



DEPARTMENT: Treasury

REPORT NO: T-022-17

COUNCIL MEETING DATE: September 11th, 2017

TITLE: 2018 Budget Public Consultation Update

OBJECTIVE

The information contained in this report provides Council with the result of the 2018 budget public survey.

This report also recommends a timetable of 2018 budget public and Council meetings for consideration.

BACKGROUND

The Town was presented an opportunity to collaborate on the 2018 budget planning process with County of Oxford and area municipalities through a County Wide Budget Consultation Online Survey. The survey was launched June 17, 2017 through a Speak Up, Oxford! and was supported by a communication rollout through news releases to all local print and broadcast media outlets, social media, and web presence on the Town website. The Survey was open for the month of July.

The survey was designed to provide resident and business owners in the community an opportunity to express their opinion and participate in forming the Town's and County's 2018 budget priorities. The survey, containing 20 questions (10 questions Ingersoll related and 10 questions related to the County's budget), outlines how property taxes were spent in 2017, and then asks respondents to indicate whether the same services should be enhanced, maintained or reduced in the upcoming year.

Participating residents were asked to rate their overall perception of the value received for Town tax dollars and how they would like to be involved in the budget process in the future. Each question allowed for comments, and there was a final question for additional open-ended comments to be received regarding the budget.

ANALYSIS

The information gathered through this survey is intended to assist Council and Staff in the preparation of the 2018 Budget and also in establishing effective ways to engage our rate payers in the municipal budget process.

The online survey had 75 respondents representing the Town of Ingersoll. The survey provides a comment section for each question on service levels, as well as one final open ended comment question. The survey resulted in many questions and concerns, all of which will be addressed during Budget deliberations.

Value for Tax Dollars

The majority of respondents (76%) feel they are receiving good (35%) or fair (41%) value for their tax dollars, while 24% feel they are receiving poor or very poor value.

Service Levels

When asked if service levels should be enhanced, maintained or reduced, the majority of respondents indicated in every category that they would like to service levels to be **maintained**.

The more notable areas that were identified for service level enhancements are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 – Service Level Enhancements

Service	Description of Services	% in Favour of Enhancement
Town Roads / Storm Sewer	Maintenance, signage, street lighting, and traffic signals, snow plowing and more on local roads, bridges and sidewalks. Maintenance of the Town storm sewer system.	25.4%
Park and Recreation	Recreation programs; managing and operating parks and recreation; facilities such as Arena, VPCC Centre, Seniors Centre, Fusion Youth Centre; public indoor pool; and supporting local sport and special event initiatives.	24.2%

The primary areas that were identified for service level reductions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 – Service Level Reductions

Service	Description of Services	% in Favour of Reductions
Cultural Services	Museum and events at the Museum, Art Gallery	36.5%
General Government	Includes Council, CAO Office, Corporate Services (Finance, Customer Services, Information Technology); Human Resources; Economic Development; Fleet and Facilities	25.7%
Park and Recreation	Recreation programs; managing and operating parks and recreation; facilities such as Arena, VPCC Centre, Seniors Centre, Fusion Youth Centre; public indoor pool; and supporting local sport and special event initiatives.	24.2%

Comments Received

The survey provides a comment section for each service level, as well as one final open ended comment question. The detailed comments provided in Attachment 1 to this report.

Future Budget Engagement and Next Steps

To provide a direction for future budget engagements, the survey asked respondents how they would like to be involved. Only 14% of respondents would like to attend special Council meetings or information sessions while the overwhelming majority, 56% of respondents, would like to fill out **online surveys, questionnaires or budget tools**. Respondents also indicated that they are very interested in the opportunity to view and learn about the budget online including Town’s website, social media and also be able to submit feedback online. These results provide direction Council and Staff for continuing the 2018 budget public engagement campaign and planning for the 2019 budget.

As a next step, Staff is proposing for Council’s consideration a timeline of 2018 Budget meetings and advertising as outlined in Table 3. The timeline offers different opportunities for residents to provide input and to stay informed on the 2018 Budget process. Staff tried to incorporate the desire expressed by a vast majority of survey respondents to be able to communicate online. We are planning to launch an online Comment section on the Town’s website. The Comment section will be open for comments and feedback October 1st through November 30th.

Table 3 - 2018 Budget Proposed Timeline

What	Where and When
Town Website – Launch Comment section on the website for public input	October 1– November 30, 2017
Social Media –informing of proposed public budget meetings on Facebook and Twitter	October 1, 2017 – February 28, 2018
Print Advertising - informing of proposed public budget meetings and Special Council meetings	Where: Ingersoll Times When: TO BE DETERMINED
Public Budget Meeting - Tabling of the 2018 Budget – 1 st Draft	Where: Council Chambers When: November 15 th , 2017
Special Council Meeting - Review of the 2018 Capital Budget	Where: Council Chambers When: December 5 th , 2017
Special Council Meeting – Approval of the 2018 Capital Budget	Where: Council Chambers When: December 12 th , 2017
Special Council Meeting – Review of the 2018 Operating Budget with Administration. Scope TO BE DETERMINED	Where: Council Chambers When: January 5 th , 2018
Special Council Meeting – Review of the 2018 Operating Budget with Administration. Scope TO BE DETERMINED	Where: Council Chambers When: January 18 th , 2018
Special Council Meeting – Approval of the 2018 Operating Budget	Where: Council Chambers When: February 8 th , 2018

INTERDEPARTMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

RECOMMENDATION

That the 2018 Budget Public Survey be received for consideration in budget deliberations;

And, that Council approves the 2018 Budget Timeline for implementation.

ATTACHMENTS

2018 Budget Survey Results

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Approved by: William Tigert, CAO