list of responses.

Most Important Priority

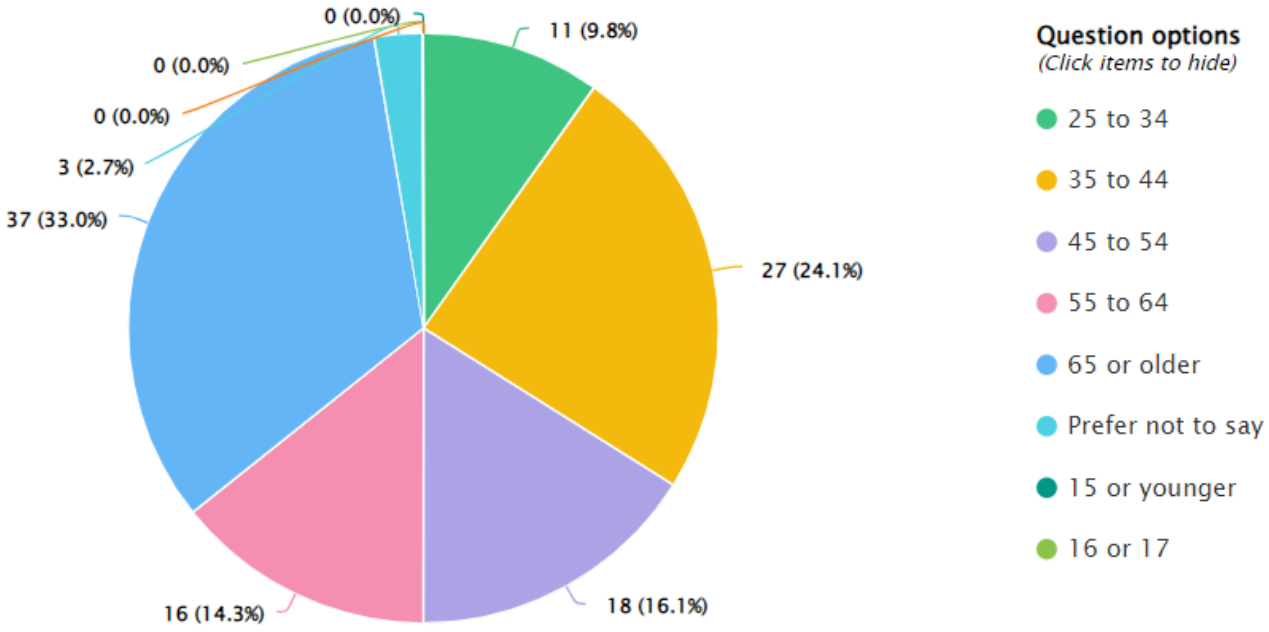
Question 27: Finally, with respect to the budget process, which of the following would you say is the most important priority facing the Town?



Demographics:

Age

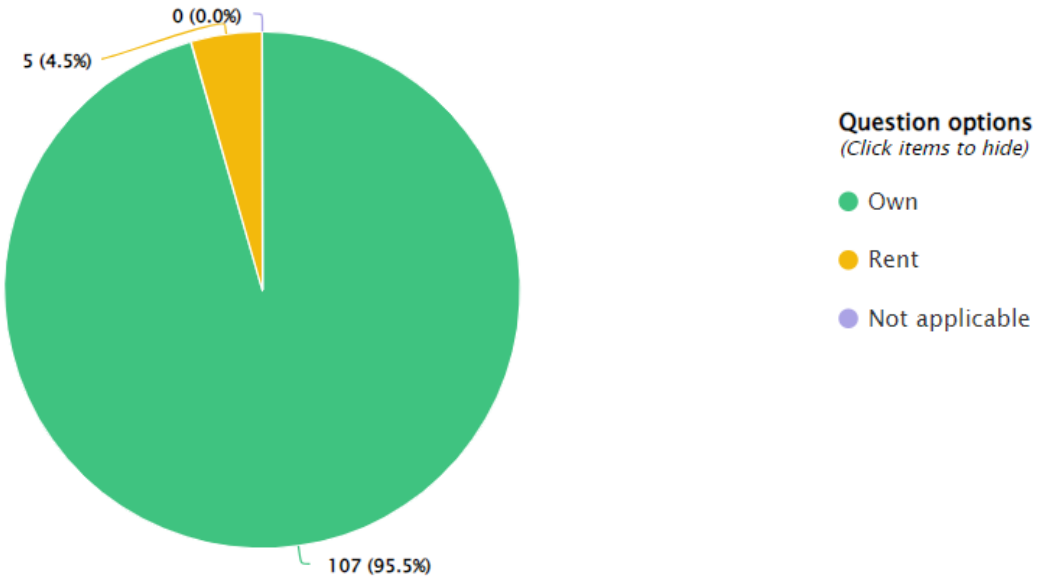
Question 1. How old are you?



A notable number of respondents were 65 or older who filled out the survey (33%), however there was fairly equal distribution amongst 35-44 (24.1%), 45-55 (15%) and 55-64 (14%). Encouragingly, 10% of individuals were in the 25-34 category.

Rent or Own

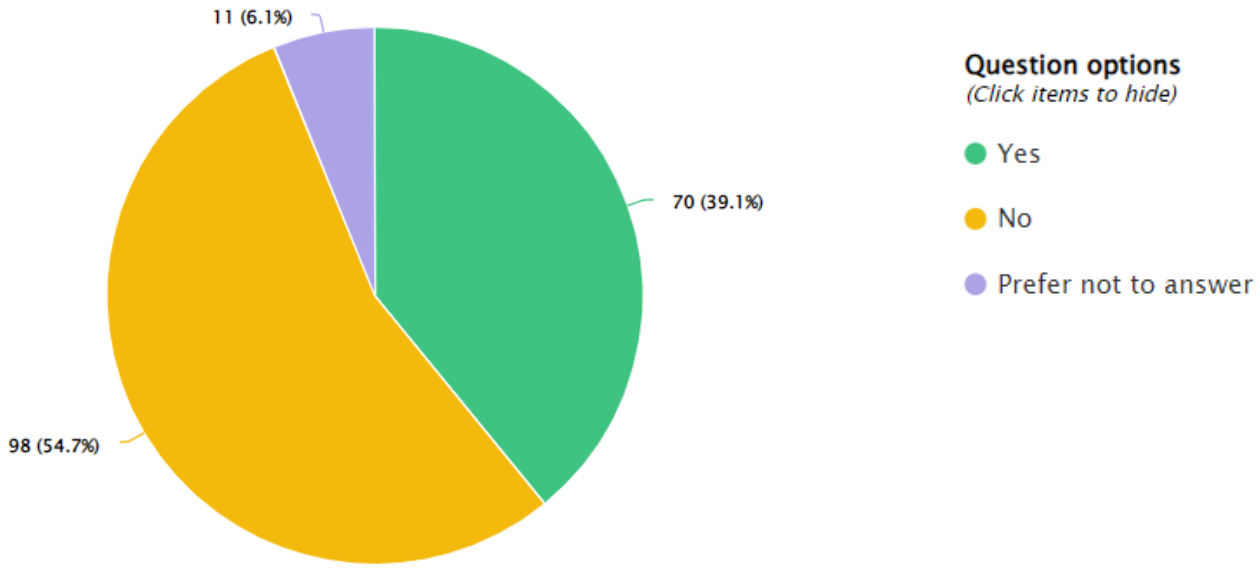
Question 3: Do you own or rent your primary residence in Cochrane?



96% of survey respondents own their home in Cochrane.

Household Children

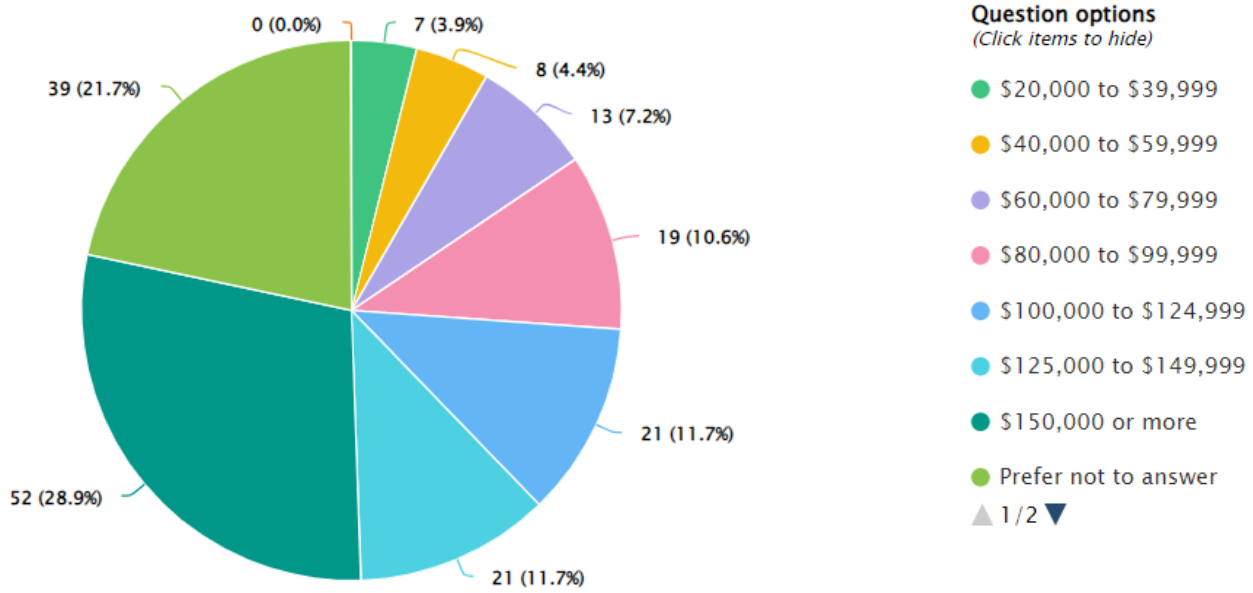
Question 28: Are there any children under the age of 18 in your household?



Most respondents (55%) do not have children under 18.

Household income before taxes

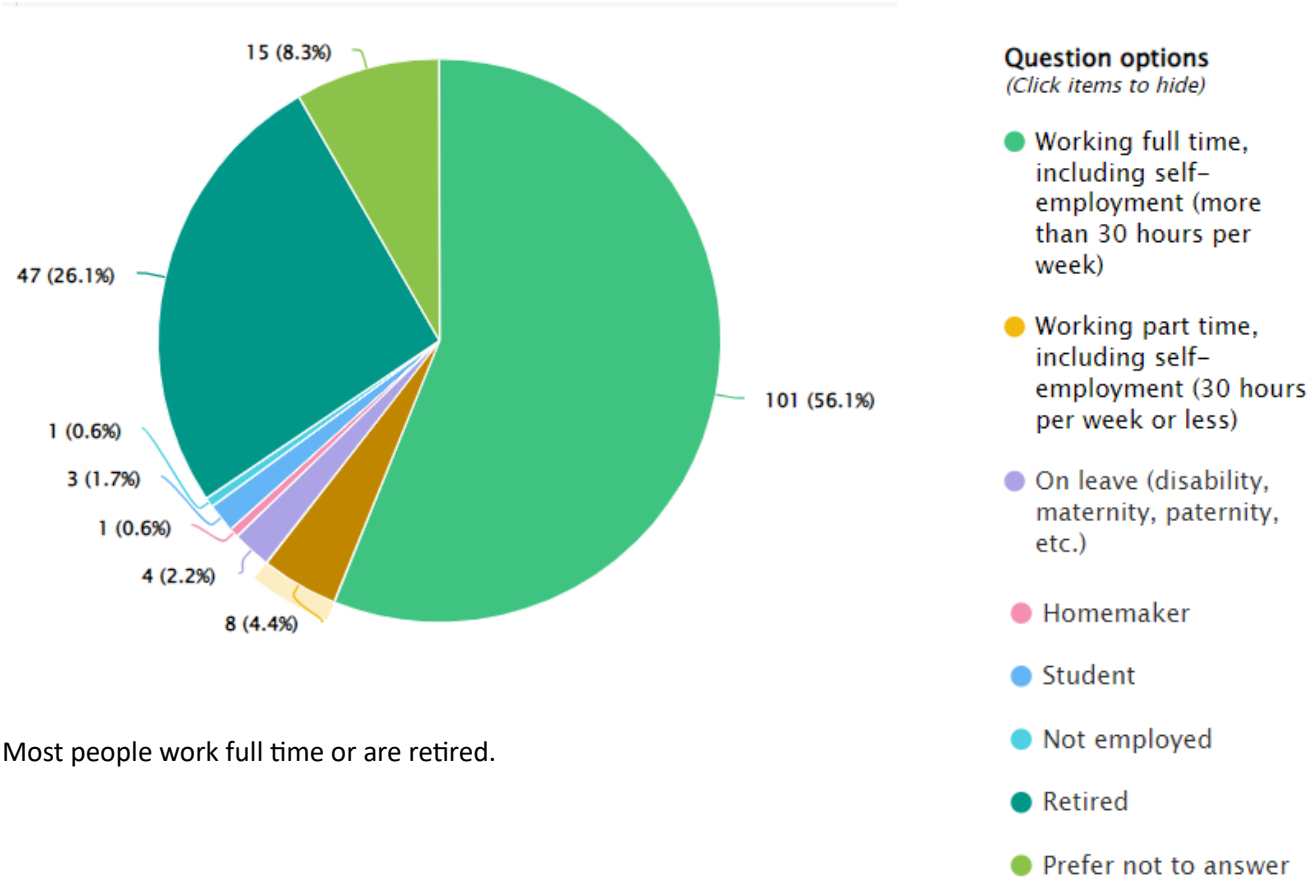
Question 29: Which of the following categories applies to your total household income before taxes in 2023?



A majority of respondents make $80,000 or more. A notable amount did not feel comfortable answering.

Current Employment Status

Question 30. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?



Most people work full time or are retired.

Appendices

Appendix A – Perceived value

Q- What is the main reason you feel that you receive very good value?

Main reason you feel you receive excellent value:

- Things are finally getting funded, to actually help Cochrane be better. People always want more for their money, or just want more for free. I wish people realize that things cost more, and nothing is free. You pay for what you want/need.
- Community amenities IE rec center, trails
- Roads are maintained and cleared. Great pathways. Clean city.
- Cochrane has beautiful pathways and services for residents and tourists. It's wonderful here. Snow is plowed in a timely fashion and our parks are clean and well maintained. I also feel like the town is good at communicating with residents.
- The town appears to run smoothly
- Utilities, infrastructure, community events, transparency of Town Council, medical and emergency services satisfactory to date.

Main reason you feel that you receive very good value:

- Our sidewalks were redone last summer if there was any cracking, I appreciate that attention to detail. Quick and efficient snow removal from main roads.
- Good pathways, road improvements
- Garbage parks street cleaners
- Appears to be decent municipal services.
- Cochrane is a progressive community who tries to be responsive to citizens
- Public services are extremely important to myself and family. Good unionized jobs with quality services like we have in this community are important for our future generations. Although we have had some infrastructure challenges they are coming under control. Good work!
- A lot of things are being built and maintained.
- The rec centre is top notch, our pathways are ploughed speedily. We need more outdoor fields for the kids. Love our free library services as well.
- Generally good town services.
- Because education is important so approximately a 1/3 of my taxes going to education is probably not enough
- Construction on roadways means progress and investment, however to urgent care needs to be transitioned to a hospitals to support ALL the families 24/7 here in cochrane. Also we need a Home Depot to helps owns keep up their homes and make easily available materials to help upgrade older homes
- The Town of Cochrane is a growing town (or city) and as a function of that we SHOULD be spending more money to get ahead of infrastructure deficiencies. If not, we're simply borrowing from our future residents. Looking at the Canadian Federation of Taxpayers data,

Cochrane is the lowest in terms of taxes/person (2020 data here: https://www.taxpayer.com/media/Municipal-Spending-Report-Alberta-2020.pdf). We need to spend MORE.

- Cochrane appears to be well maintained compared to other towns in Canada. It's services keep the community clean and welcoming to visitors and residents.
- Cochrane is clean and well maintained. We have good services and business sector. I appreciate the new intersection at 1A and Hwy 22. Another vehicle bridge over the railway tracks is desperately needed in the downtown; traffic is backed up often and will only get worse as we grow.
- We have good services with garbage recycling emergency. In order to support or oppose a decrease in services I would need to know what services in particular were affected as it would not be across the board.
- Town services seem to be well run. No complaints.
- Services of town meets my needs
- The street cleaning/snow removal is fast and effective. The parks are nice.
- Roads sanded and cleared quickly as well as pathways. Good emergency services, recreational facilities and quick attention to emergency repair needs.
- Happy with current services
- It would be better if law enforcement officials actually enforced speeding limits and there were rules created/enforced for the excessive noise in residential areas from half /one ton trucks
- It would be better if law enforcement officials actually enforced speeding limits and there were rules created/enforced for the excessive noise in residential areas from half /one ton trucks
- Town is well maintained, good services, lots to do
- Service are being provided. It may be slow but roadwork and underground service have been completed
- Happy with most services, snow plowing could be a bit better eg entire road, not just middle strip and only allow parking on one side of street in winter or perhaps alternate sides to allow for easier snow removal.
- Considering the growth of Cochrane you are managing!
- Town is progressive, well maintained, innovative
- lots of parks and pathways within the town. We are on a school bus route so street is cleaned of snow regularly. good clean water and reasonable water rates. Solid community services for everyone to access. A strong, supported seniors culture. Leisure center subsidies that promote greater public access. Reasonable taxes.
- finally getting some infrasture work done
- Our roads and sidewalks are maintained. I appreciate the paths being cleared and the accesibiity of the parks. Bylaw and fire is well serviced from my experience however I thnk that our fire department are one of the highest paid in the province. Although I may be wrong.
- The administration often approves new developments as though cochrane wants to be another boring town just like every other suburb town. Instead of focusing on what

Cochrane really wants. We want more green space than any other town. A couple tiny green spaces in each development with a few untreed narrow between houses paths, not good enough. Do better. Aim to build developments that look like glenbow or west terrace where pathways and green space was actually significant. Stop just trying to be like everyone else. Even if it means we don't get as many developers.

- Town does a good job of managing the funds

What is the main reason you feel you receive good value:

- Cochrane provides many services
- Basic services are good here. Bus service is awful. Police coverage seems low. Roads are in tough shape. Pathway system is great in some places. Not sure what the function of the new Station building is.
- Cochrane has all the basis covered plus also excels as a beautiful town with parks etc.
- Everyday services (garbage, streets sweep/snow removal/water) provided in a timely And reliable manner. Needs more ambitious long term investments in roadways to pace town growth.
- I am happy with the capital projects that are taking place, as well as the town's support of community organizations and events. I would like to see more investment directed towards economic development, and encouraging/supporting innovative independent businesses to come to Cochrane.
- Road clearing is excellent, parks are well maintained and overall town employees are great to deal with. - lack of recreation funding and opportunities for a growing municipality are limiting and feel like growing this area of the town is important and sorely needed.
- The town is beautiful, the pathways are cleared.
- The town seems to have very good up keep and new development to make our town more functional.
- Basic Services appear to be attended to.
- Still lacking services for residents
- Service is adequate.
- We love the dog park by the river. Also road clearing etc happens on a regular basis.
- Infrastructure is generally in good shape and being improved. We aren’t being nickel and dimed for things like parking. It could be better if certain things like protecting our natural areas was better managed.
- I have had no complaints with any of the services. They seem to be handled in a timely manner.
- We have reasonable services for the money.
- Need 24/7 urgent care and more ambulances
- Excellent road maintenance cleaning and snow removal, good street lights (though i would prefer Dark Skies), finally getting road infrastructure upgraded. what isn't so good is infrastructure maintenance (water and sewer), and that road upgrades very late in coming.
- Could be better. The parks maintenance budge is very low.
- Fair split of taxes with the Province
- I do use some services but believe council and admin could do better job of budgetting.

- I am pleased with the parks and trails and the way the roads are maintained (ie snow clearing)
- Things are mostly done promptly and thoroughly in regards to cleaning areas, clearing snow, maintaining streets, collecting garbage.
- The level of service is adequate. The variety of services offered is adequate.
- The town is kept in good repair
- I dislike seeing contractors standing around (Centre Ave. for instance) and digging up, putting back down, re-digging up the same spot a week or month later. The entire project was mismanaged and as a result businesses and residents in the area have greatly suffered from this mismanagement. An entire rotary was built in less time than it has taken to widen Centre Ave. This contractor is a menace to the town. Tourists and visitors can't even come into town without meeting this mess.
- I don't have any metrics to go by. I feel Waste collection is good. street cleaning and clearing is okay. Would like to see more snow collection/plowing on the smaller streets where I live in riversong over the winter but its manageable. I like that the town is focused on the infrastructure improvements (22, 1A) and that is very good value.
- To make the good value go to very good or excellent, I would like to see 24 hour urgent care.
- What I see in action I'm generally pleased with, though I think we could definitely have an improvement in street lighting.
- Too much money spent on new developments rather than general services that benefit long time as well as new residents.
- Very few services apply to me.
- Some of it is well managed, some is poorly managed.
- I live in a condo (town house style) and garbage is paid by our condo fees even though we are in town limits
- I think Cochrane is nice, but sometimes I question municipal spending decisions
- Most issues that I identify are being dealt with. Some are a waste but some are good.
- Generally speaking the funding for municipal services is adequate but needs to be increased due to increased population growth etc.
- So far the services have been good, haven't lived here long enough to form a concrete observation.
- Satisfied overall with services
- Most services and facilities provided by the Town are satisfactory and meet expectations.
- I no longer use education, but see the worth in free education as long as that education fund is to support Canadian citizens and not subsidize non Canadian citizens
- Public spaces are maintained, funds for locally administered programs appear to be well spent
- Know big complaints
- Traffic is a nightmare in town, who decides to rip all of the downtown along with the other construction at the same time. The town planner should be replaced.

What is the main reason you feel that you receive fair value:

- Still have to pay for other town services, ie: eco center that comes off water bill
- Our taxes are a lot. We moved from Canmore due to the cost of living and our taxes are climbing exponentially. The town feels like it's just missing something. It's so disjointed. The roads need work, the snow removal is poor. There are essentially no trees in fireside (we need so much more focus on bringing green to Cochrane). The trees we do hand are not trimmed away to allow adequate walking clearance on most sidewalks in communities. There is no bylaw presence for snow removal, garage all over peoples lawns, speeding in residential areas with kids. There is garbage everywhere that isn't picked up. Projects seem mishandled. There is no trail system linking fireside to downtown. There is no downtown. There is so much work to be done to make Cochrane feel in anyway cohesive. Unfortunately for what we pay, I don't see the return into the community yet. For the question below... "other"?? Don't decrease service levels. Lower the counsels huge salaries and make a better budget that serves the community.
- We see wasted funds in services that are provided. Example when you see things as town trucks running while workers are doing a job on landscaping or other work on road sides, also do you need a truck for each person?
- there has been a decline in overall service delivery - i.e. road maintenance and repair (painting of road lanes, bike lanes etc, pothole filling and repair) as well as pathway maintenance and safety, forest management and weed control (STOP using toxic chemicals). Bylaw enforcement seems to have disappeared - people park cars on their lawns, block lanes, unpermitted development (suites) are not controlled which impacts parking and tenant safety.
- Parks, play grounds, gathering spaces, culture, diversity, where is it?
- Service, infrastructure and roads are behind for the population of Cochrane, parks no movement for HHSC for years, nothing to do with the family
- Planning and construction projects on roads are ill conceived and poorly implemented. Parks are generally well kept, except for the parking lot for mitford pond, which seems built for racing and due to lack of enforcement encourages stunting and excessive noise. The item that is leading to very big problems in the future is very poor planning of roads and parking.
- Infrastructure and improvements. More focus on building walkable, sustainable communities, parks and playgrounds, and shovel ready school sites for public school (RVS) schools.
- Public Safety is my biggest concern. The 2 times RCMP have been involved in 2 incidents, (one with us and one with neighbours) nothing was done and never resolved. Our concerns were basically ignored. I also have a HUGE issue with speeding - in Gleneagles and on Hwy 1A. Whenever RCMP come to the neighbourhood to monitor, all they do is chat with people in the neighbourhood. Second concern is for health care - we really do need a hospital and more doctors.
- Not much for middle aged, no children, not seniors, etc. In Cochrane. Most things geared towards families and seniors.

- As long as infrastructure projects are completed within 20% of the expected cost, I consider it “fair value”, as is the case in general industry. When projects are completed as budgeted, the value improves.
- Seems that the individual tax rate per person in Cochrane is $2600.00. The per person in a major city as Calgary is $2200.00. The residents of Chestermere, Alberta is $1600.00. That’s why!
- Have not had swings at our park for almost a year, traffic congestion from poor planning, TOC "lost" 5 million dollars to do road upgrades in Glenbow, residents not consulted re widening the pathways to pave Glenbow paths(I have no problem with paving and the bridges definitely need to be fixed, but taking down trees to widen it will change the environment for the animals and pathway users). I think the town does a good job keeping the town clean and most pathways maintained. The garbage/recycling services are reliable. I like living in Cochrane for the friendly people, downtown, close to the mountains, pathways.
- Our roads are in poor condition; snow removal has been poor for the last couple of years (it used to be great); there aren't many new recreational services geared just towards adults.
- Services are not great nor bad.
- housing development is going faster than public space/environmental/town logistics development
- We have good services but they could be improved
- Always room for improvement
- with all the ongoing development things seem to be taking longer and longer to complete resulting in many in progress projects at the same time
- Municipal Services in Town have not kept pace with the rapid growth the community has experienced. As a result, the services available do not support the current population and should be expanded to respond to growing community needs.
- There’s nothing to make me feel like I’m getting anything more than adequate base level municipal services.
- While certain services are great, there are plenty that are lacking or underfunded.
- Administration costs too high
- So many things could be better, like transit and roads. Also, councillor salaries are quite low considering it isn't supposed to be a full-time job, and it is tax-free.
- Would like to see more transparency in Town expenditures, e.g. what was the total cost of the damaged water and sewer pipes last December and what was the cause of the damage and is any company paying for the cost of damages.
- Park facilities are basic and minimal, pathways very busy with lots of motorized bikes challenging pedestrian traffic, road system frustratingly under perpetual construction...
- There is always room for improvement, and governments at ALL levels in Alberta and Canada need to start doing better to reduce wasteful spending, rather than leveraging taxpayer collected money with borrowing at high interest rates that ultimately results in higher taxes year after year. For example, we pay property taxes, but I still have to shovel the walkway in front of my house, and mow the boulevard in front of my house. Why? Do we not have town employees who are paid with my tax dollars that are employed to do exactly

these types of jobs? I'm unclear on this, but does a portion of my property tax also go to public works/utilities? If that's the case, then why do I also have to pay EXTRA for garbage, recycling and compost pickup? Governments at all levels constantly have their hands in our pockets, and service levels NEVER improve. They either remain stagnant or sink even lower than the current sub-par levels.

- the flash-bang signs and salary increases. Question 7 is a loaded question, please be more specific. A bolded decrease in service levels?!?! hours at the ranch house? police services? the recycle center? Less utilities? What?
- Council and Mayor salaries seem high. Poor planning on infrastructure projects such as Centre Ave has let to mutliple closures, repeatedly digging and filling holes.
- There is excessive spending in many areas
- Some decisions are not the best. Focus in connection
- Too many niche projects. Feel good projects
- Haven't seen much change other than a bus station being built and a transit system that hardly gets used
- Money is wasted on programs that people want but should be paying on their own instead of things that benefit all community members
- A condominium owner we do work and pay for ourselves. Compare to other communities where the Town is doing street sweeping and snow removal. We do not get those services! However, we pay equal if not more on property tax. Condominium that do their own snow removal, street sweeping landscaping and such should get some sort of reduction since they do not get this service from the Town.

What is the main reason you feel that you receive poor value:

- Council uses the money to give themselves raises, build silly signs and give construction projects to inept companies.
- I feel like we get the bare minimum. There are very few services provided by the town, many provided from private businesses and non for profits.
- The town does not listen to its citizens!
- The taxes continue to rise each year to fund the continued hiring of middle management, with fewer and fewer hands on staff who actually provide services to the residents of the town.
- No snow clearing on my street sidewalks in disrepair. Centre Street mess no end in sight.
- Money is being ill spent on bloated wages, unnecessary spending is out of touch with what residents are going through financially
- I pay my taxes but no one from the Town (mayor, councillors) actually listens to what the taxpayers want and don't want. Sounds like pretty poor value to me.
- Poor planning, waste. Example, 1st street. How much did it cost to rip up the road (2023) to widen it, and not add additional lanes? This provides no benefit to the community whatsoever. How many times has Centre street been torn up in the last 2 years? Proper planning would reduce this.
- Over spend on all the wrong projects

- Infrastructure management is poor. Water valve locations unknown . Road closures not coordinated. Green space tree replacement does not occur. Traffic enforcement in residential areas is lax considering posted residential speed limits. Red light infractions are common most intersections. Single entry points to numerous communities is a safety concern for emergency responses. Dust & sediment management in construction zones is not enforced within town limits. Paved walking paths terminate at square curbs opposed to rolled curbs or disabled ramp type easements. Poor communication regarding commercial expansion ie concrete plant traffic management. Pinnacle Estate pathway open, no garbage receptacles; town posting clean up after your dog. Pathway not disabled friendly for grade; saw stuck disabled scooter unable to overcome grade. Design guidelines? Walkway on 22 Bow River bridge too narrow. Connect pathway to Glenbow Park. Deteriorated sidewalks should be replaced. Cudos for public area walkway snow clearing. Extent of green space is appreciated both maintained & native areas.
- -Wasted money paving natural walking paths but lack of seasonal maintenance done on existing paths - road and sidewalk repair is atrocious - lack of promised off-leash dog areas and splash parks - overall lack of outdoor activities for young children and families to participate in together - too large of a focus on our senior population
- I do not feel the priorities of the council accurately address the needs of the town.
- Paying more tax for receiving lower quality services, e.g. neglected greenspaces. Example the BS question below - how about a question do you support greater efficiency and accountability at the Town?!
- This town has major infrastructure issues. This town is expanding exponentially and town council has proved itself not capable of managing this situation.
- We pay a lot of taxes and our local government has not been responsible in the spending of those funds.
- Look at our town you can tell, it should be easy to manage can’t get from point A to Point B in less than 30 minutes inside of town. We keep buildings new communities but no infrastructures. Also let’s just poison everyone with a concrete plant.
- Tearing up Centre Avenue three times and having those home and business owner's lives destroyed (Yes, in one case, destroyed,) and being unable to use this AVENUE for THREE years is repulsive, irresponsible and shows a remarkable inability for this town to plan..
- Lack of infrastructure planning for explosive growth.
- I do not use most municipal services except for roads.
- Infrastructure not keeping pace with development - roads not completed or in place before housing is started; water (no need to say more); better/bigger library needed; more low income and senior housing needed (not the same thing); expanded urgent care (realize that is AHS)
- Way to many admin.in the town office (Managers,Supervisors) and no enough workers
- The question is loaded. I am getting good value however the taxes are too high. Please lower taxes.
- Since we moved to our community there has been no street cleaning or snow removal. The taxes we currently pay are not reflective of the services for our area. This is our fifth build- the first time in a small town/city; we were surprised that the bus service doesn't run more frequently; especially having a high school so nearby. As mentioned above; the property taxes are high for what amenities and services we have currently in place in the Willows West.

- I've paid taxes since moving here in 1996, I've put 3 of my daughters through the schools here in Cochrane. Those that have lived here most of their adult lives and children who still live here should get a break. Those interprovincial people moving here, retiring, those families moving here increasing the value of houses/rental prices in Cochrane should pay more than those that have lived here 25 plus years. No questions asked!!! My daughters with their boyfriends/husbands can barely afford a dwelling to rent let alone purchase. Question #7, again, those interprovincial people need to pay more taxes. Why should those suffer for decreased service because of them!!??
- Poor infrastructure, high development with zero services being paid for by developers so falling on the shoulders of residencents.
- Eco Center - totally insane it hasn't found a way to allow folks to dump garbage. Charge a fee - make some money and allow folks to stop making the trip to Calgary - and overpaying the city. The Station - Went in yesteday to get some info for visiting friends. What an embarrament. No parking - the few spots on the site need to be time limited. A security guy! Why - and what cost. And there is basically zero tourist info / support and it was a mess. We were there 10 minutes and all we heard was the town staff having a great yak and laughing - obviously not working. Lastly one loney guy working in the incubator area!! This mess needs to be closed down.
- The town fumbles spending tax dollars adequately. The road construction and maintenance scheduling was a huge miss. I don't see any drive to grow commerce or bring services to the town. Yet I pay more.taxes. Where does this money go?

Why can you not rate the value?

- Unsure of what municipal services are being provided other than water and waste collection and animal services
- I am a new resident of Cochrane as of April 2024
- Because I would require, in detail, the services that were supposedly provided with this 67% of tax payers property taxes.

Q: The Town of Cochrane understands and recognizes residents' desire to keep tax increases to a minimum. In order to do this, the Town may need to consider reducing current service levels.

The 48% of participants that strongly or somewhat oppose a decrease in service levels to minimize tax increase listed the following reasons for their response:

- I like the way things are and I am okay with a small increase if needed to keep it that way.
- I need to know where decreases would be in order to disagree or agree with this auestion. More information required.
- Services are important to many, and also improve quality of life. We must be more than a town full of houses
- Cochran is the size of a small city and growing. Need to start investing in infrastructure and support like one
- I support a tax increase to pay for community services. I am cognizant that other community members are struggling financially, and would like to see a balanced approach to taxes and services.
- Happy with status quo
- That is contrary to maintaining a strong community. A budget should not be a penalty to tax payers - i.e. accept increases or accept poor service/maintenance. The onus is on the town to maintain standards or improve them through better strategies and negotiating with suppliers - not residents
- Yes, similar to the results in the last budget survey, there were overwhelming responses to increasing budget in certain spaces, yet they did not increase them at all in those areas. What is the point of this survey then? The budget was not reflective of what the residents requested
- I think the services in the community are stretched already but we are increasing our tax base with more homes. The town needs to be more diligent in putting more responsibilities on developers during the planning process for infrastructure and holding any substandard work accountable
- Due to the inefficient and wasteful spending. I would only support a reduction in services if tax dollars were being spent wisely and the cost of core services was increasing beyond the community's ability to pay.
- We can reduce taxes services down to nothing if we want, but I don't see how that improves quality of life. We are blessed in our society to benefit from the hard work of our predecessors to create a civil society that is based on collective contributions (taxes) that enable a collective benefit (civil society).
- I think it’s important to keep up with maintenance in town, but things are so expensive right now that I know we couldn’t afford too much more.
- Worse service and with the town growing in population, more services and increases to existing services may be needed
- increasing taxes is not acceptable, so perhaps service level reductions would be possible, especially in administration. Simplify processes rather than adding more approvals and permitting.

- I am unsure as to what services would be decreased
- The service should be better for the amount of money spent
- Service levels should not be decreased but not if taxes have to be raised more than 5% or the going inflation rate.
- Because there are already limited services available and I believe that there might be a mismanagement of tax dollars
- I think we need to keep up with the massive growth and we're already committed to that growth. We should be looking longer term at slowing that growth to a more realistic and sustainable rate.
- I think you should increase taxes in line with inflation and CPI while maintaining as many services as possible.
- i understand that toen need money to keep developing and pay for it and the money comes mostly from residents of the town. TO be a responsible citizen, I know I need to contribute
- We don't want to get rid of services
- It depends on what services you are considering. If it's bus services then a huge NO as this needs to actually become more more viable and user friendly. People need to be able to connect and get around town. Currently the service is lacking.
- The rapid increase in population from 2021-2025 will automatically increase the number of households that will contribute to property taxes. As development increases, growth should pay for growth and the new residents in the area would be required to contribute to the municipal services that will be required. Cochrane saw a tax freeze before and during covid with a sharp rise after the multi-year freeze on taxes. With current inflation and housing prices I don't think the community, myself included would be able to justify the tax increase right now despite the need for more services.
- I'm happy with the current level, but if a decrease becomes necessary, I'll try to adapt.
- With growth of population and all new construction of homes, we will need more not less services
- I think having services is a good for the town. It helps make Cochrane a desirable neighborhood to live in. With regular maintenance, regular cleaning, upkeep of foliage, etc. I think there could be some money saved in the salaries of the director of corporate services, infrastructure, strategy and culture and the CAO. Their salaries have increased significantly over the last couple years.
- Want to at least keep current level we have
- I'd like to remain service provided but let's get more strategic on how the money is used.
- Perhaps it should be a deprioritized model of available services
- What services? Didn't you shut down the landscape crew for a year. Planted then killed all the trees on main street, then paid to remove dead stumps. Waste of my tax dollars not looking after things.
- It would depend what kind of service we were talking about. Need more information.
- town officials are taking a substantial raise for their services
- I want a better understanding of what the service levels entail.
- There are some services that I would strongly oppose a decrease in (i.e. necessities for living and safety) but other 'luxury' services could be scaled back.

- Happy with current service levels while understanding financial impact of current taxes.
- What would the town decreaSe on. What public service do you offer that is so expensive? Perhaps councillors could take a pay cut.

Of the 27% of respondents who would strongly or somewhat support a decrease in service levels to minimize tax increase in 2025, their reasons are:

- We need to tighten our financial spending as the residents of Cochrane are financially strapped, struggling just to put food on the table and pay utilities. The yearly tax increases are putting a financial strain on families. Stop spending and if that means decreasing services then so be it. As long as that also means that the mayor and town employees and council stop wasting our tax money going on trips and their constant eating out. Ridiculous and time deaf.
- It would be great to decrease our taxes if there was something we could do to help off set the cost.
- Because people cannot afford to live right now, so put more money back in our pockets by stopping tax increases. Seriously, we are drowning here.
- A decrease won't change the poor service we are provided at least we won't go broke for nothing to change. It can't get worst than what it is.
- Everything is so vastly expensive right now. To help support your citizens, a tax decrease would go a long way for support of the town's leadership.
- As a single person with no children, I have NEVER received any tax breaks or service supports from any level of government that I have paid taxes to for over 30 years. EVERY subsidy, social service and tax credit is for married/common-law couples with or without children, and seniors. Any services I receive are 100% necessary (water, sewer, garbage/recycling/compost), not "nice to have", and I highly doubt they would ever be cut or reduced. I would dearly love to be able to keep more of my hard-earned money for myself, instead of being forced to give it to 3 levels of government who turn around and hand it out like candy to other people.
- We don't need some of the services at the level they are ie plants on quigley boulevard the level of snow removal on payhways
- Cuts need to be made or more contracting out of services. Snow, Grass cutting, HR,Accounting, ETC.
- This question is loaded also. You should be able to lower taxes AND provide good services
- To keep taxes down. The cost of living is incredibly high right now.
- As mentioned in #7 currently the services in this area are lacking and should be increased- and are not reflective of the high taxes we currently pa
- Because we do kot get good value for tax dollars under this council
- There are some things we don't need for example every time we get an inch of snow the sanding trucks are out so our driveways/garages are filled with grit. Totally not needed until the snow depth is 5 inches or more.
- The town could cut costs in some areas to help keep the budget at the same level or with just a slight increase

- We don’t need to repave the trail system. We don’t need the “station” for public bathrooms which over 1/2 of all visitors just wanted the bathroom. If these are the provided services I support a reduction in those. Build a cheaper public bathroom or use portopotties
- All 3 levels of government over-spend so it’s nothing personal nor specific for Cochrane. All 3 levels of government need to trim budgets and stick to the basics to stop the continual cycle of debt, borrowing, higher interest payments and higher taxes.
- Depends on the services and the amount of people effected
- Colt can go, worst transit system ever
- Everyone is suffering from inflation generally and we need to reduce spending in some capacity and find ways to 'catch up' so we are not all homeless.
- To help people with rising costs on everything and fight inflation
- Affordability is top of mind for many. We are mostly involved with not for profit sport groups so could take the hit on decreased municipal e service levels.
- should cut budget for all services then watch and fix where needed. Ralph Klein style.
- I'm sure there are some things that could be cut to reduce the tax burden.
- Some of the services the town SAYS it offers, it does not. What is happening is the services provided are poorly planned and financially irresponsible. Why put good money after bad?
- Keep taxes low
- Depends on the services, there must be cuts that can be made.
- I do not use most municipal services
- I don't necessarily want to see a decrease in service levels, but as a senior I also do not want to see an increase in taxes. They are already way higher than Calgary which is where we lived before moving here.
- Simply because the price of everything else has gone up thanks to the federal government’s carbon tax!!
- The only direct town services I've required have been staff to answer questions, and they've always been quick. My street isn't maintained in winter (supposedly "developer maintained", which it isn't) so I don't see benefit there. I'd need to understand what services were up for reduction to better answer.
- The municipal government should not be all things to all people.
- One of the options should be maintaining taxes at current level and increasing services, by reducing excess spending and improving efficiency and lowering staff count.
- It will depend in the services
- To be fair - I don’t work in municipal services, so perhaps some clarity on the services you provide would be helpful. But cost of living is a major concern and the town is expanding (which means more tax base… although can also increase taxes. Either way, be more transparent here
- I support consideration of reductions and the ability to provide some feedback on suggestions by council and subject experts within administration on proposed reductions. BUT, and not because I am a senior, 0.01% of taxes to seniors is terrible I strongly would support a % increase in light of the rise in elder abuse and cost of living impacting quality of life existence. Do we spray or not spray weeds? What is the trail maintenance costs and are there reductions there that make a difference and what is the consequence of reductions. I

am a dog owner but when does off leash areas become obsessive and costly do we stop building or increase fees(that would entail enforcement which is a cost).

- It would depend on the service and the level.it was decreased but I am not totally against the idea.
- Decrease taxes paid
- Living is more expensive than ever.
- decrease family programs, I mean why should |I pay for another's person family, funds should be directed to usage where everyone can benefit from it. So if it target only one demographic, that is the fund that should be reduced
- We are being taxed to death! There is a certain amount of "surplus activity" in Cochrane, not least an excessive and often unresponsive Planning Dept.

Appendix B- "Other"

Q - "Other" responses for the 21% of residents that would like to see a decrease in spending for the RCMP budget of 14%.

- "As a law abiding citizen, I am not overly pleased about a majority of budget going to the RCMP. We have a creepy guy accosting women with children for months and months and nothing has been done to stop him? The ROI here seems poor."
- "Slight reduction to be able to increase in other important areas like family and community support."
- "Would like to see more money routed to family services to reduce the need for police services."
- "Shift more to provincial service"
- "What crime? They just sit at stop signs and write moving violations to justify their own employment. After a family member called them about being a victim of domestic violence they didn't even attend. So what the point in funding an organization who's sole Goal seems to be producing tax revenue not actual police work?"
- "Move to an Alberta police force"
- "There are too many of these guys crawling all over town and harassing people."
- "Decrease funding."
- "The RCMP is valuable and should be adequately funded, but 14% of discretionary spend seems high. I would reduce by 1-2% and reallocate to other town priorities."
- "Police will always tell you they need more, but to what end. Does increase in spending on policing in our community result in lower crime rates in our community? I'd like to see the data on this…"
- "They are not as useful as they were in prior years"
- "Current allocation can handle population growth"
- "I personally do not feel that RCMP are responsive to serious issues (speeding, crime) and feel they are not worth the money spent. What the solution is, I don't know."
- "I'd like to see bylaw services receive more of the budget it this category. Many of the issues in town are related to bylaw infractions, but enforcement is sparse, at best."
- "RCMP does not provide protective services to Cochrane, mostly outside areas"
- "RCMP provide next to nothing for services and Cochrane has now become a hub for training, which should not be at the cost of Cochrane residents."
- "not happy with federal government intrusion. should not be controlled by fed gov. ie. interfering with trucker convoy in Ottawa, or coutts. overkill on covid enforcement."
- "Perhaps keep the budget the same as town grows in size. I don't see crime being a huge issue here."
- "We don't get value for money."
- "They only thing they do is to give tickets in Town because when we call for an actual problem they do nothing, so we don't need more lazy cops giving tickets because they have nothing better to do."

- “Covering a peaceful protest as was done last month with over- armed law enforcement is ridiculous and a waste of police time and tax-payers money.”
- “Crime isn’t actually investigated as it is, just minor traffic infractions are penalized.”
- “New facility and "police" sign appears to have lack of fiscal restraint.”
- “They are rarely seen in the community. No patrols in Cochrane at night. All police community engagement seems left to bylaw and maybe a sheriff.”
- “Long response time from detachment. Need increase in community patrols.”
- “Not sure how much they do. The only time I see them is at speed traps.”
- “Help Mini Thni strengthen their own internal enforcement. Put these funds into community services. Ask the feds if you need more money”
- “This money could be allocated to municipal enforcement who are actually in town limits. The town is paying for an RCMP detatchment that spends most of it's time outside of town.”
- “When you send an army of RCMP to a peaceful protest and treat those people like unthinking idiots, it is a waste of money. Whatever happened to dialogue”

Appendix C – Additional Feedback

Q - Thank you for your input on the Town of Cochrane's variable spending budget. Is there any additional feedback you would like to provide regarding your choices?

- Please stop giving council raises. No one else is getting raises. We are in an inflation crisis. Stop spending our money on lunches and hotels. Go home and sleep in your own bed. I don't want to pay for your lunch. Have meetings in your fancy meeting rooms that what they are for. Not at the most expensive restaurants in town
- Green spaces Street cleaning Community events Affordable housing Transit More box stores (shock i know) but I don't want to drive to Calgary for everything Protect the natural landscape as much as we can Pave Glenbow pathways and those potholes Hold developers accountable for their waste and promises. We must be more than a town with houses
- I think survey's are a good tool, but rarely will people agree to increased taxes. It's the role of elected officials to take all the evidence and make decisions on behalf of the community for the Cochrane of 5, 10, 15 years in the future.
- Improve the town's COLT system.
- Lets slow the town growth and catch up on infrastructure
- New to Cochrane and new to municipal engagement. My concern in the is small but fast growing town is that city infrastructure is unprepared for growth (water waste etc)
- We need to rethink how we provide these services to make them more efficient and more cost effective.
- Walkway solar lighting for pathways
- More attention on underground infrastructure. Excavation protocols need addressing to avoid existing infrastructure. Two major incidents have cost us dearly. Luckily no injuries yet!!
- I would like to see budget allocated to the maintenance and enhancement of downtown Cochrane (Main Street).
- Happy to live in Cochrane
- It dismays me to include so many critical comments in this survey, however, I am a resident that does care about the future of our community and the direction we are going, and the lack of cohesive direction within Council and Administration is concerning. I would gladly pay the 'correct' amount in taxes if I felt there is a reasonable expectation of good outcomes. We need corrective action to restore ourselves to a well functioning community.
- I would like to see the library expanded as it's over capacity. I am confused as to why taxes need to be continually increased when the town is being in more and more money with the increase in homes being built
- What about recreation? an outdoor pool? another splash park? What about culture, more community events?
- It is tricky to make informed suggestions about what is currently being allocated and what departments are doing --- this is really not visible/known to the layman/regular community member. My suggestions would be to use the Town employees and their expertise to find a resolve to budget suggestions and ways to restrain. They are the ones whose voices are most informed. They are on the front lines.

- The work being done on major roads needs to be done a lot quicker and right the first time. Also the Colt on-demand systems does not work thus why I do not use it. This needs to be seriously looked at.
- It appears that you feel that administration is not a variable portion of the budget, yet I suspect there is a lot of duplication or waste of manpower in admin.
- Please, stop the growth. The people who are already here are absolutely drowning. How about help us actually live and pay our bills before being concerned about growth and unnecessary bike paths.
- Cochrane is expanding too quickly. Infrastructure must be in place to properly handle movement within the town safely and effectively prior to further expansion. Presently many areas are one entrance/one exit situations . This is unsafe.
- Strong communities provide top notch public services for residents. This requires being competitive and providing solid wages, benefits and treatment of staff. I would also like to see an action plan for Reconciliation with a budget line item to ensure we are walking a good path
- In the current economy, people are struggling to make ends meet. Wasteful use of the existing tax dollars does not support the need to increase the burden on the population. Stick to the basics, do them right, then consider the frivolous endeavours later.
- We can do much better. Instead of destroying the planet, help fix and repair it. Instead of helping criminals and those who are selfish and thoughtless and are attempting to destroy everything decent, punish and educate them. This place is currently very hostile to educated, thoughtful citizens who actually believe in modern science and medicine and in having a community that believes in cooperation and common decency and common sense. We are enabling extremists and punishing decent people. Reverse this immediately.
- You call one part of the budget "necessary" and another part "discretionary," but that is the wrong way of looking at it. In my own budget, electricity and gas may be "necessary," but that by no means reduces the importance of examining that expense. Can I turn down the heat? Can I turn off some lights? Please examine the Town's "necessary" budget expenditures and find creative ways to reduce those as well.
- We have to keep up with growth. We have to stop this 'less taxes' thing while not building our future.
- It’s easy for people to say NO to increasing taxes to seem like they are helping. In reality our town has been underfunding for years and now the growth and planning problems are controversial because they were not planned or done properly in the first place (like Jim U park). We need the staff employed by the town to deal with the issues, and the funding to fix the growth issues. It’s the easier to tear people/fixes down publicly than actually doing and committing to the hard work of making it better and building for the future. Safety and quality of life are harder to fix and build after the fact. Please keep improving the town! Don’t listen to the complainers that attack any changes because they value their own personal use over community benefit. We know cutting in the past has lead to current and future problems. Now we know better, and when you know better, you can do better! Keep getting better- it is appreciated! And you can see the changes that make it better for the growth, not just for the few that were here before and only cater to themselves! We need bus services for some people, we need safe pathways for all people, we need to improve the basic infrastructure for our growth. Thanks for getting things done, instead of kicking the can down the road again.

- By Law officers should spend more time patrolling the river pathways Ref:- checking bikes have bells (too many fast cyclists) PLUS checking dog owners pick-up poop.
- Why does Cochrane have to grow? Why do we need a bigger population? Why do we need new neighbourhoods, "city stores"? Why now is Cochrane looking at a cement plant? We moved to Cochrane due to its smallish size, its quaintness and closeness to Calgary. If Cochrane continues to grow, we will just be another "Calgary neighbourhood". Why has Cochrane not considered capping its population? More growth can mean higher taxes, more crime, water shortage etc. I'm hoping Cochrane stops growing . . .
- Provide more detail for budget buckets to the public. Last published data was not detailed.
- Air quality requires more attention, and enforcement. The sawmill wreaks, what is that?! Neighbours burning garbage. Now the proposed cement plant. I would support additional funding to the department responsible for that.
- Focus should be on growth and developing this city as we are no longer the size of a town. Focus should be on young families and middle class. Affordable housing initiatives should be limited as they attract the wrong type of people. Larger focus should be on making Cochrane an attractive place to live and not a retirement or low-income community.
- For Cochrane to be mindful of it's spending around road/transportation infrastructure and to plan with greater foresight/collaboration to reduce waste and unnecessary spending.
- Much more needs to be done to ensure there are a better mix of housing options for seniors in the new communities. Currently there are not nearly enough bungalows being built to allow seniors to age in place and remain in Cochrane. These are not complete communities when they don’t provide for seniors or people who can’t manage a two-story house.
- Why are our taxes significantly higher than other municipalities in Alberta, yet we have fewer services to show for it ?
- We want more accountability, less spending on special interest groups
- I would like to see an increased focus on commercial development and bringing in larger businesses
- Plan for 5+ years of capital projects around investing in active transportation in order to 'catch up'. Our roads have taken priority and it's time to invest in non-motoring access.
- I believe we need to hold the local government accountable for the use of the taxes including their wages. I also think we need more money and focus put into replanting all the trees we have destroyed in construction over the past couple of years. Let's take care of our environment and make our town more beautiful.
- Stop allowing new developments until the infrastructure is adequate to handle the volume!
- Continue to expand the town with is values, making it a pleasant place to work and play, and stay close to nature.
- More money spent on weeds.
- Too many inefficiencies, very poor communication and accountability...ie water issues
- The kids need more resources, ball diamonds/arenas, the more we are growing the less the kids have to do and no way to get there with COLT not being a reliable way for them to get around town.
- private sector has economies of scale, as it gets bigger becomes more efficient cost per unit goes down. public sector is the opposite because gets too big and nobody is watching the excess spending as closely as they would if they were paying all the bills.

- Again mostly I am pretty happy with the services that are provided. I think the taxes are not crazy high. The only thing that is really lacking is the transit system - it is so close to being unusable. I like the e-scooters.
- Cochrane is a great place to live. My hope is that it is able to meet the needs of an ever increasing population and maintain the small town feel. Keeping that in mind and the life style many people move here for, it is important to maximize the outdoor spaces i.e. parks and green spaces so future generations can experience what we are fortunate to have today.
- Focus on the infrastructure and business developments if growth is necessary.
- Yes, when planning new neighbourhoods, you really need to consider single level housing for seniors and those with mobility issues. Currently Cochrane is mostly 'high rise' houses. It's great to see the mountains but it's limiting for some and honestly it's becoming 'boring' without greater variety in our new areas. So much 'sameness' in style, colour....everything.
- I think the Town needs to take a long hard look at what its priorities are and re-evaluate your executive renumeration.
- Colt is an extremely poorly planned and managed transit system. On demand bussing is ludicrous. One is unable to use the system as is because it is so painfully hard to book a ride. I would rather wait for a bus that was a regular bus, than deal with the expensive fiasco we have now. Also, if there was less financial gluttony among council members, perhaps we would have more money for services in town without squeezing people who are already struggling to get by. Perhaps council should be paid closer to the average income of where they live. Rather than like kings ruling over peasants
- Again, who comes up with these ideas like paving the Glenbow pathway? At a time when we should be scrutinizing every dollar we end up with projects like this that are not necessary. I'd lump the "Cochrane" sign at 5th Avenue into this same category. Learn what is actually a necessity.
- In regards to decreasing funding to Partner Organizations I was specifically looking at Spray Lakes Sports Center. Although a great facility it is operating at a deficit and as a private facility it should have a plan to be self sustainable at some point.
- The current commercial rental rates in Cochrane are very high and independent businesses struggle to survive in Cochrane, often leading to closures. Box stores seem to be the main business that survives and more should be done to incentivize and support independent businesses to thrive in Cochrane.
- Leisure spaces are not sufficient for a town of our size. More thought should be put into outdoor recreation spaces (bike paths, baseball fields, beach volleyball, etc), availability of gymnasium and other racquet sport spaces, etc. While the SLS facility is beautiful, it has a lot of wasted space and the hours of operation force many people to seek other facilities (i.e. fitness gyms). Also, public transit in town is unreliable and hard to use. I have 4 children that would all use the COLT bus system to get around town but they can never get on the bus. There should be a set route that flows through the Station for all community members to use.
- The must be more visibility and accountability from the Town Council and Civil Servants who are supposed to have our best interests in mind.
- Why is this entire survey about either reducing services or raising taxes? Surely with the population growth of this city all the additional households should be adding as much tax

income as the services they require. If that is not the case you should consider a campaign to educate residents on why there isn't enough money to maintain current services.

- Developers should be required to fund infrastructure 100% BEFORE new subdivisions are started.
- The Town charges too much for it's community spaces thus not supporting community at all. Your prices are way out of reach for most non-profit organizations thus the spaces sit empty and you gain no revenue because most non-profits cannot afford your "community hourly prices". The Station was supposed to provide community meeting space but is too small and overpriced; thus sits empty. Build a Library that actually has community space; encourage community groups to utilize the Ranchehouse. We are all paying for it in taxes but unaccessible due to high rental fees.
- Please complete James Walker Trail out to Hwy 22.
- We're growing too fast with a lack of proper infrastructure.
- Decrease Non-discretionary funding. Their salaries are very very high and it seems like a slap in the face to the people of Cochrane to have these positions make more than double what a lot of people make. Specially when the people see tax increases.
- Cochrane is a very attractive place to live, due to location, low crime rate, good amenities. With the growing population, there needs to continue the high level of service.
- When all families and especially seniors on fixed incomes are required to cope with increased costs by finding efficiencies and reducing costs where possible, I expect the Town of Cochrane to do the same.
- We really need to twin 1a beyond Heartland. It's crazy to have single lane for a large population while all this construction is underway
- Cochrane is a great place to live
- You seem to be really struggling with money management. Perhaps you should stop approving new communities to be developed, since even with all that extra tax revenue, property tax keeps going up and you continue to threaten cuts to services. This government, like all others, needs to thoroughly examine where every cent is allocated, and eliminate waste.
- I would like 24 hour urgent care and more ambulances.
- Historic downtown I support the business owners but I am guessing locals only go for unique gifts or when they have visitors, Otherwise we avoid the place. Your questions are so loaded,....
- Better planning and coordination of projects to avoid wastage and duplication, thus saving tax dollars.
- No more new communities until the school's overgrown is fixed and we have better roads .
- Need to make budget cuts. Stop sending money on buildings.Police station,bus stations etc
- No but thank you to all of the staff for their hard work.
- Improve the Fitness facility at SLS.
- Too much growth is causing most of the issues. Limit the growth.
- This survey is biased. You're forcing citizens to choose where to cut. It is not their role in democracy. You as governors should be able to cut taxes AND provide proper services!
- We are still fairly new to Cochrane and our feedback is based on our personal experiences and what we have seen or read on the news; and on the Town of Cochrane website. We hope to be more involved in the years ahead.

- Colt transit section I think should remain the same but managed/offered more economically. Also not sure why e-bikes and e-scooters included in that section as I would understand those are not town enterprises but rather private businesses. While I have great appreciation for the work our fire services provide I am aware they have received increases year over year. When salaries for Administration staff are posted the public complain bitterly as they don't have the proper context for the amounts shown (example finance ED) yet if the public knew the salary based on amount of shifts worked and response calls per shift for the fire fighters they may think differently about their tax dollars.
- Council the mayor and civic employees should be reminded they have a jib because of tax payers and taxes pay their salaries
- The first portion of this survey was terrible in that it did not provide enough detailed information to answer the questions appropriately. Cochrane is not the town it once was - it seems that all that is important is making more and more money when our town can not cope with the growth. It's also not what the majority of people signed up for when buying/building a new home here. Promises are broken time and time again and it's becoming disgustingly overcrowded.
- I don't think we need to keep adding services that aren't funded by newcomers to the town -we always hear that due to increasing population base we need more services but it appears that new services being proposed are always more and disproportionate to the increase in population. If we need more or extended services to the increasing population then the taxes that the new population pays should cover the increase in services.
- With the explosive population growth. It seems to me that the developers are dictating the Town of Cochrane what is needed. Affordable housing is and will remain an issue if the Town is not willing to dictate the developers to create houses in their development that are affordable for new home owners but also for seniors who are willing to downsize, free up some of their equity in their current place to help pay for increases in cost of living and that included property taxes.
- Please invest in people's mental health - communities have spent less on community programing, green space and recreation than in the 80s & 90s and we see how mental health has deteriorated. You can choose to be like every other community who is seeing durastic rises in youth additions, mental health, violence, etc. Or you can be a leader, you can make cochrane a leader. Dare to be different and invest in people again not just roads and economic growth and low taxes. Give us indoor and outdoor arenas, ball diamonds, soccer fields, playgrounds, pathways and greenspaces in the way that they used to be built. Stop pretending like any of the excuses are real. We don't need snow cleared, we don't need businesses, think about what the PEOPLE actually need. We need community, we need our mental health.
- We need to increase the residential property tax rate to help fund the overall municipal budget.
- Yes Cochrane is a beautiful place next to the mountains. I really don’t want to see 15 minute designs in this place. So many apartment / townhomes are starting to look like communist China. I see this everywhere in Calgary. I don’t want to see it here.
- should have value for money and management audit as part of performance review of town services on a 3 or 5 vyear cycle.
- The focus for the Town of Cochrane needs to change from 'growth' to 'sustainability' and the budget needs to reflect this.

- be more proactive in planning, and regulate developers. currently you are on a plan to destroy the charm of Cochrane
- Somewhat of a useless exercise in asking for public input. The last few years have shown a complete lack of any value given to the opinions of what residents actually want. The growth of this community is out of control and you are taxing us to death in a sad attempt to make it look like you are making an effort to keep up. Locals are not being hired for town positions and have not been a small town for years. Sadly as a person that has grown up here when it was a small town (less than 2000) all I want to do is move away. Residents no longer matter.
- Town needs to do a much better job saving money - and telling the taxpayers the plans to become more efficient. This insanity of each department growing their programs and services every year comes at a cost. These same departments need to focus on cost reduction programs.
- A number of items that are difficult to make an assessment. I.e. fire, police are they asking/need more funding, hard to say keep it the same if we don't have that info.
- We love living here!
- Would like to see additional equipment and ambulance services available to support the Urgent Care Facility!
- Do better. Provincial support should be acquired to help with larger requirements like roads and grounds. The sever lack of attention to James walker trail while focusing on more housing and population growth is terrible. How do we focus so much on growth and dont put emphasis on schools, roadways, and healthcare. I feel like Cochrane is a more beautiful fort mac in the sense that fort mac didn't invest properly into its community until many people left. People won't leave here but people will continue to grow frustrated with the lack of attention on important infrastructure and the proper management to adhere and improve schedule to completion.
- I understand that "Planning" is regarded as a non-discretionary service: that does not mean (in my view) that it is exempt from cuts in personnel: it is seriously overstaffed and often unresponsive to mere citizen concerns - all it cares about is promoting all and any development.