



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

What We Heard Report Phase 2

...what we heard from the community

Administration and Council want to thank those that took the time to participate in both phases of the budget engagement surveys. Your input will help the Town determine the community's priorities and where Council needs to focus for the 2021 budget.

The Town would also like to thank the individuals who registered for the Citizens' Panel. They have joined a group of engaged citizens who want to be contacted for future public consultation opportunities. You can still register to be a part of the Citizen Panel by signing up at okotoks.ca/citizen-panel.

Budget 2021 Survey

Over the past few years, budget consultations were conducted through online surveys at the beginning of the budget process when Council is establishing the budget guidelines and before the budget is approved. This year, the Town took another step toward expanding its engagement activities by offering a two-phased public engagement approach.

Phase 1

The first phase of the budget consultation was a survey to help Council establish the budget guidelines for building the 2021 budget. The survey opened on September 8 and closed on September 23. The first public engagement was a quick check-in on the impact that COVID-19 has had on residents and their priorities for the Town services they need in 2021.

Phase 2

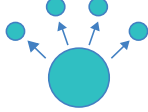

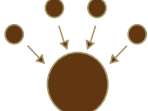
Phase 2 began in **early October** and dug even deeper into the community's priorities by asking residents and business owners to make critical choices on community service levels and user fees. Phase 2 provided an opportunity for the community to share their priorities on specific service level changes and user fees. All comments and community feedback will be provided in the budget discussions and debates that will take place with Council and the Finance & Audit Committee between November 17 and 19. The meetings will be livestreamed for public viewing. Final approval of the 2021 budget will go before Council at the December 14 meeting.



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Public Participation - What stage?

The Phase 2 stage of the 2021 Budget online engagement was at **CONSULT**.

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE
GOAL	<p>To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner.</p> 	<p>To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives, and decisions.</p> 	<p>To work with public to make sure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.</p> 



"Some of the items under consideration for the 2021 Budget are controversial and some of them will likely not be publicly supported," said CAO Elaine Vincent, "so the public's feedback is very important to help Council make the right decisions to support our community. We encourage everyone to provide their thoughts and comments so that we can build a balanced budget based on their priorities."

- Elaine Vincent, CAO



463
comments



894



14 minutes
avg. survey length

survey
participants



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Intro Question

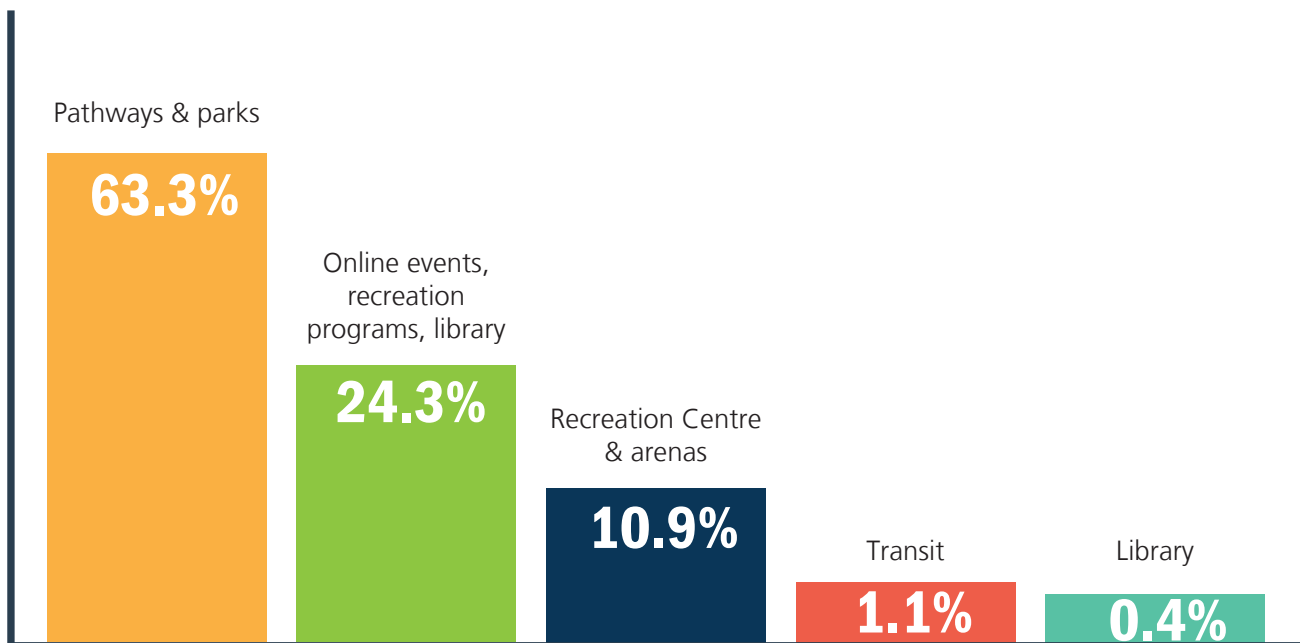
While the last few months have created unprecedented challenges, Okotokians have come together to support each other, our local businesses and organizations. We are truly fortunate to live in such a connected, caring community. Please share with us which Town service(s) have you most used or appreciated this year.

Please share with us which Town service(s) have you most used or appreciated this year.



261
comments

Which town services have you most appreciated or used this year?



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!



Citizen Panel

344 Okotoks survey participants registered for the Okotoks Citizen Panel in both Phase 1 and Phase 2. These individuals have joined a group of engaged citizens that want to be contacted for future public consultation opportunities. Signing up was voluntary. To register for the Citizen Panel, visit Okotoks.ca/citizenpanel.



Phase 1

250 registered participants



Phase 2

94 registered participants



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Service Levels

The results from the Phase 1 survey indicated that 55% of respondents somewhat or strongly supported reducing the level of Town services to balance the budget and 42% somewhat or strongly oppose reducing services.

In 2020, Council offered a 0% tax rate increase to manage the impact of COVID-19 in our community. This was a short-term solution, as continuing to offer a 0% tax rate increase over a long period would be unsustainable and result in significant, long-term service level reductions.

For the 2021 Budget, Council has recently endorsed the budget guidelines, which include considering a 1% tax rate increase, which would equate to approximately \$1.95 per typical household per month. Although this increase will help to maintain many service levels, some reductions will still be necessary.





BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

To balance the 2021 budget with a proposed 1% tax rate increase, please share your thoughts on the following suggested service level reductions:

Hours of Service

The following are suggested reductions in hours for some municipal services:

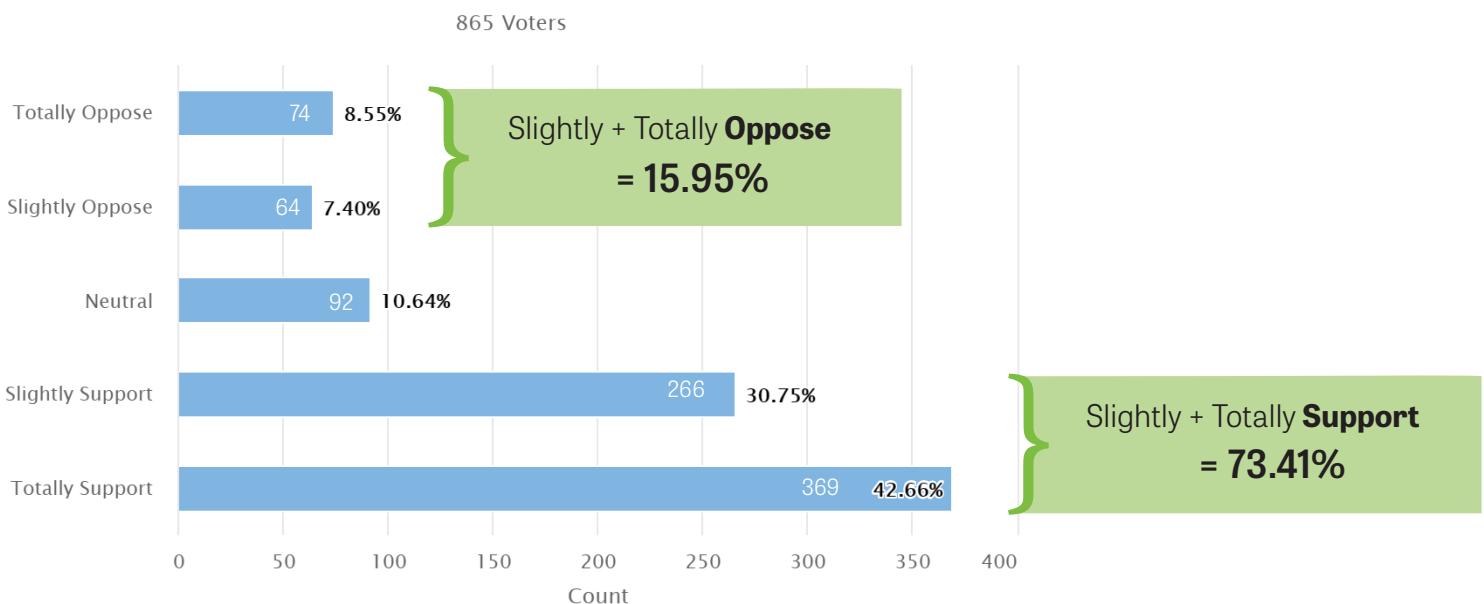
Recreation Centre Hours

Proposed Service Level Reduction

Potential reduction of service levels by closing the Okotoks Recreation Centre and Pason Centennial Arenas up to ten (10) Sundays during the summer, which is the lowest usage times during the year.

Please indicate below how much you support this proposed service level reduction:

Recreation Centre: Hours of Service reduction



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

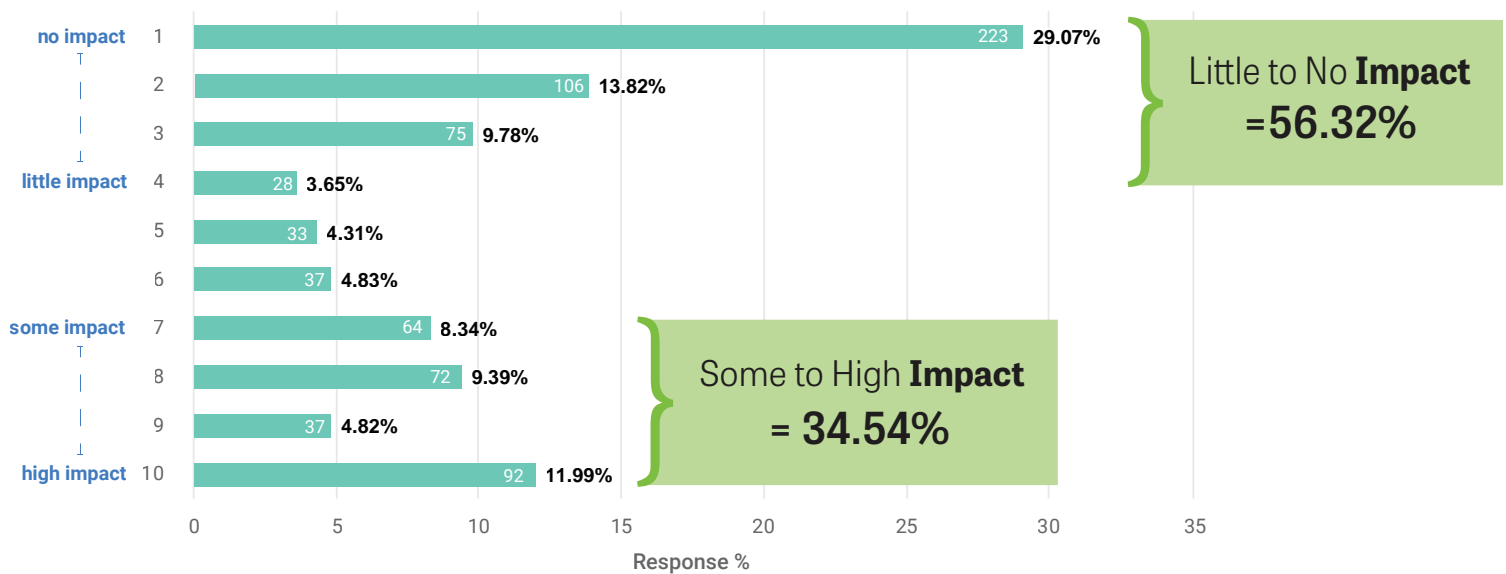
Recreation Centre Hours

Service Level Impact

Please indicate how the proposed reduction in Town services including Hours of Service, Town Maintenance and Programs and Communication will impact you and your family with **1 being no impact to my family and 10 being high impact to my family**.

Impact of service reductions: Recreation Centre Hours

767 Voters



83
comments

Reduce services or hours

- Don't extend past summer
- Makes sense if low usage
- Consider Mondays instead
- Reduce hours rather than days

Cut salaries
Reduce management

Other concerns

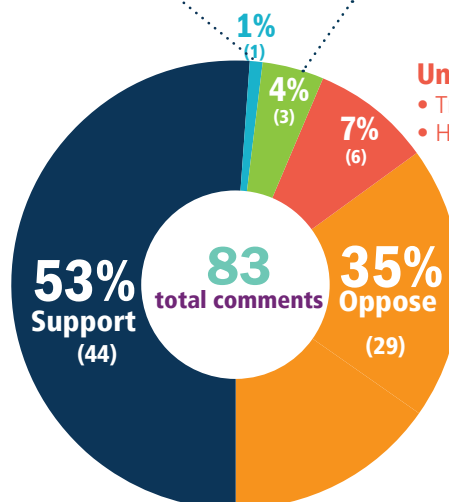
- Tax decrease
- Have management do some of the work

Unsure/need more information

- Transparency of data is needed
- How would this impact hockey camps?

Maintain services or hours

- Can only use it on Sundays
- There are other ways for cost savings
- Close arenas, not Recreation Centre





BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Hours of Service

The following are suggested reductions in hours for some municipal services:

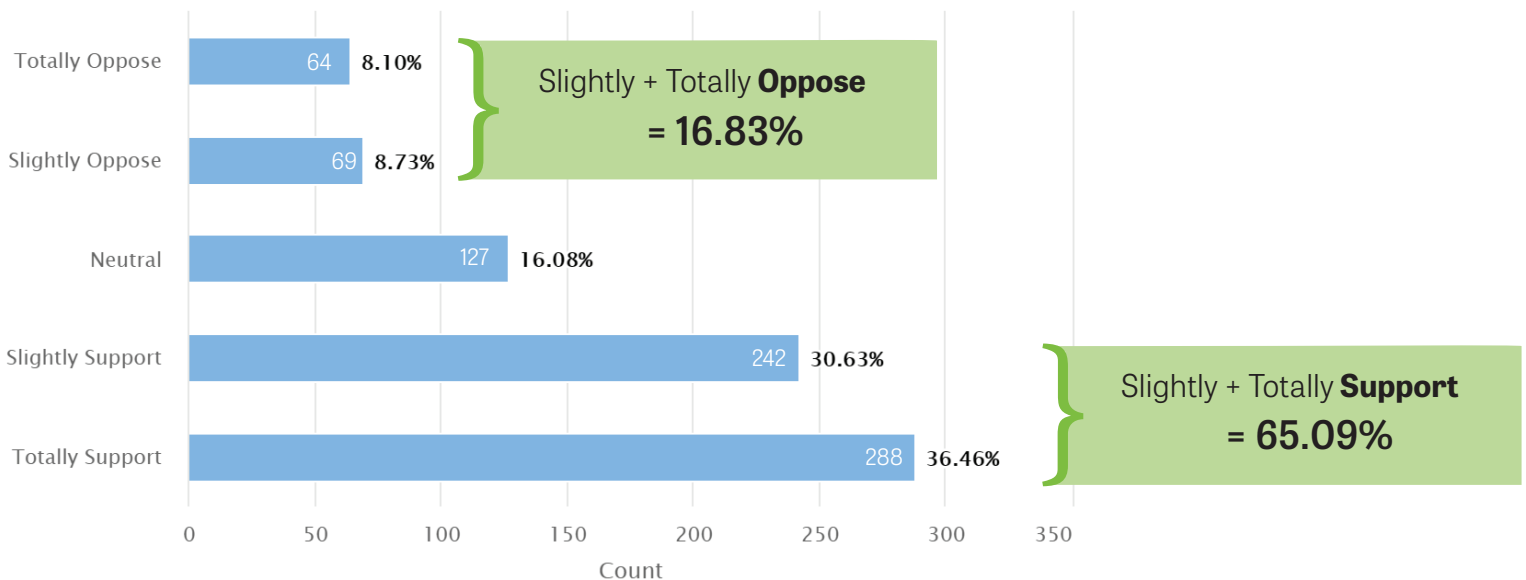
Municipal Centre Hours Proposed Service Level Reduction

Potential reduction of two hours per day Monday to Friday depending on service demands.

Please indicate below how much you support this proposed service level reduction:

Municipal Centre: Hours of Service reduction

790 Voters

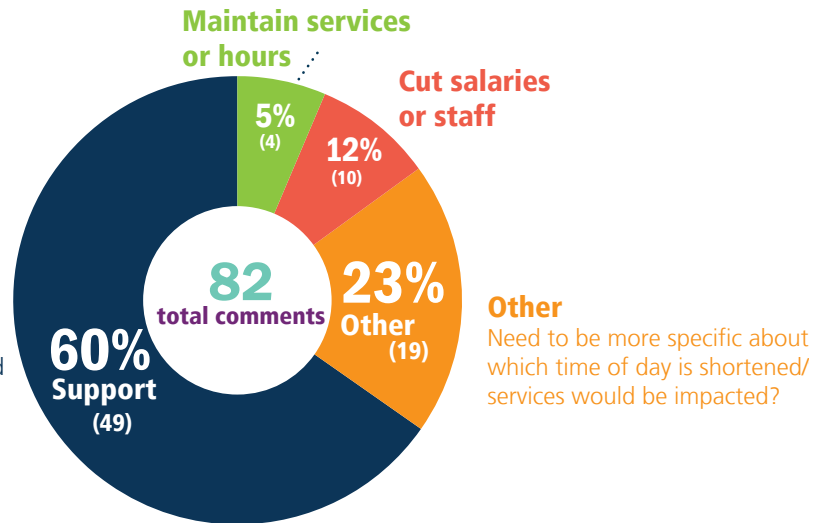


BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!



**82
comments**

Reduce services or hours
Shorter morning hours and
extended evening hours suggested

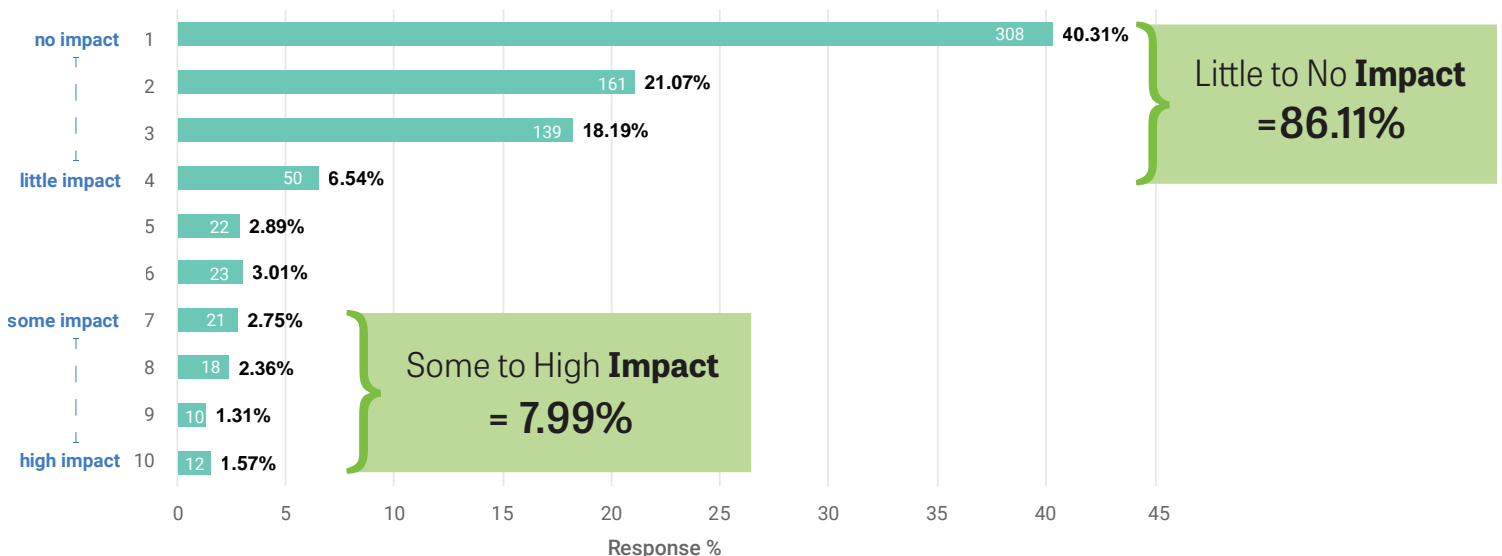


Municipal Centre Hours Service Level Impact

Please indicate how this proposed reduction in Town services will impact you and your family with **1 being no impact to my family and 10 being high impact to my family**.

Impact of service reductions: Municipal Centre Hours

764 Voters



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Hours of Service

The following are suggested reductions in hours for some municipal services:

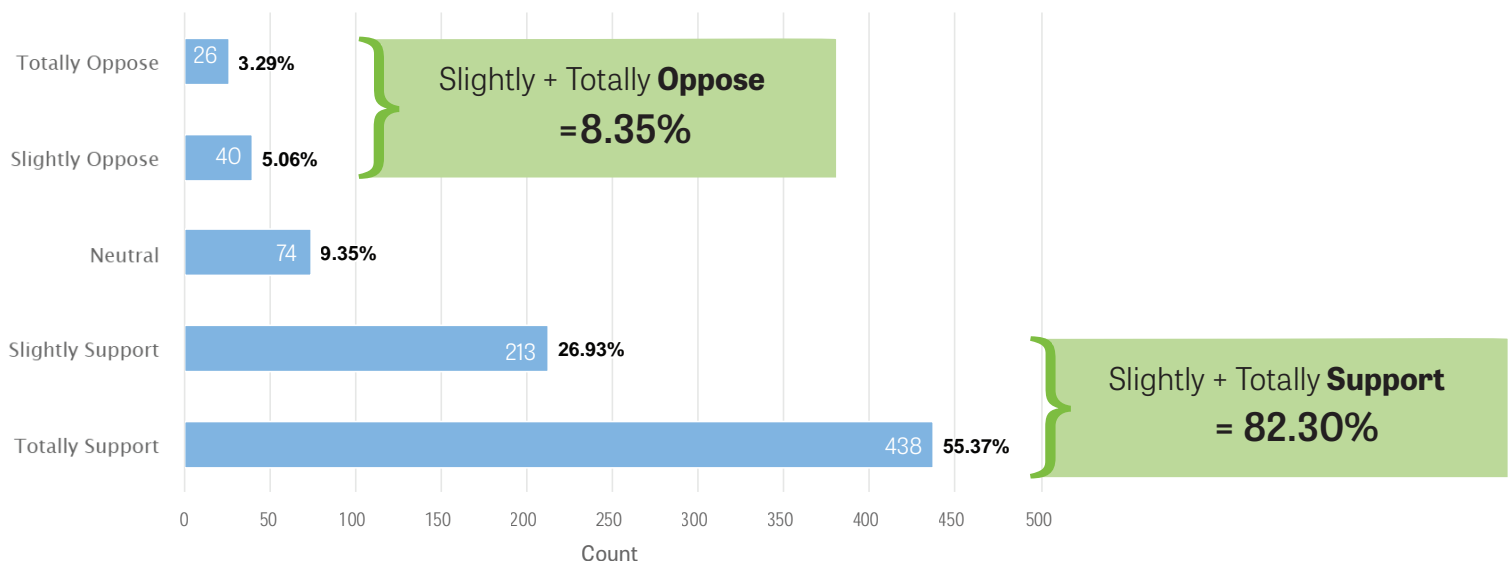
Museum & Art Gallery Hours Proposed Service Level Reduction

Potential reduction of services would be to be open the facilities for 4 days/week from Wednesdays to Saturdays. The Museum and Art Gallery are open 5 days per week and 6 days per week in the summer months before COVID-19. Since reopening in June of this year, they are currently operating at 4 days per week.

Please indicate below how much you support this proposed service level reduction:

Museum & Art Gallery: Hours of Service reduction

791 Voters



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!



62
comments

Reduce services or hours

- Not revenue generating facilities
- Should be open over weekends/ busier days
- Reduce hours as long as COVID is happening
- Go virtual

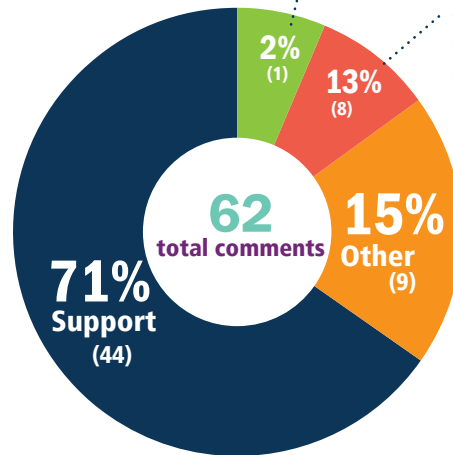
Oppose increased fees

Maintain services or hours

- Maintain service without increasing fees
- Artists need support
- Provides a place for low-income families

Other

- Need more advertising/awareness
- Revert back after COVID

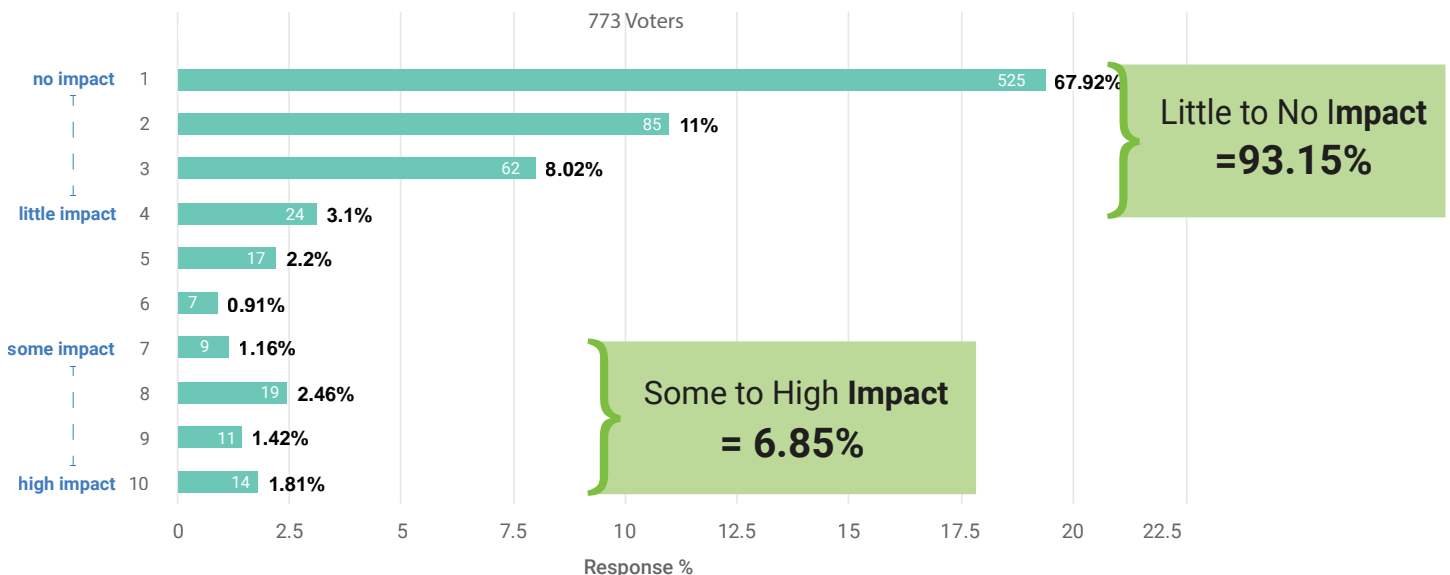


Museum & Art Gallery Hours

Service Level Impact

Please indicate how this proposed reduction in Town services will impact you and your family with **1** being no impact to my family and **10** being high impact to my family.

Impact of service reductions: Museum & Art Gallery Hours



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Hours of Service

The following are suggested reductions in hours for some municipal services:

Municipal Enforcement Hours Proposed Service Level Reduction

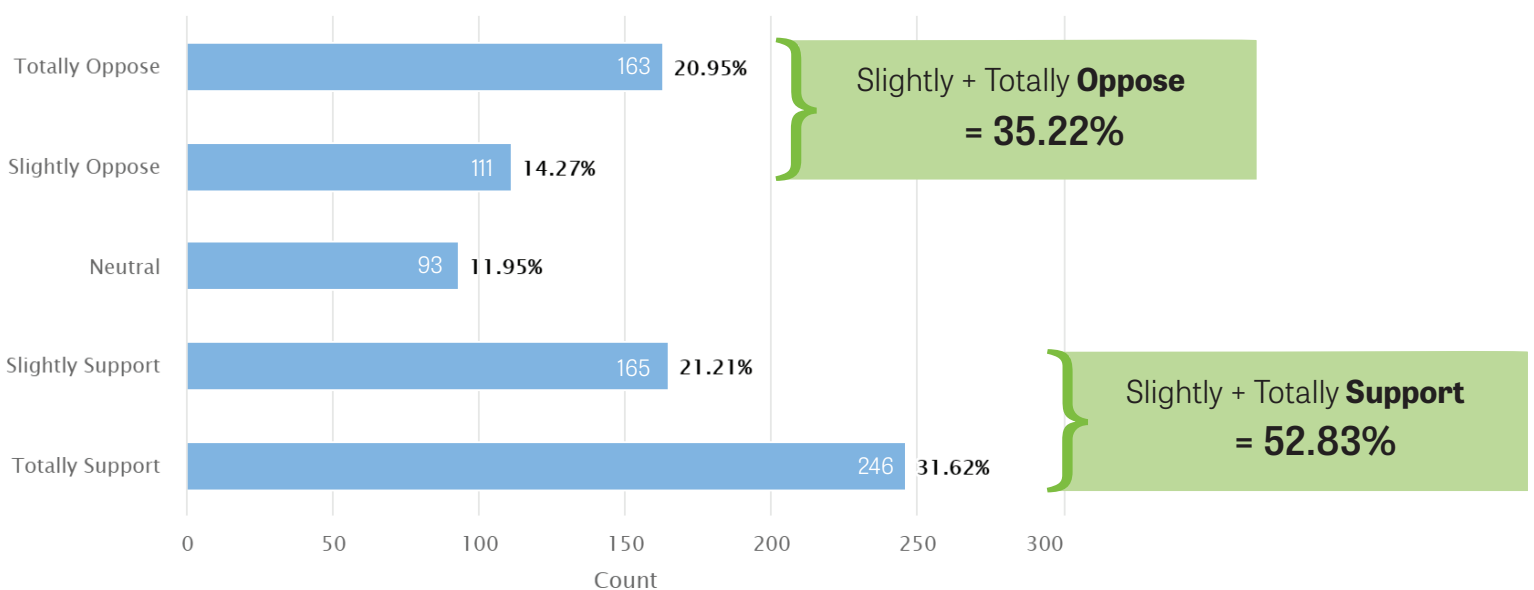
Potential reduction of service hours by 2 hours per day or seasonally, dependent on peak call times. The current normal hours for Municipal Enforcement Peace Officers are from 6 a.m. to midnight.

Please indicate below how much you support this proposed service level reduction:



Municipal Enforcement: Hours of Service reduction

778 Voters

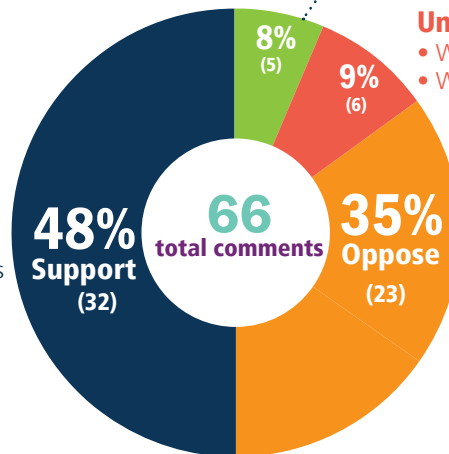


BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!



**66
comments**

Reduce services or hours
Cut mornings rather than evenings



Other concerns

- Provide less expensive vehicles
- Reorganize the department
- Review officers work and priorities

Unsure/need more information

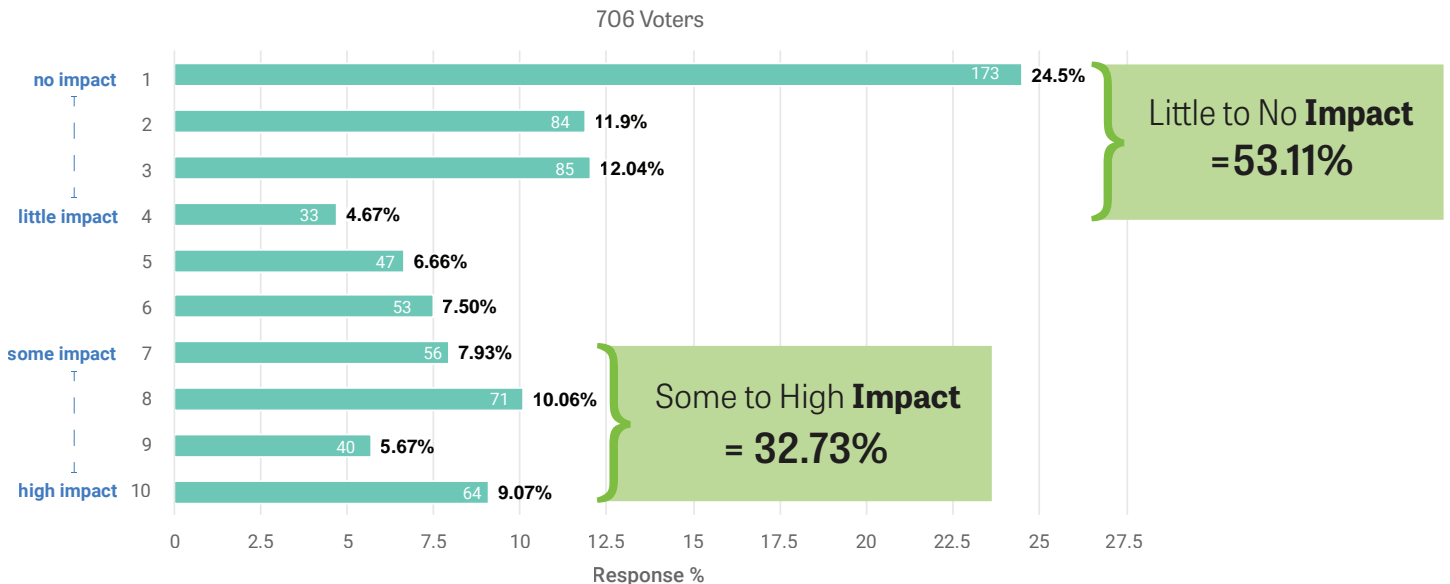
- What hours are quietest?
- When is highest demand?

Maintain services or hours
Important and valuable service as
Town grows will need more not less

Municipal Enforcement Hours Service Level Impact

Please indicate how this proposed reduction in Town services will impact you and your family with **1** being no impact to my family and **10** being high impact to my family.

Impact of service reductions: Municipal Enforcement Hours



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Town Maintenance

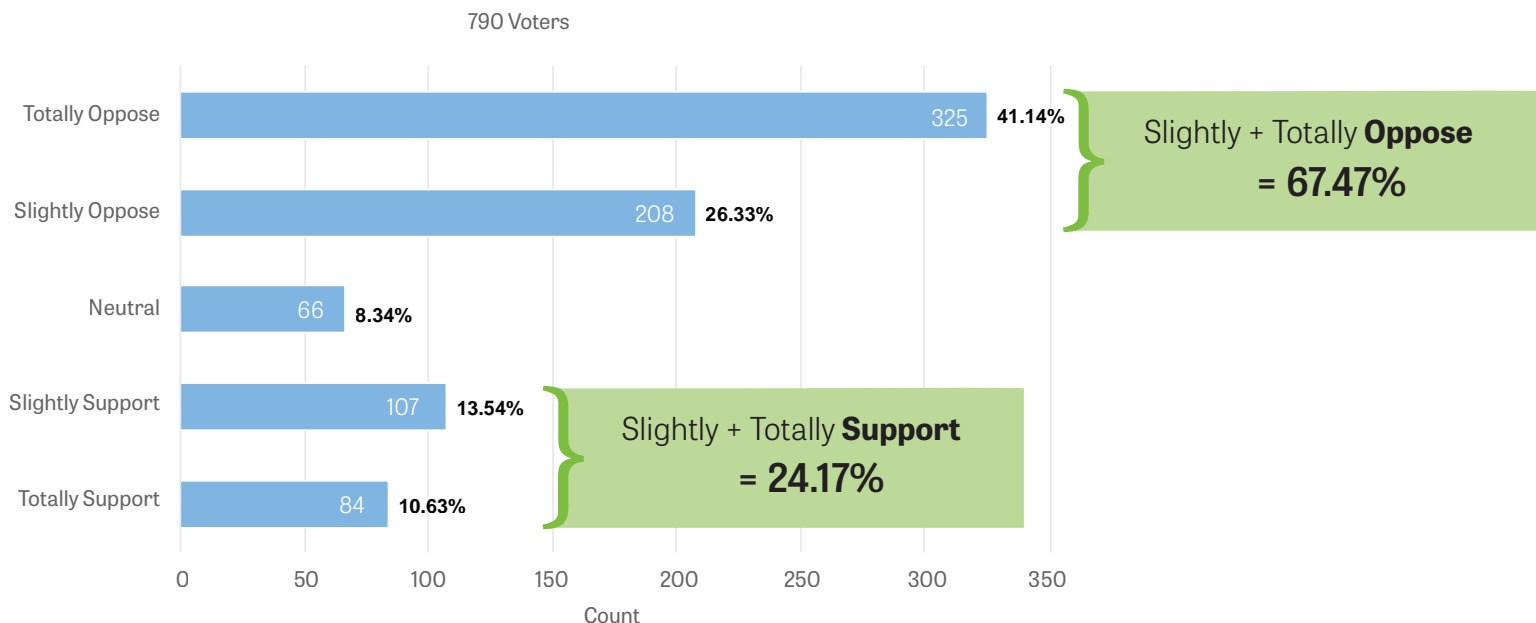
The following are potential reductions in Town maintenance for our community:

Snow Clearing on Pathways Proposed Service Level Reduction

Potential to reduce the number of pathway routes or the amount of days snow clearing is offered on certain pathways with the lowest pathway traffic.
Please indicate how much you support this proposed service level reduction:



Town Maintenance: Snow clearing on pathways

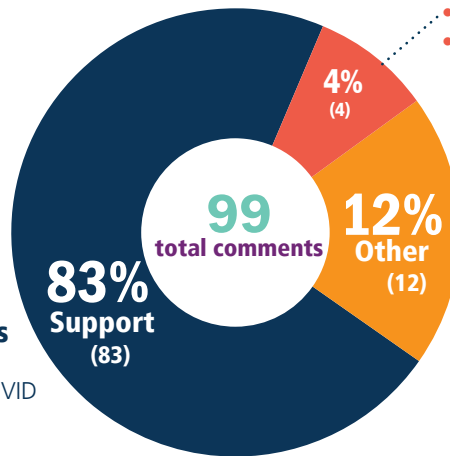


BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!



**99
comments**

Maintain services
• Safety
• High use during COVID



Other

- Never use
- Who determines essential pathways?

Reduce services

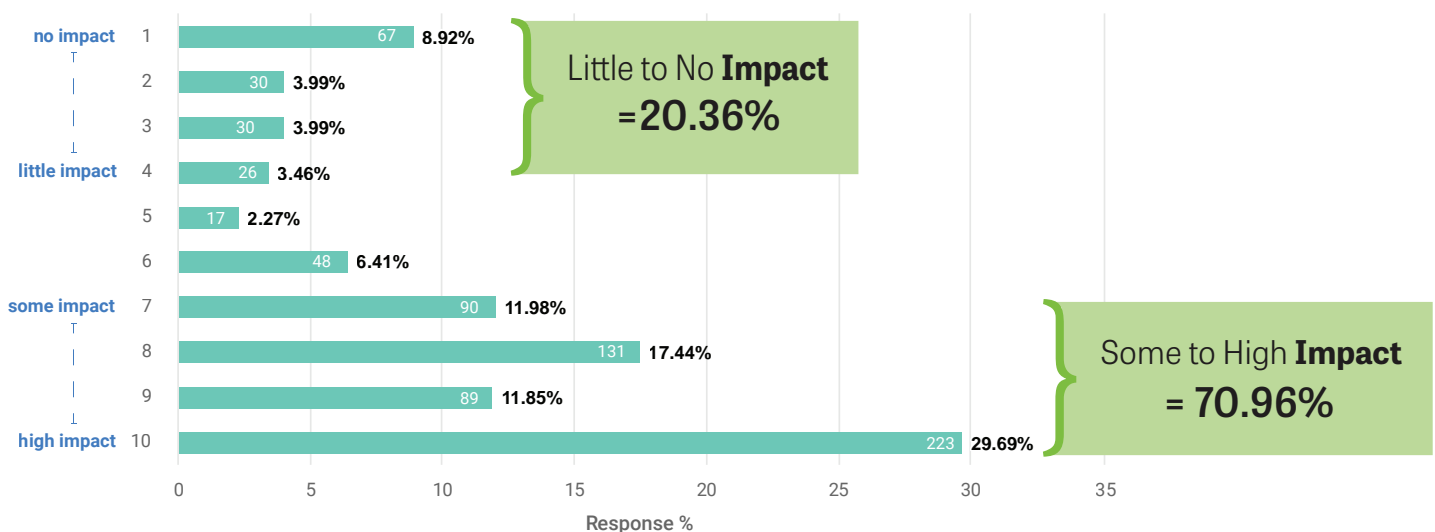
Specifically in low traffic areas

Snow Clearing on Pathways Service Level Impact

Please indicate how this proposed reduction in Town services will impact you and your family with **1 being no impact to my family and 10 being high impact to my family.**

Impact of service reductions: Snow clearing on pathways

751 Voters



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Town Maintenance

The following are potential reductions in Town maintenance for our community:

Maintenance of Green Spaces

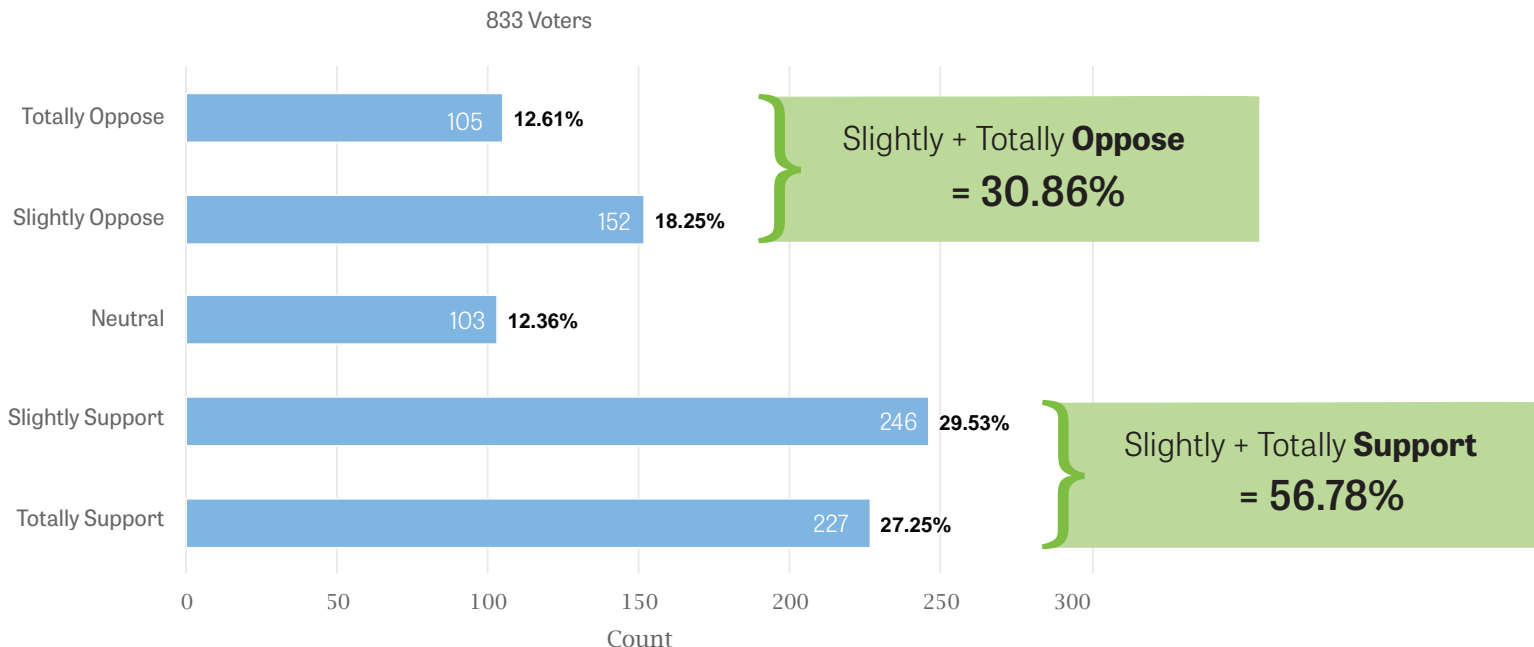
Proposed Service Level Reduction

There is a potential to reduce the number of times grass is cut in manicured green spaces, along with weed control. The Town could also reduce tree and shrub pruning throughout the community.

Please indicate below how much you support this proposed service level reduction:



Town Maintenance: Green Spaces



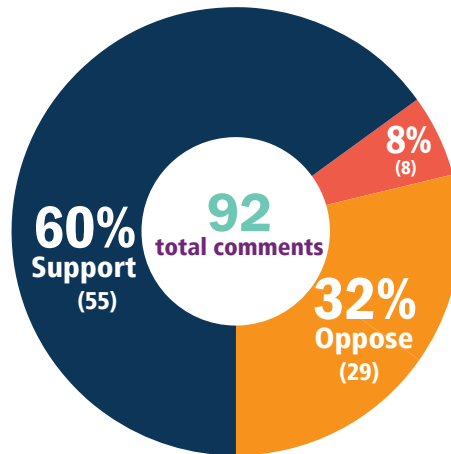
BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!



**92
comments**

Reduce services

- Specifically in less visible areas
- Less pesticide use/weed control
- Suggested use of goats - similar to Calgary



Cut positions

Maintain services

- Pride in Town
- Reason moved here
- Concerned it will cost more in long term

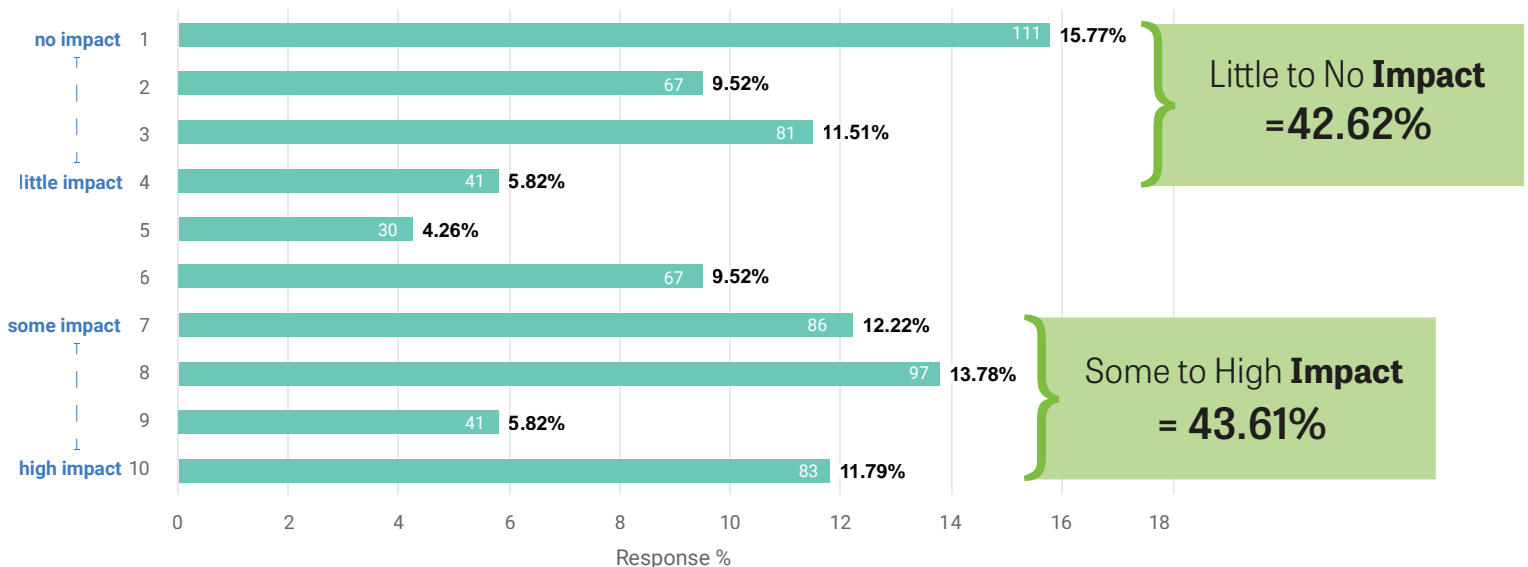
Maintenance of Green Spaces

Service Level Impact

Please indicate how this proposed reduction in Town services will impact you and your family with **1** being no impact to my family and **10** being high impact to my family.

Impact of service reductions: Green Space Maintenance

704 Voters



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Programs & Communication

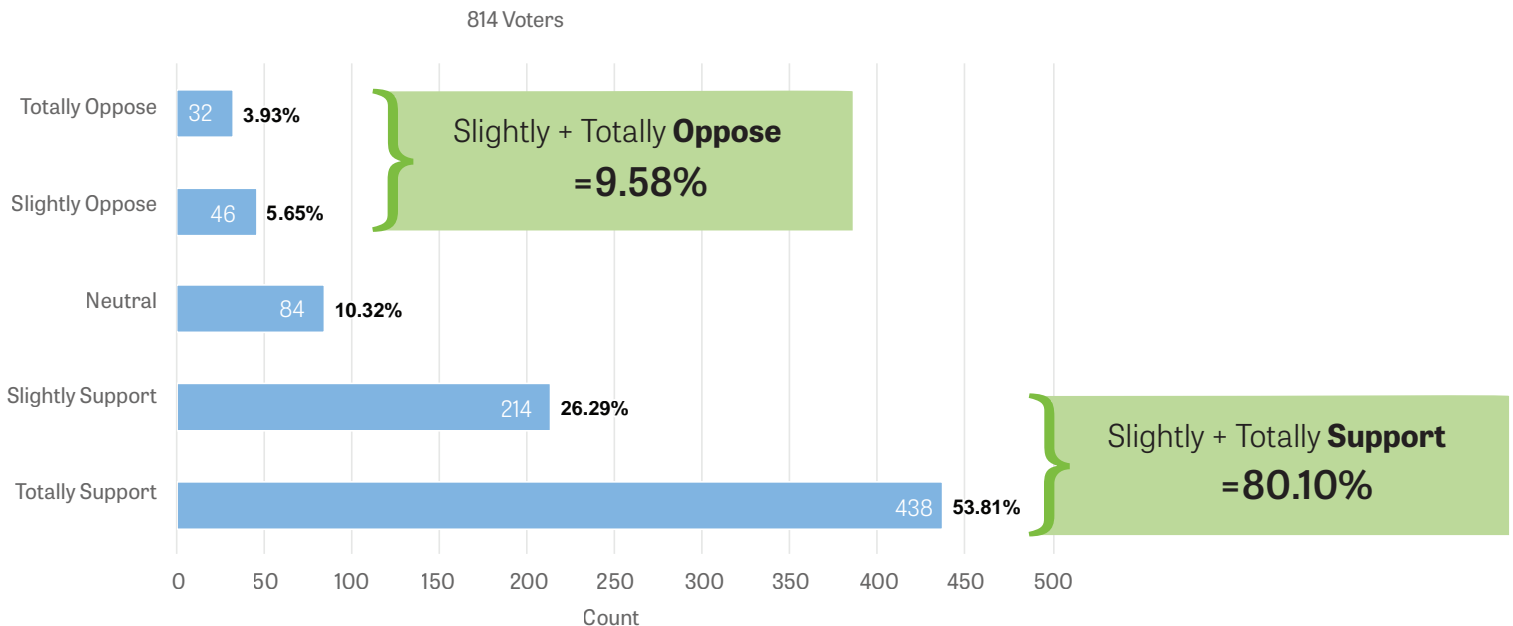
Communications Services

Proposed Service Level Reduction

Potential reduction of the amount of printed materials that provide information about Town programs, services and activities. Additionally, the Town could reduce advertising by eliminating or reducing the number of advertisements in the local newspaper and/or the amount of radio advertisements the Town runs on the local radio.

Please indicate below how much you support this proposed service level reduction:

Communication Services: reduce advertising and print materials



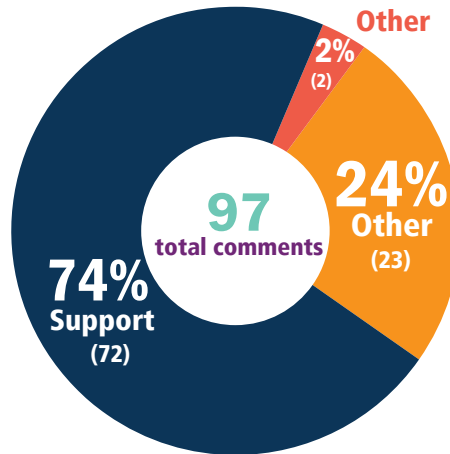
BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!



97
comments

Reduce print & advertising

- Go online
- Align with environmental objectives by using less paper
- Use social media or email
- Advertise less frequently
- Waste of money to advertise in print



Maintain some print

- Seniors and others who don't have online access still need paper
- Western Wheel information is valuable

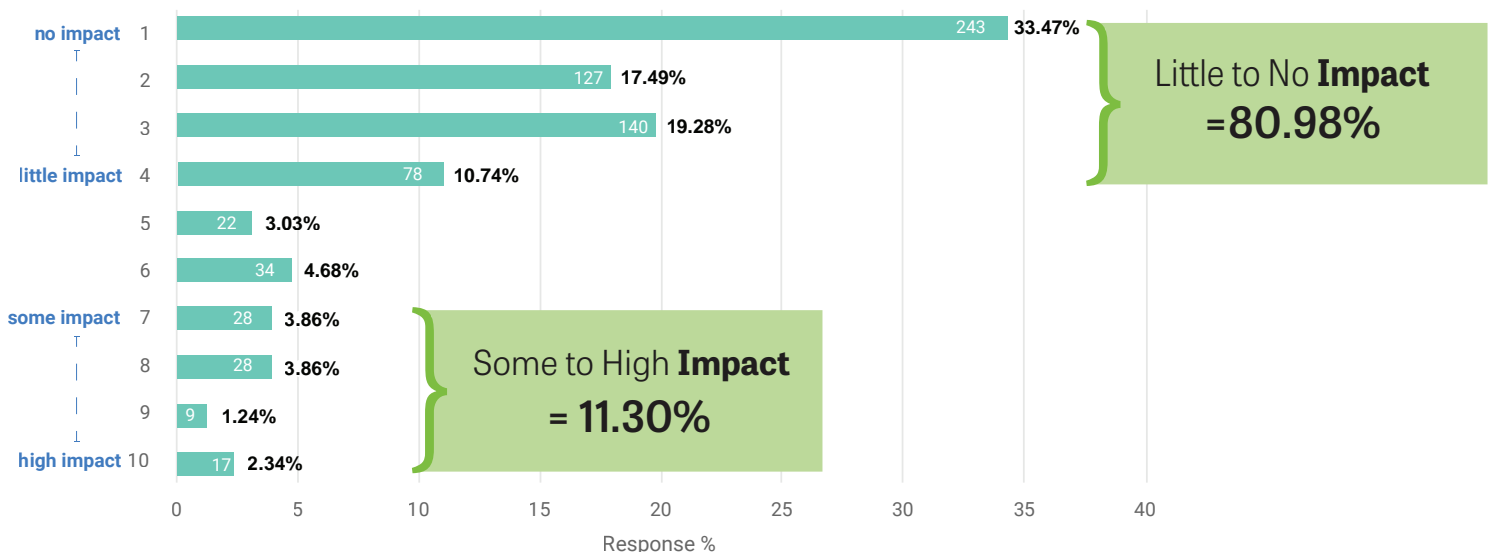
Communications Services

Service Level Impact

Please indicate how this proposed reduction in Town services will impact you and your family with **1** being no impact to my family and **10** being high impact to my family.

Impact of service reductions: Communication services

726 Voters



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Programs & Communication

Environmental Education Program

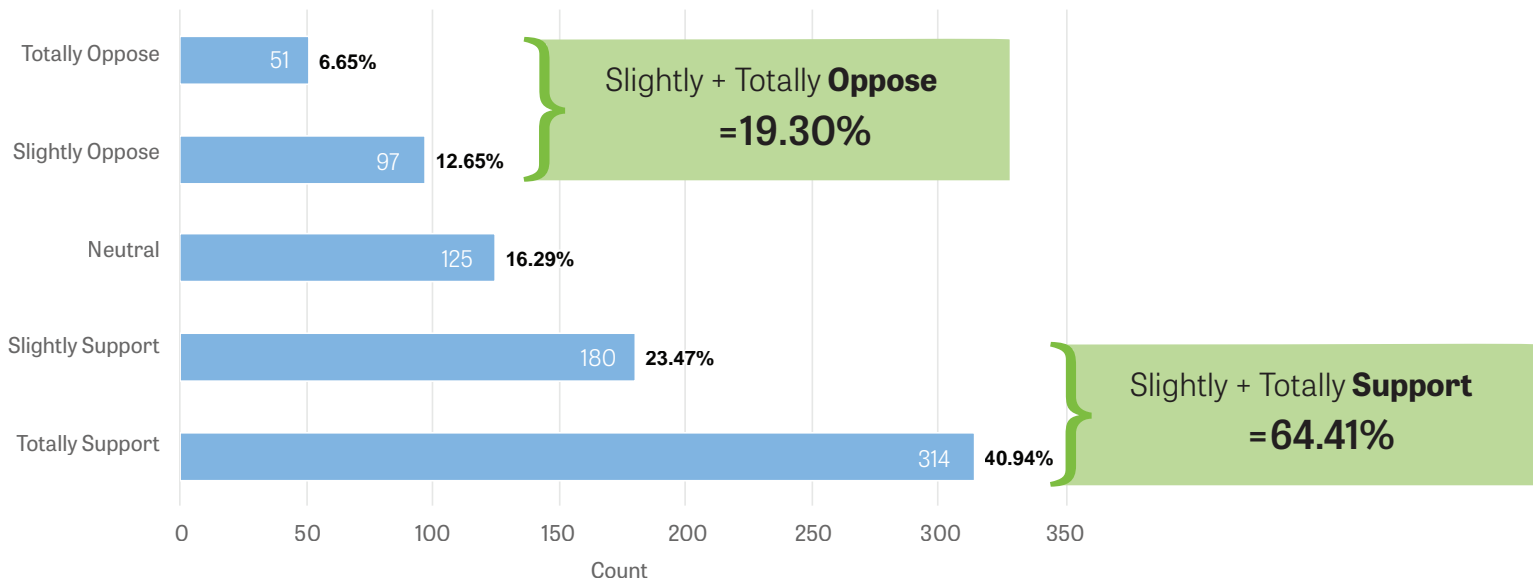
Proposed Service Level Reduction

Potential reduction in conservation focused events, door-to-door information and presentations to schools and businesses. This program provides environmental education to residents, schools and local businesses to support the Town's environmental initiatives in water, waste and energy reduction.

Please indicate below how much you support this proposed service level reduction:

Environmental Education Program: reduce service levels

767 Voters



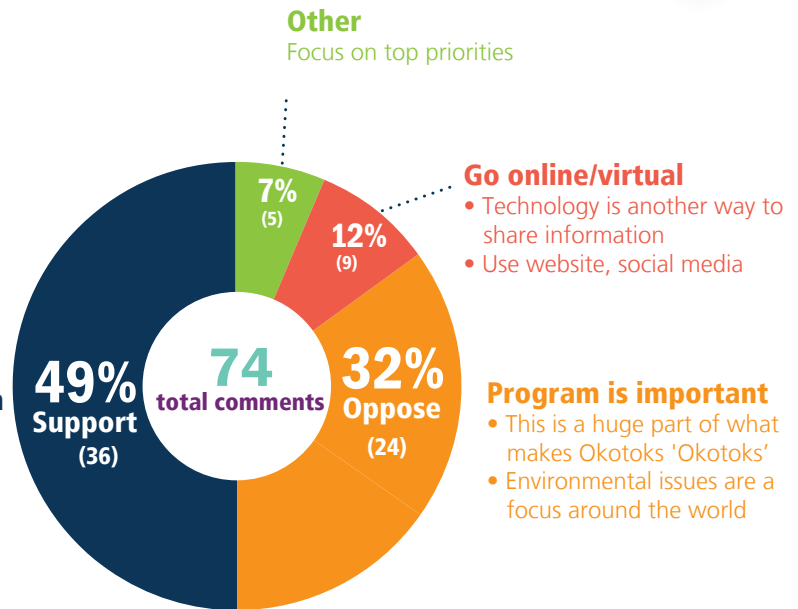
BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!



74
comments

Eliminate/Postpone program

- Leave in Schools
- Nice to have but not necessary
- Keep the green living workshops

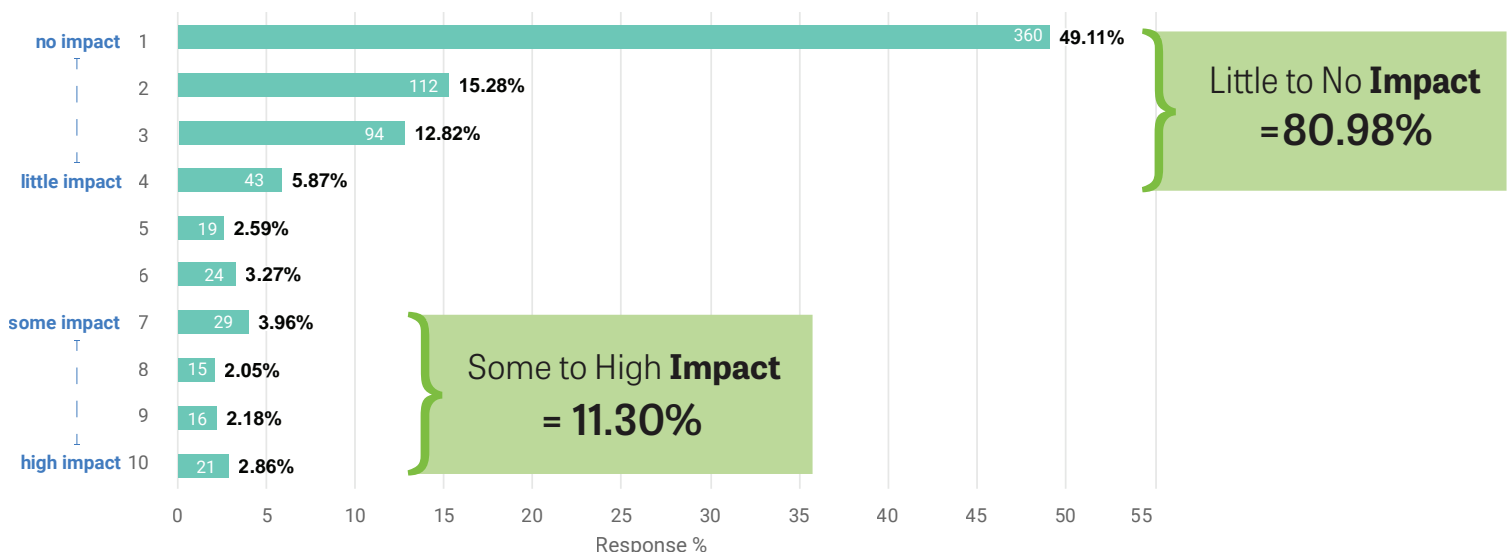


Environmental Education Program Service Level Impact

Please indicate how this proposed reduction in Town services will impact you and your family with **1 being no impact to my family and 10 being high impact to my family**.

Impact of service reductions: Environmental Education Program

733 Voters



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Programs & Communication

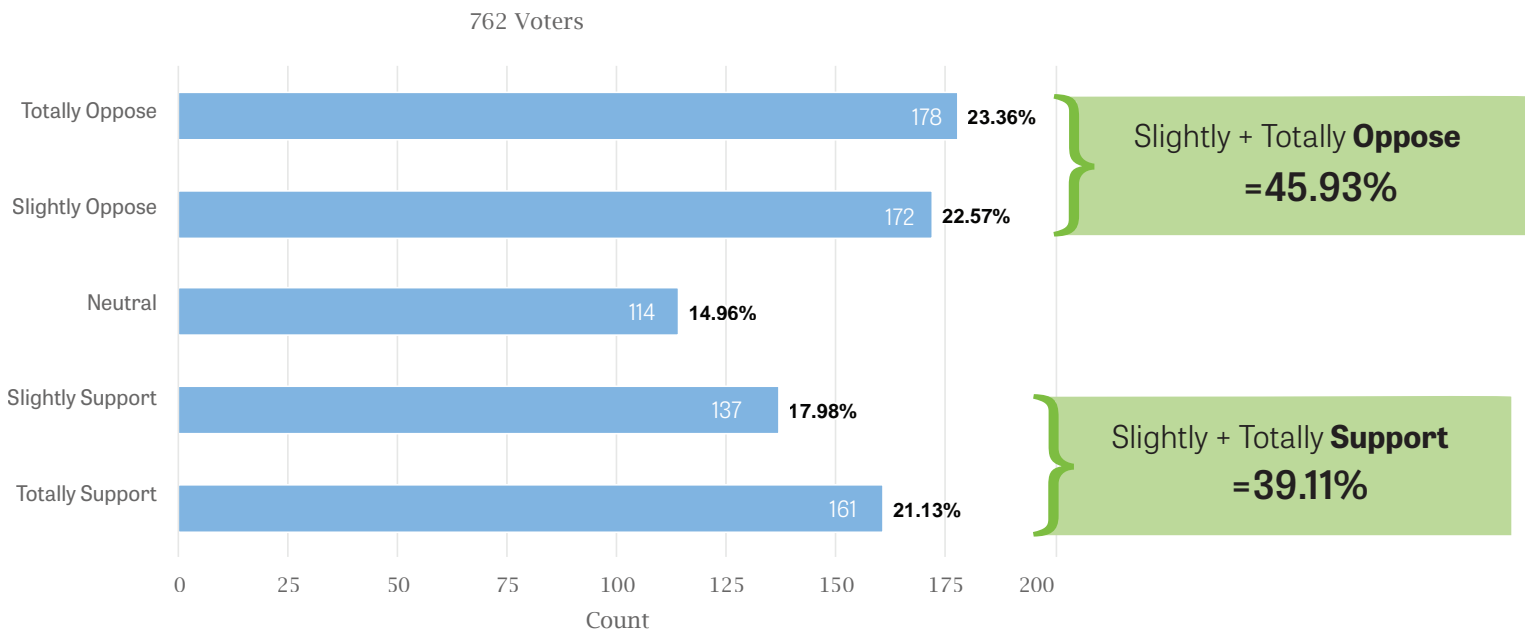
Town Sponsored Community Events

Proposed Service Level Reduction

Potential reduction in the number of Town sponsored events based on historical attendance. Examples could include BuskersFest, ChiliFest etc.

Please indicate below how much you support this proposed service level reduction:

Community Events: reduce number of Town-sponsored events



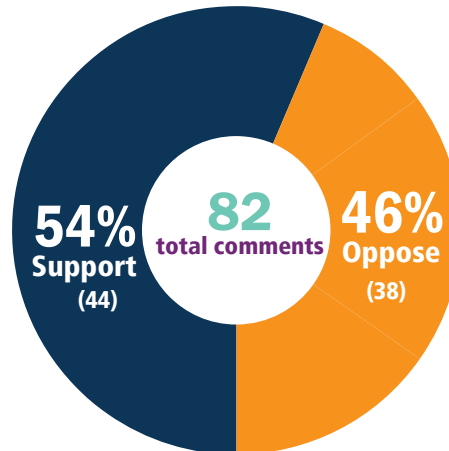
BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!



**82
comments**

Maintain events

- Events contribute to quality of life and sense of community
- Supports local business/economy



Eliminate some events

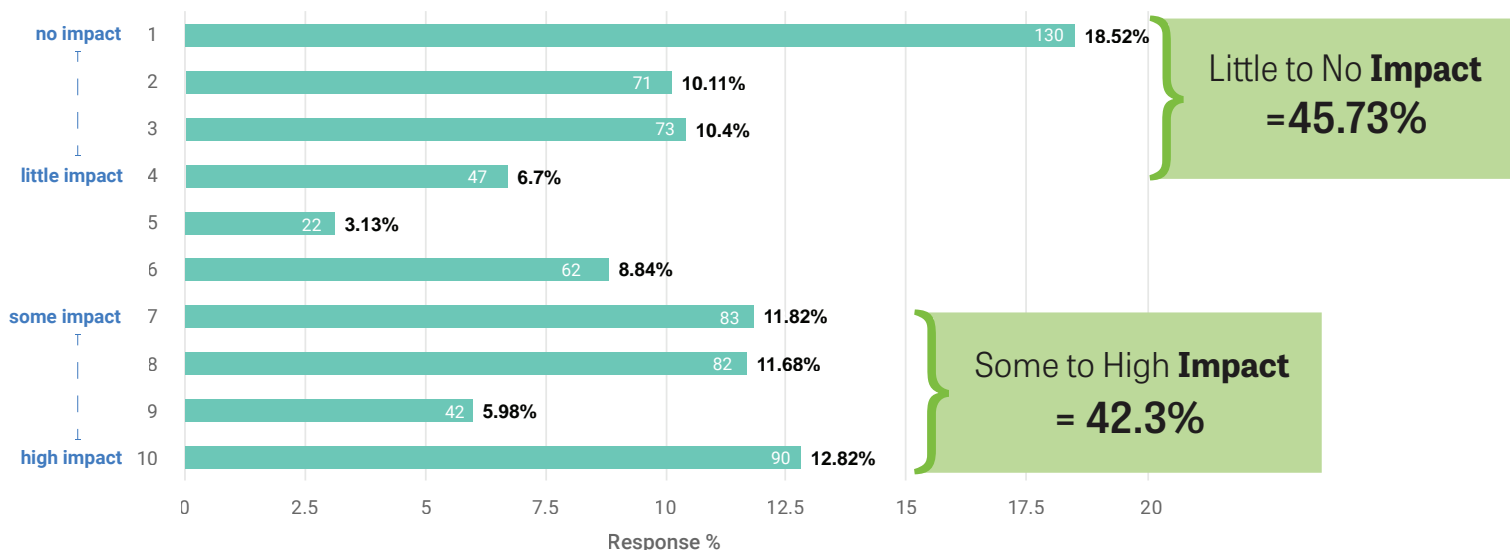
- Encourage outside groups, private sector to organize and host
- Decrease during COVID

Town Sponsored Community Events Service Level Impact

Please indicate how this proposed reduction in Town services will impact you and your family with **1 being no impact to my family and 10 being high impact to my family**.

Impact of service reductions: Town sponsored events

702 Voters



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Other Service Level Reductions

What other services should the Town consider reducing?



201
comments

Other*

- Stop Free events
- Stop weed spraying
- Cut down advertising
- Increase snow removal
- Our taxes are high enough we shouldn't need to cut services

*Please note there were a wide range of comments so these represent only a few of the themes

Cut salaries/positions

- Why is Town not considering cuts in administration and bureaucracy?
- Reduce administrative personnel by 20%
- Town has low crime rate—can RCMP be reduced?

Contract Services

Consider internal vs external contracts

All departments

- Fiscal restraints need to be put in place
- Need to do a zero based budget and look at how effectively departments are being run
- Reduce fleet of vehicles

Street Sweeping

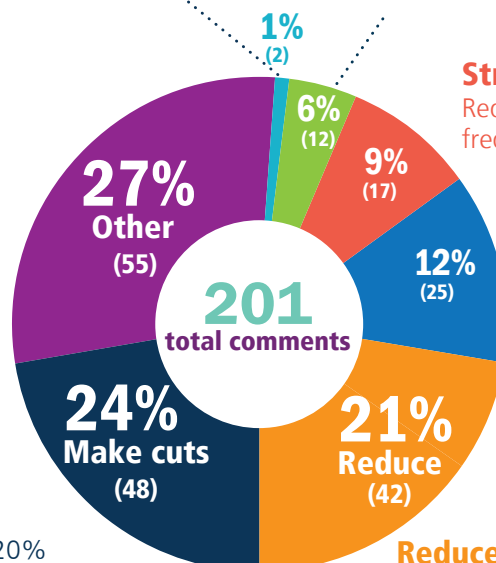
Reduce street sweeping frequency throughout the year

Capital spending

- Curb new development of service until COVID is resolved
- Invest in automation where possible
- Cut new construction such as Arts and Learning campus

Reduce essential services

- Cut garbage collection
- Use volunteers to water trees and maintain green spaces
- Stop sanding roads





BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!





BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Existing User Fees

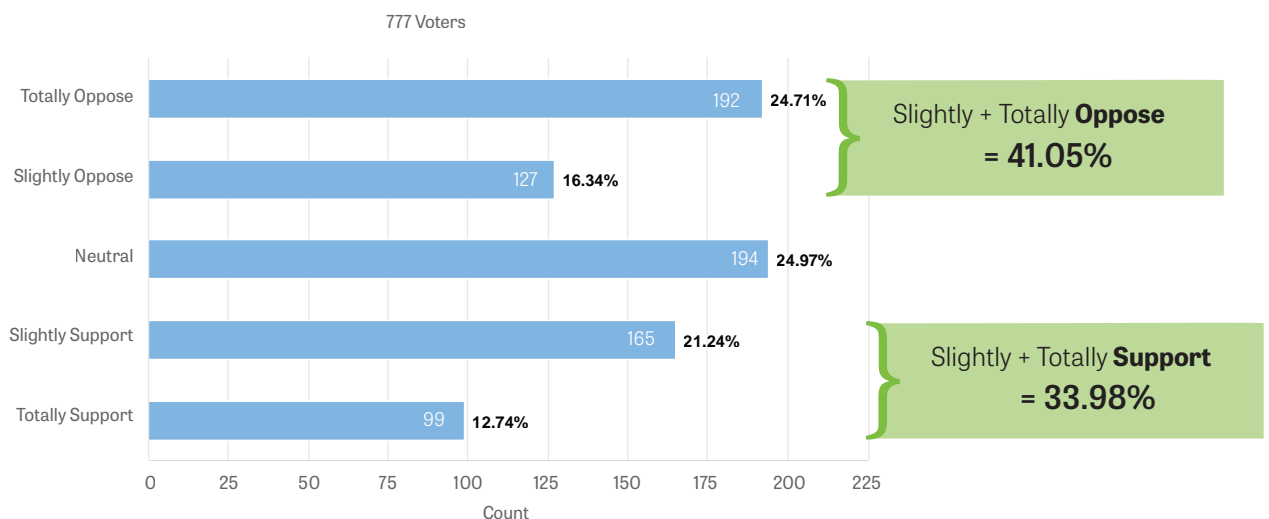
In the first Budget survey, 52% of respondents indicated that they somewhat support or strongly support increasing user fees for Town services that currently have fees and 36% somewhat or strongly opposed this.

Please indicate how much you would support fee increases for the following services:

Building Permit Fees

Increase fees for new deck or garage building permits.

Existing User Fees: increase fees for new deck or garage building permit fees

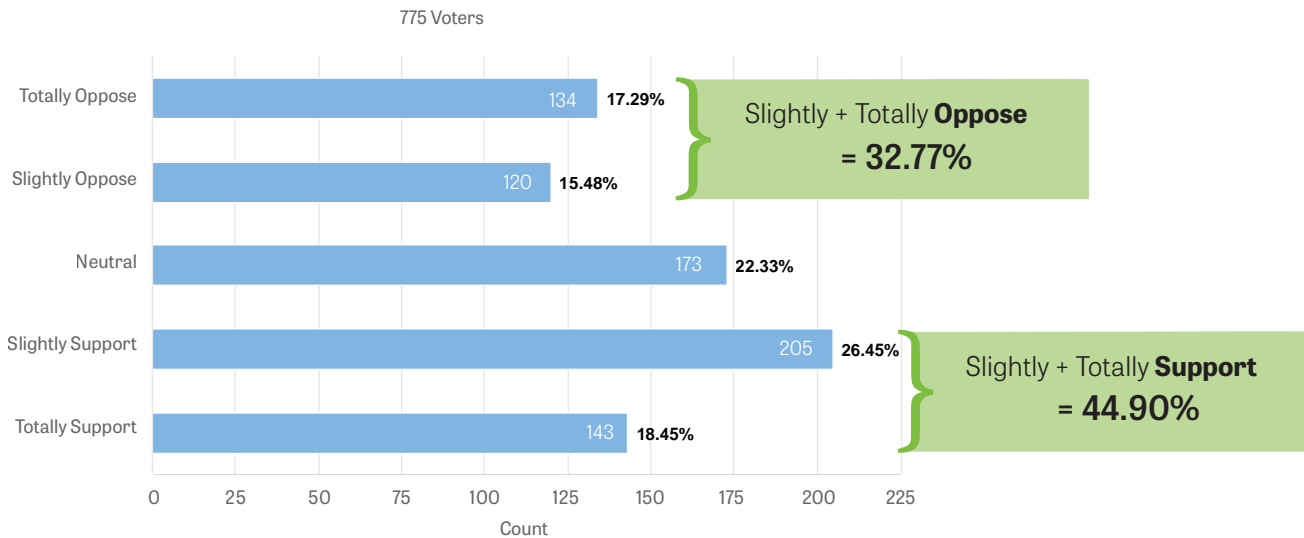


BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Building Inspection Fees on New Construction

Increase building inspection fees on new construction, i.e. garage or accessory suite.

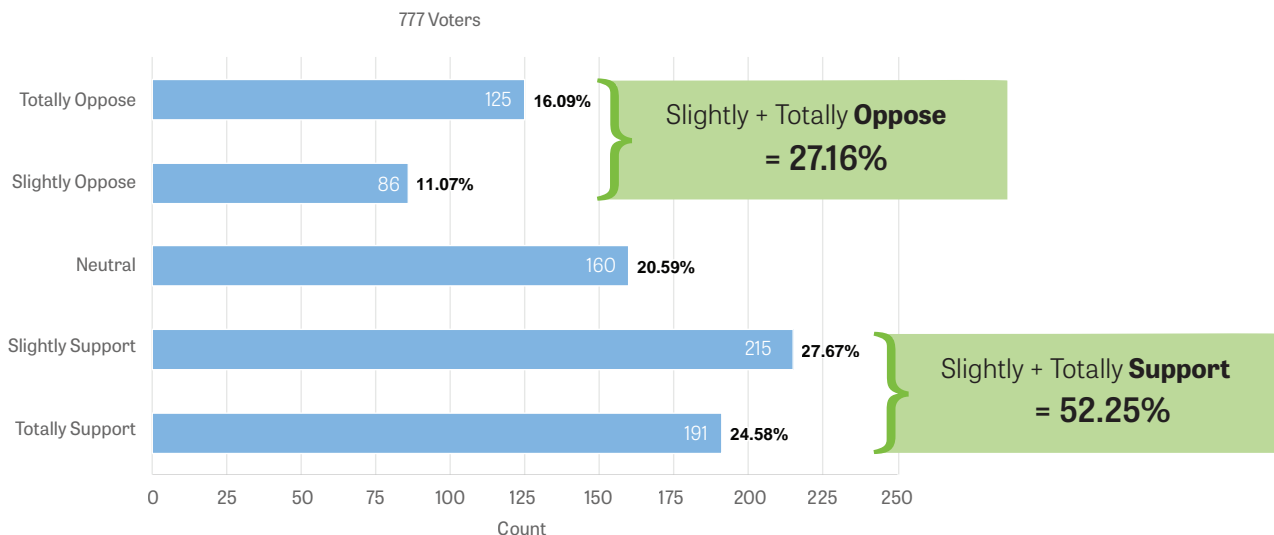
Existing User Fees: increase building inspection fees on new construction



Development Permit Fees

Increase fees for Development Permits

Existing User Fees: increase fees for development permits



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Existing User Fees

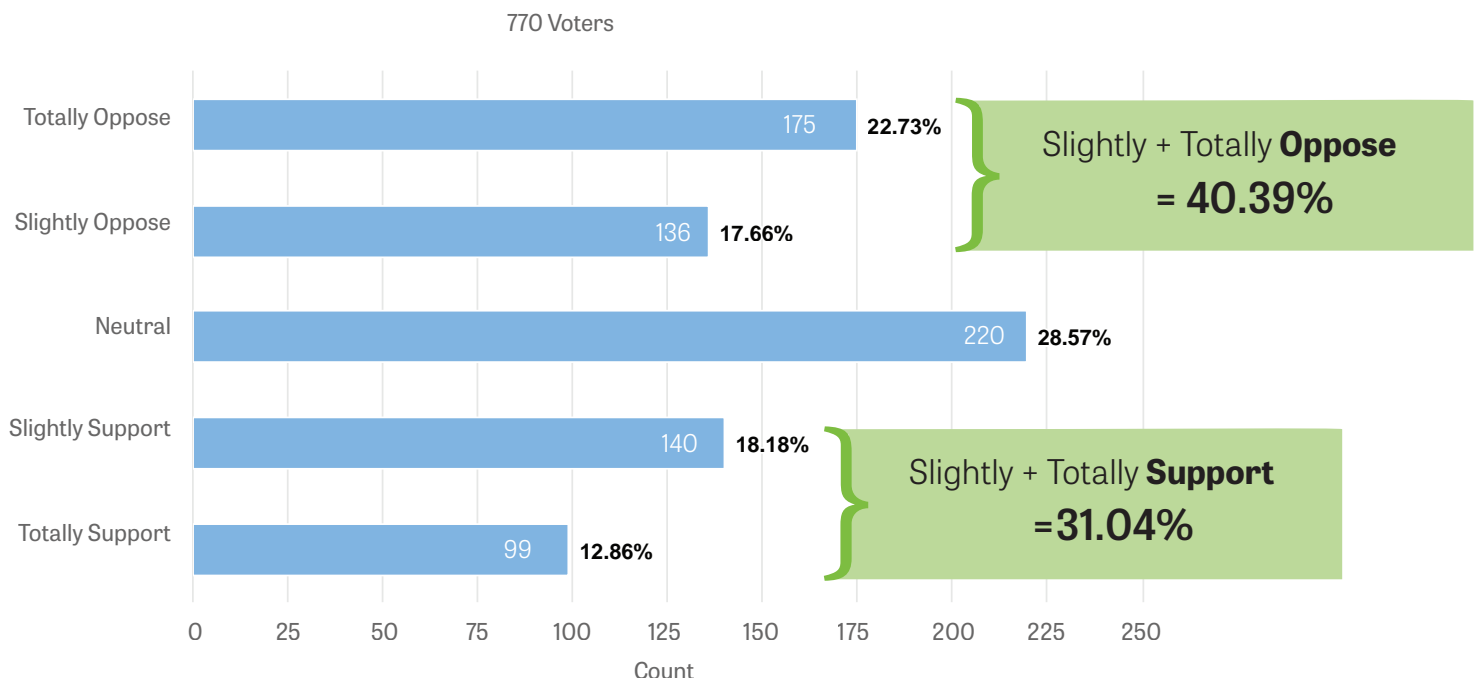
In the first Budget survey, 52% of respondents indicated that they somewhat support or strongly support increasing user fees for Town services that currently have fees and 36% somewhat or strongly opposed this.

Please indicate how much you would support fee increases for the following services:

Increase Fees for Certificate of Compliance

Potential to increase the fee. A Certificate of Compliance stamp on a Real Property Report (RPR) is a confirmation that the location of the building(s) on the property complies with the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw. A bank typically requires this.

Existing User Fees: increase fees for Certificate of Compliance

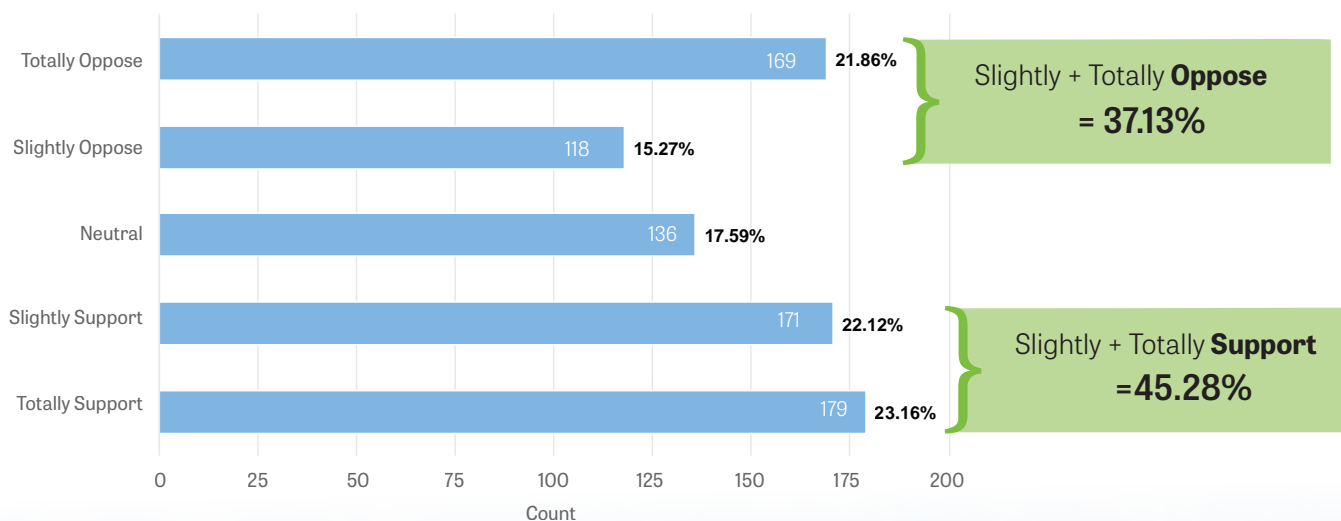


BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Increase Protective Services Fees

Increase the following user fees for protective services to meet regional standards:

- Criminal record checks, increase from \$40 to \$60 (non-volunteer)
- Providing collision reports, increase from \$25 to \$50 (paid by insurance companies)
- Fingerprint checks, increase from \$10 to \$25



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Existing User Fees

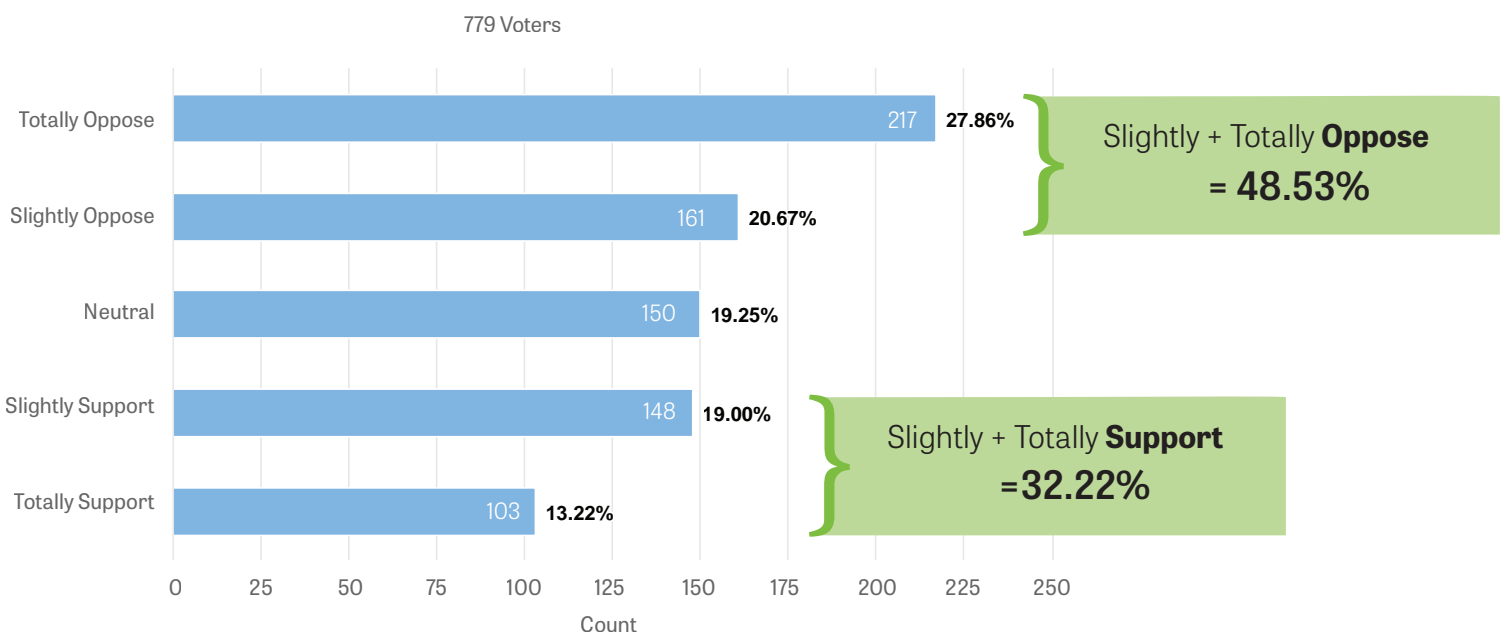
In the first Budget survey, 52% of respondents indicated that they somewhat support or strongly support increasing user fees for Town services that currently have fees and 36% somewhat or strongly opposed this.

Please indicate how much you would support fee increases for the following services:

Increase Recreation, Arts and Culture Rental rates

Increase rental fees for arenas, pool, outdoor sports facilities, and arts/culture facilities.

Existing User Fees: increase rental rates for recreation, arts and culture

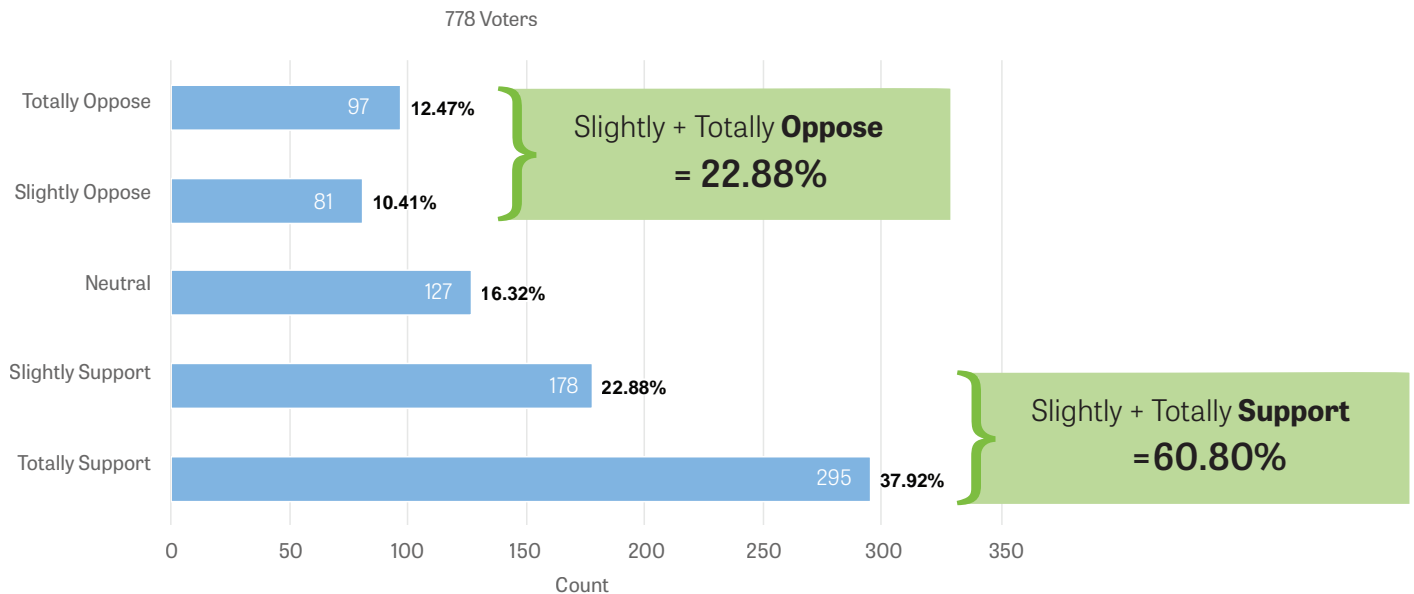


BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Increase Transit Fees

Increase single ride transit fees from \$2.75 to \$3.00

Existing User Fees: increase transit fees



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

New User Fees

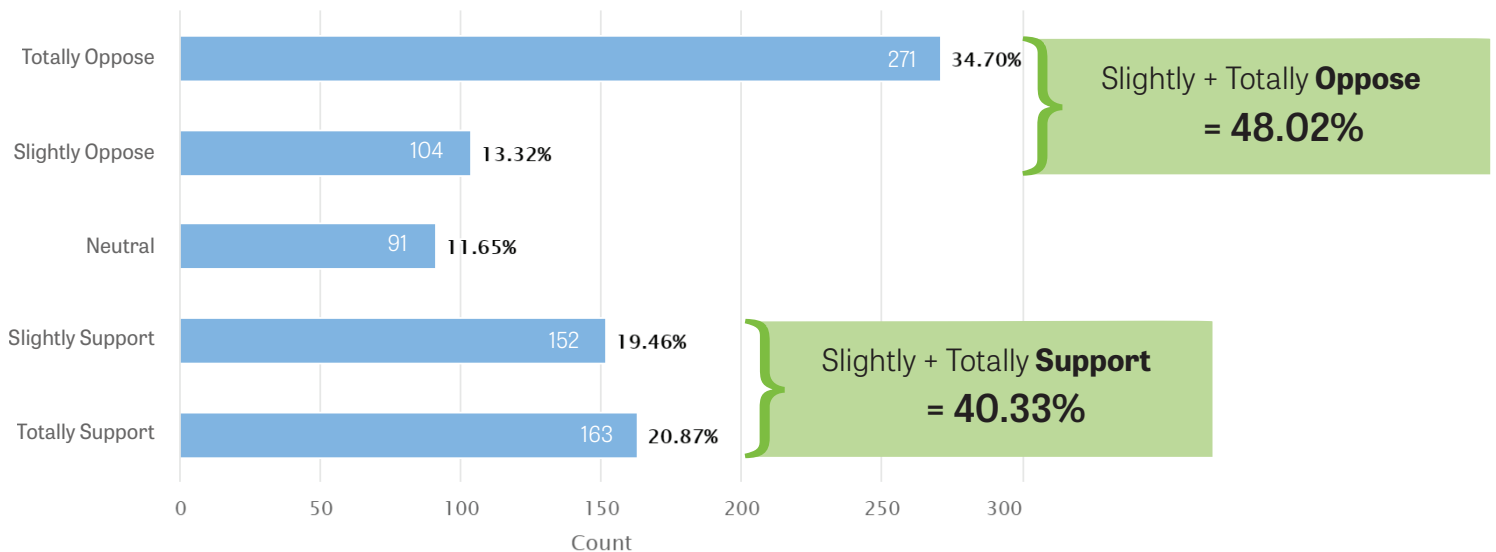
What new user fees should the Town consider?

Municipal Enforcement

Adding red light and speed enforcement cameras at intersections with the highest collision rates.

Municipal Enforcement: red light and speed enforcement cameras

781 Voters



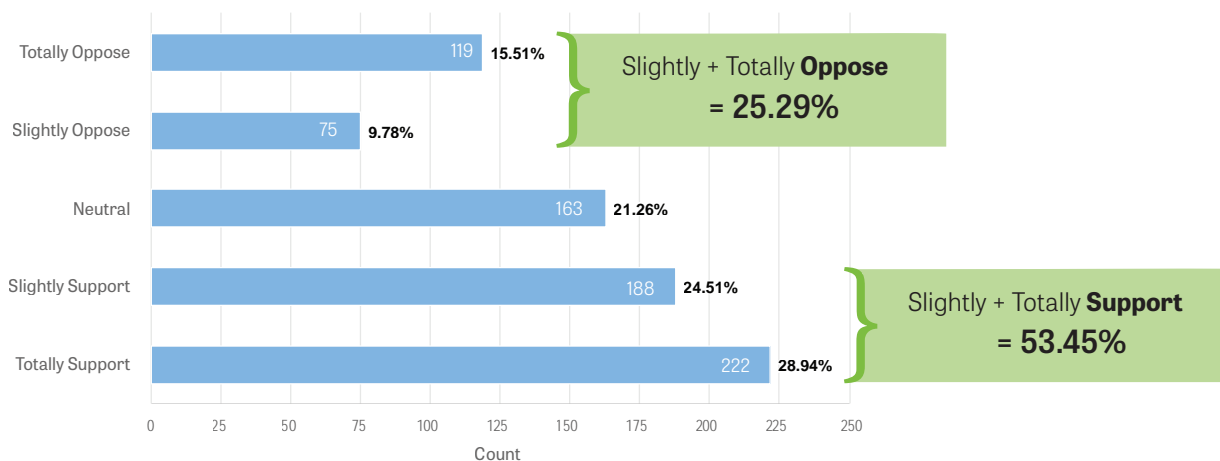
BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Advertising/Sponsorship

Allowing for advertising/sponsorship on municipal assets (i.e. on Town facilities, amenities, and vehicles)

New User Fees: Advertising & Sponsorship

767 Voters

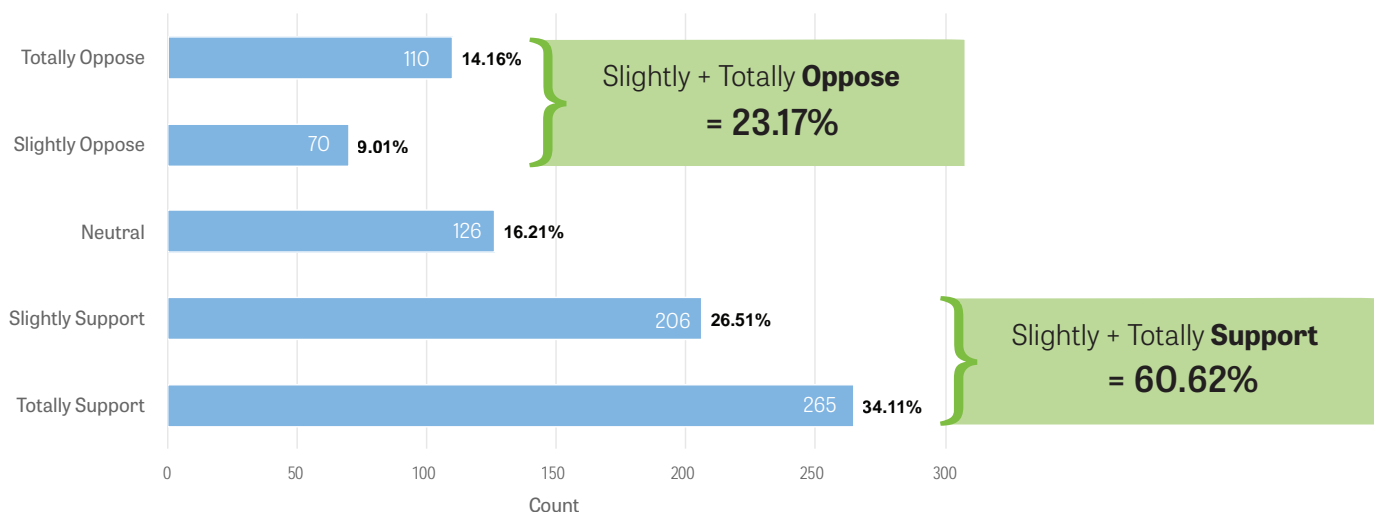


Liquor Sales at Designated Facilities and Times

Allowing liquor sales at municipal facilities at designated times e.g. Recreation Centre and Pason Centennial Arenas

New User Fees: Liquor sales at designated facilities and times

777 Voters



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

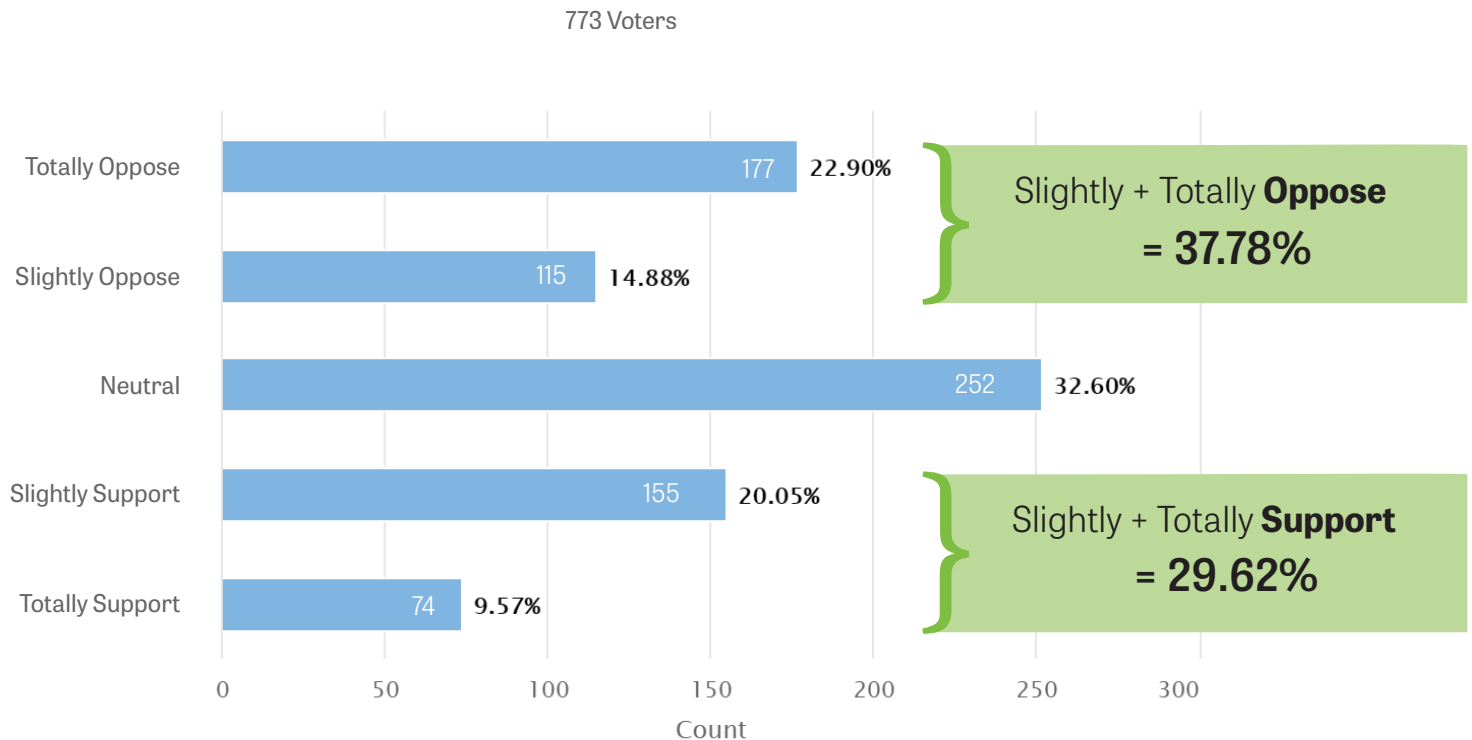
New User Fees

What new user fees should the Town consider?

Assessment Service Fees

Introduce fees for formal requests for a property assessment or information.

New User Fees: Assessment Services



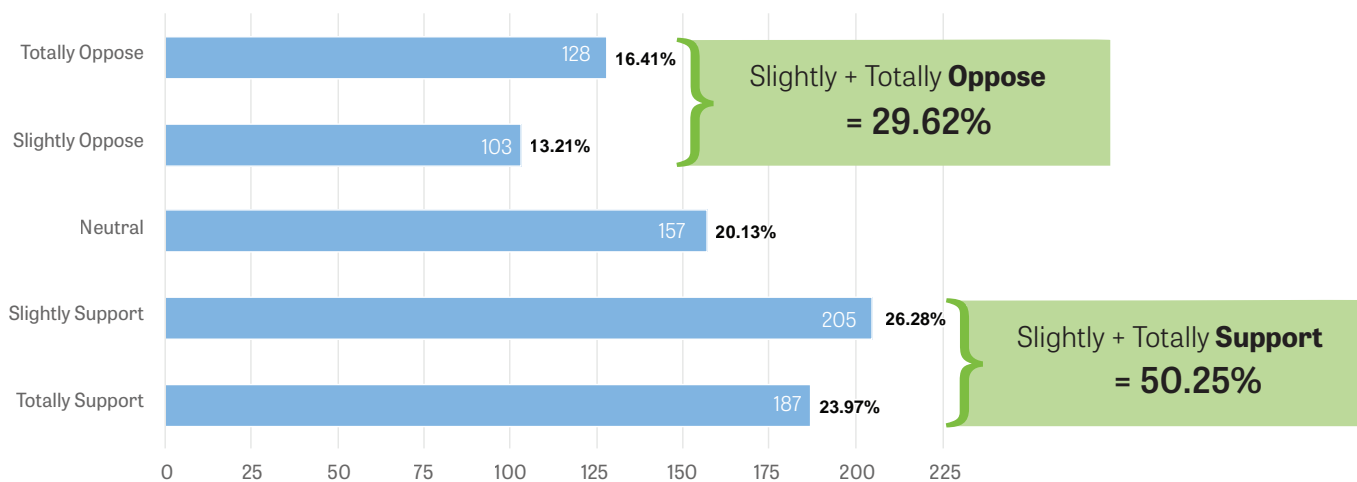
BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Entrance fees

Charge admission fees to the Art Gallery and Museum (i.e. a nominal daily admission or annual fee).

Entrance Fees: Art Gallery & Museum

780 Voters

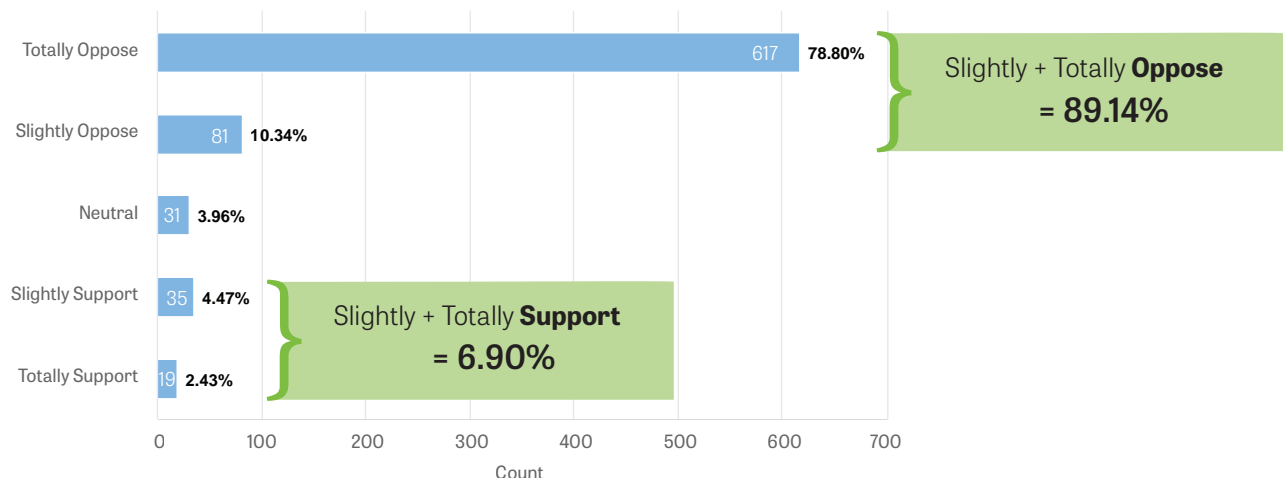


Parking Fees

Charge parking fees at designated municipal facilities. (i.e. Recreation Centres, library, downtown lots)

New User Fees: Parking fees at designated municipal facilities

783 Voters



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Other Fee Increases

Is there anything else the Town should consider regarding the introduction or increase of user fees?



132
comments

Other*

- Time and cost management of staff
- Decrease Council expenses
- More Youth programs
- Limited Parking fees
- Red light cameras

**Please note there were a wide range of comments so these represent only a few of the themes*

Charge for electric car

- Should not be covered by taxpayers
- Eliminate car charging stations

Permits

- Developer fees, in new areas
- Need to ensure fees are comparable to other municipalities
- Higher taxes in new developments

Pet licenses

- Increase dog licenses
- Include cat licenses

No Parking fees

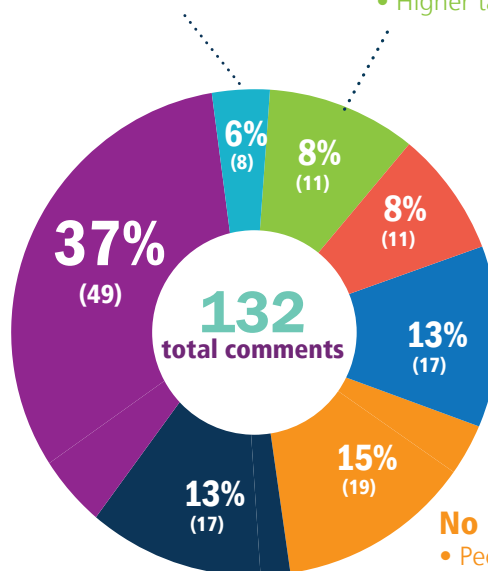
- There is already limited parking
- Charge visitors from out of town will deter visitors

No more fees

- People are already suffering
- Taxpayers pay enough
- Keep fees comparable to other municipalities

Higher fees for external users

Visitors pay for using Town facilities



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

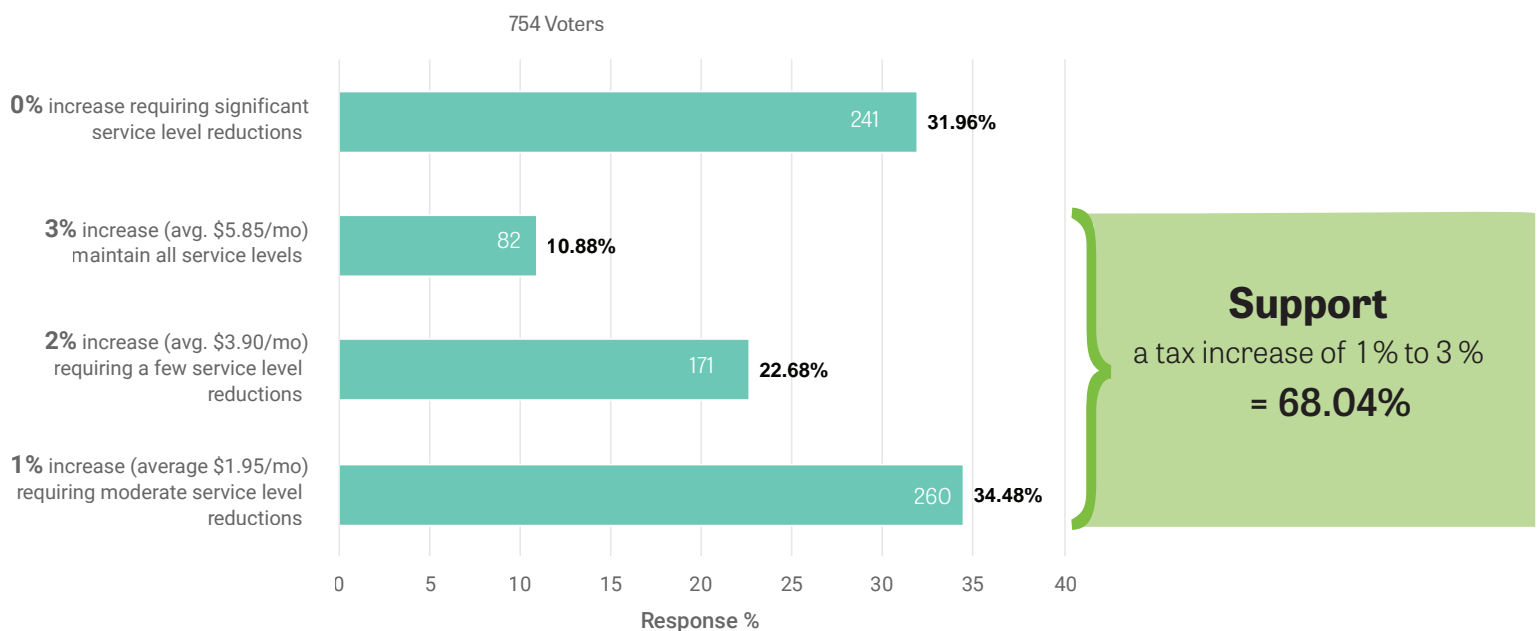
Property Tax Increases

Tax increase options

The amount of service reductions the Town will need to implement will depend on the level of taxes that are charged. Based on the previous questions and your responses to reducing services, which of the following would you be most comfortable with.

Please note that the monthly increase is based on the average property in Okotoks.

Tax Increase Options



BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!



**135
comments**

Tax increase/maintain services

- Taxes are already high
- What service levels would be affected
- Decrease services where possible

Cut salaries/position

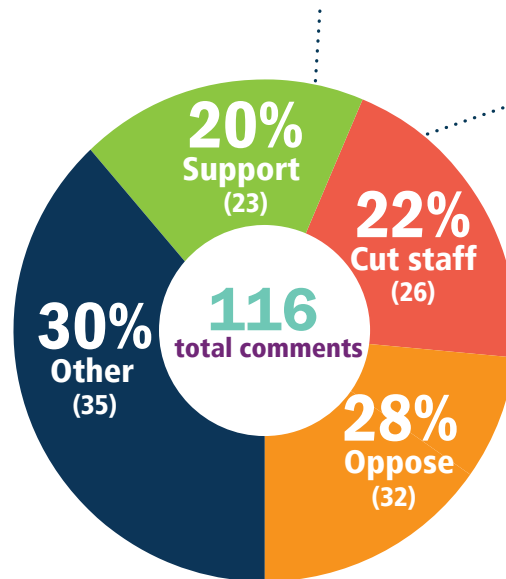
- Reduce staff similar to private sector
- Eliminate supervisor/manager positions

No tax increase/reduce services

- Taxes are already high:
- What service levels would be affected
- Decrease services where possible

Other

- Automate to reduce costs
- Bid out maintenance contracts
- Take COVID seriously





BUDGET 2021 – Have Your Say!

Response to potential tax increases

Responses from the first survey:

In the Phase 1 survey, two questions were asked on tax increases.

1. Over the past few years, Okotoks residents and businesses have traditionally indicated in Community Household Surveys and Participatory Budget exercises that they would like to maintain services, which represents a small tax increase. i.e. 1% tax increase = \$1.95/month on the typical property tax bill. Due to recent world experiences and your personal experiences over the past few months, has your perception on this changed and what would you prefer the Town to do now.

59% of respondents either somewhat supported or strongly supported increasing taxes to maintain current service levels.

2. The Town has a number of financial tools that can be used to balance the budget. Tell us how much you support or oppose the following option: increase residential property taxes.

27% of respondents either somewhat supported or strongly supported increasing taxes to balance the budget.

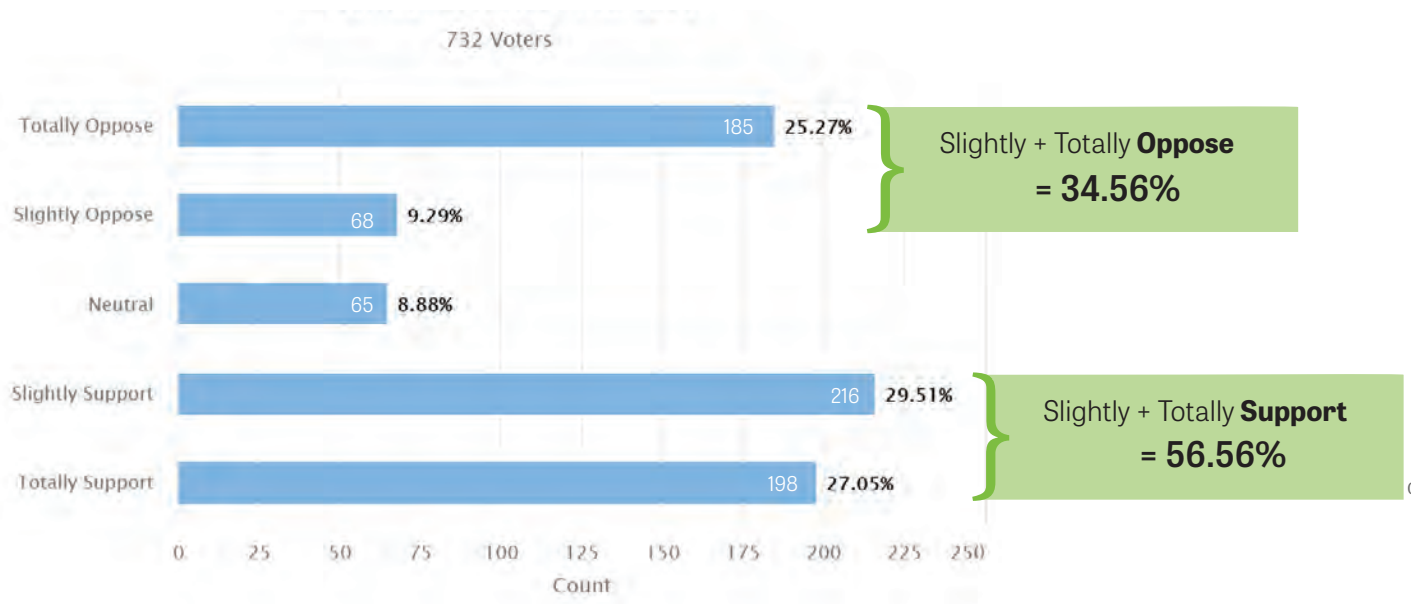
The results from these two questions were very different. **Based on this feedback, Council recommended a 1% tax increase, which is equivalent to \$1.95 per month for the typical household.** This tax will be used to reduce impacts like service level decreases or user fee increases.

BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Potential Tax Rate Increase

Based on the external environment and COVID-19, do you support this minimal (1%) tax increase that will result in moderate service level decreases?

Potential Tax Rate Increase





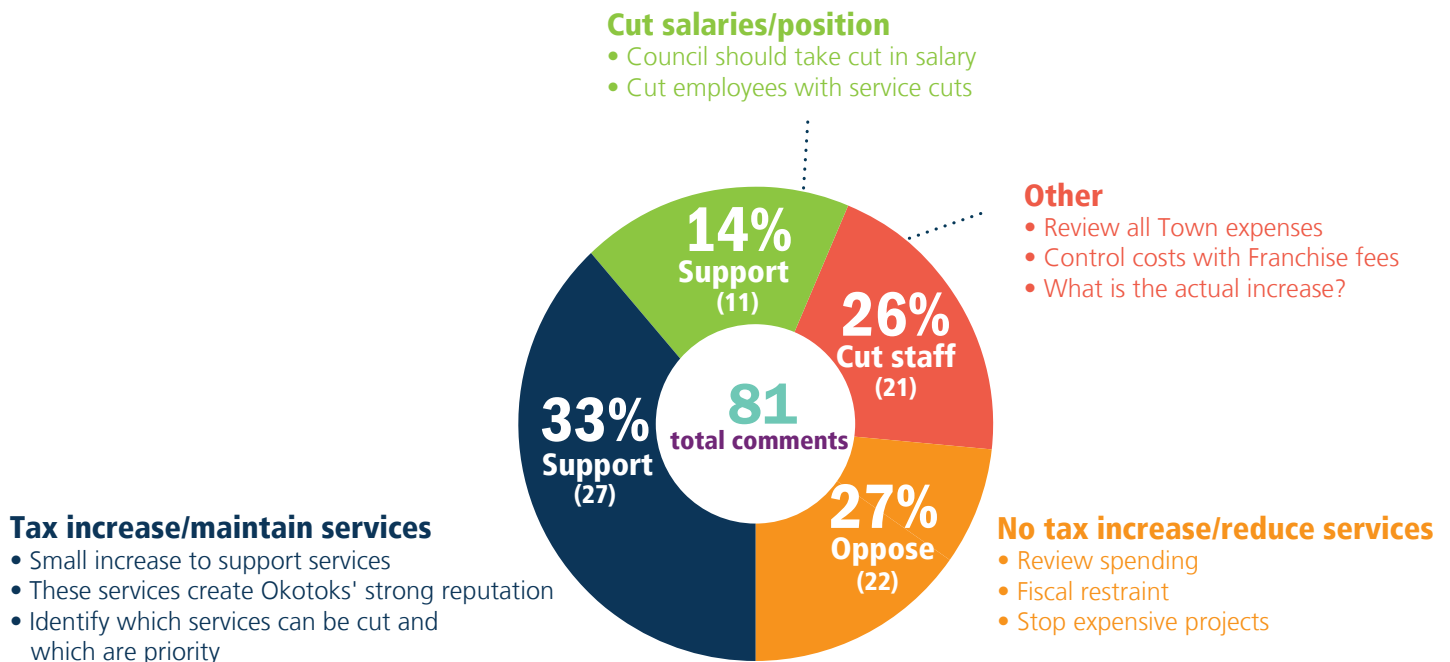
BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Potential Tax Rate Increase - Your Comments

Based on the external environment and COVID-19, do you support this minimal (1%) tax increase that will result in moderate service level decreases?



81
comments

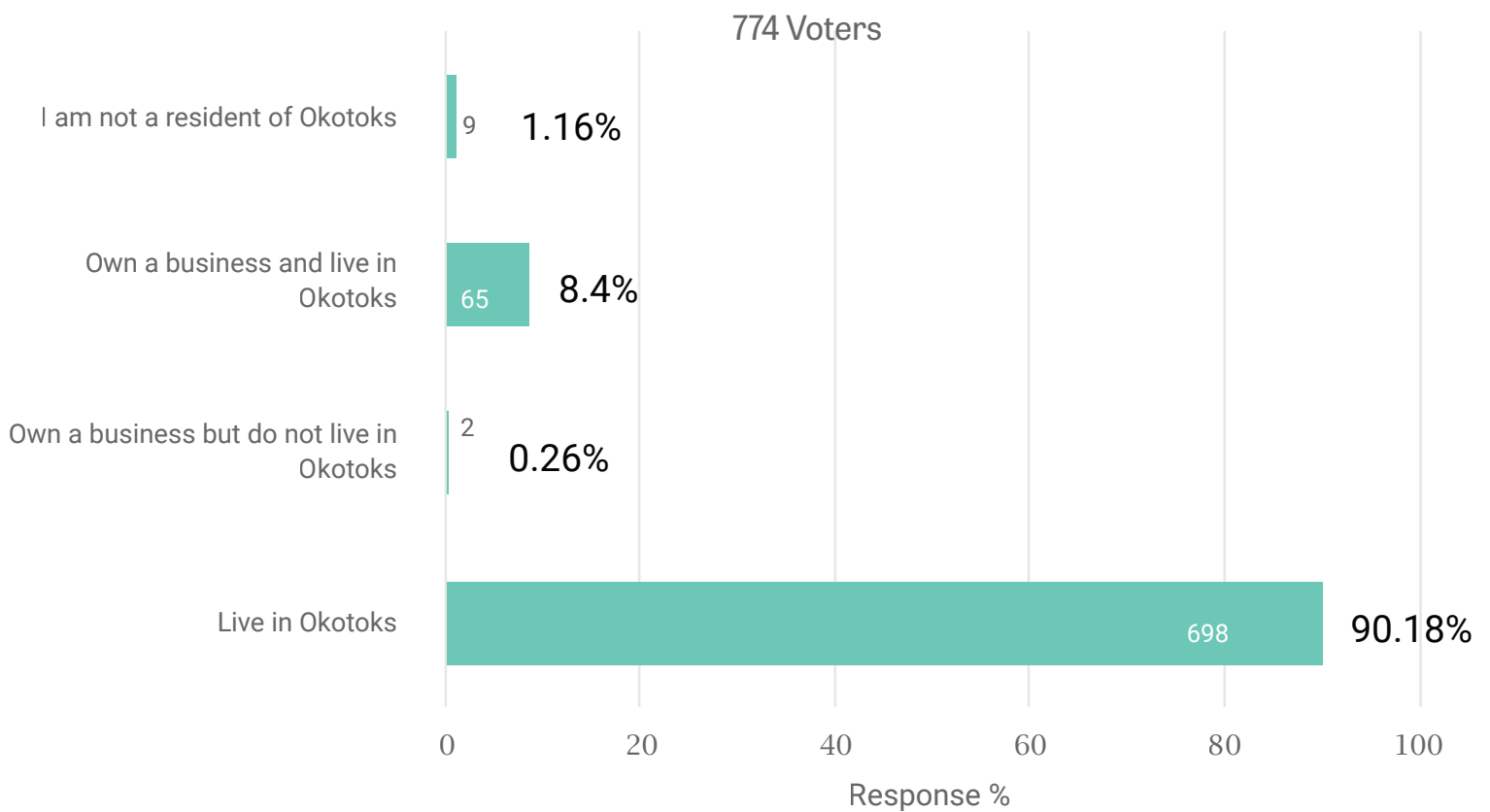




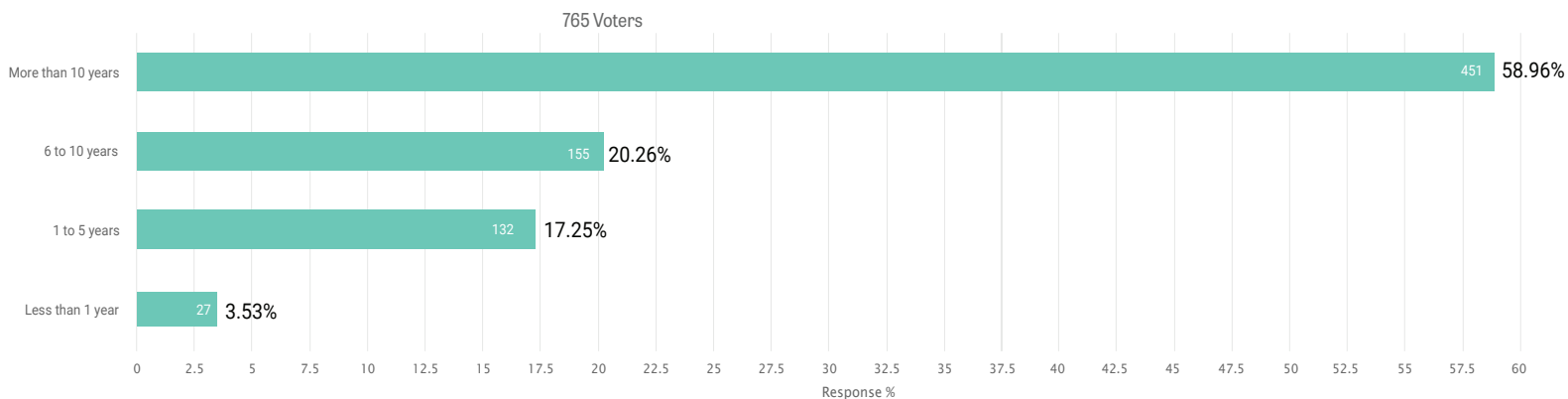
BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

About You

Which of the following applies to you



How long have you lived in Okotoks



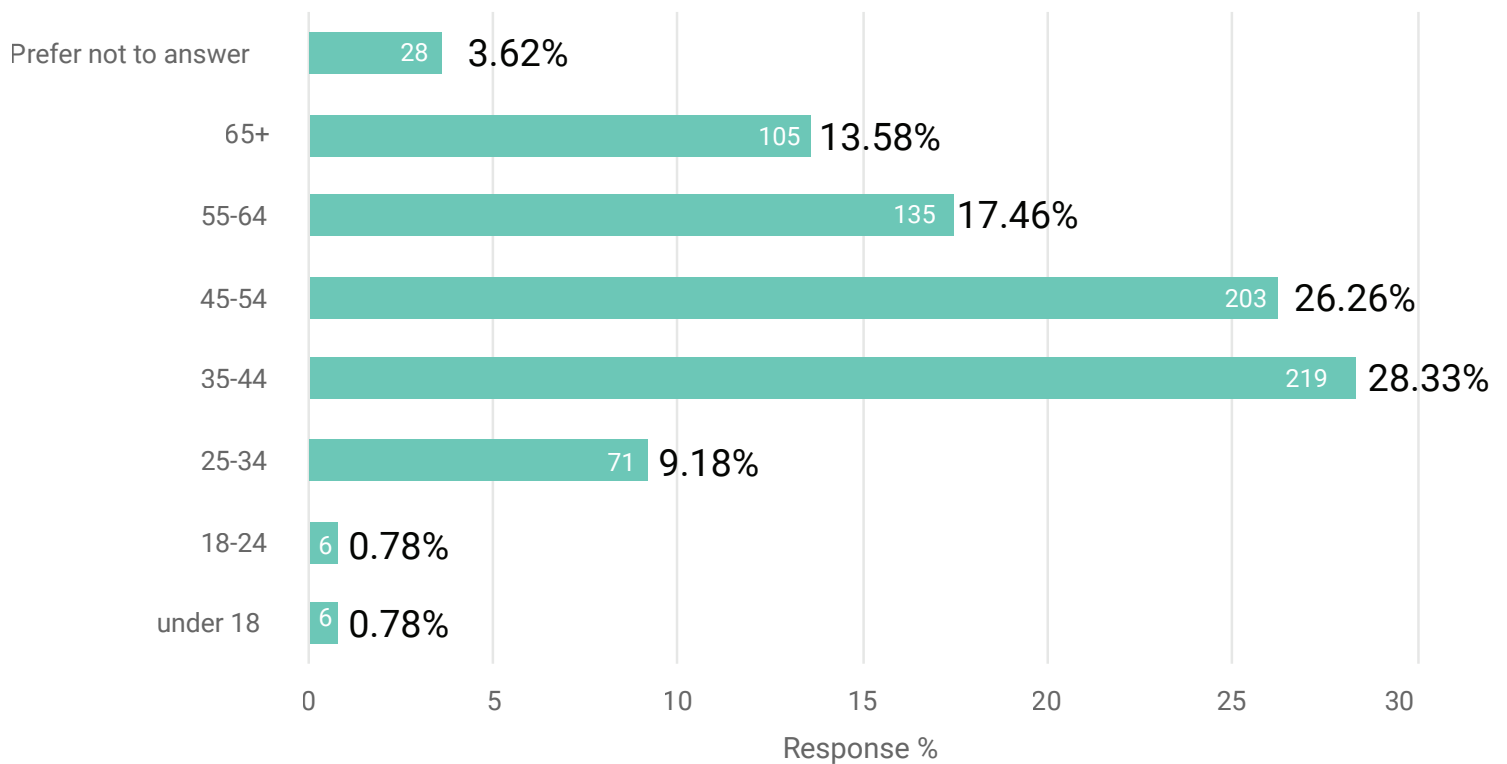


BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

About You

Which age group do you fit into?

773 Voters





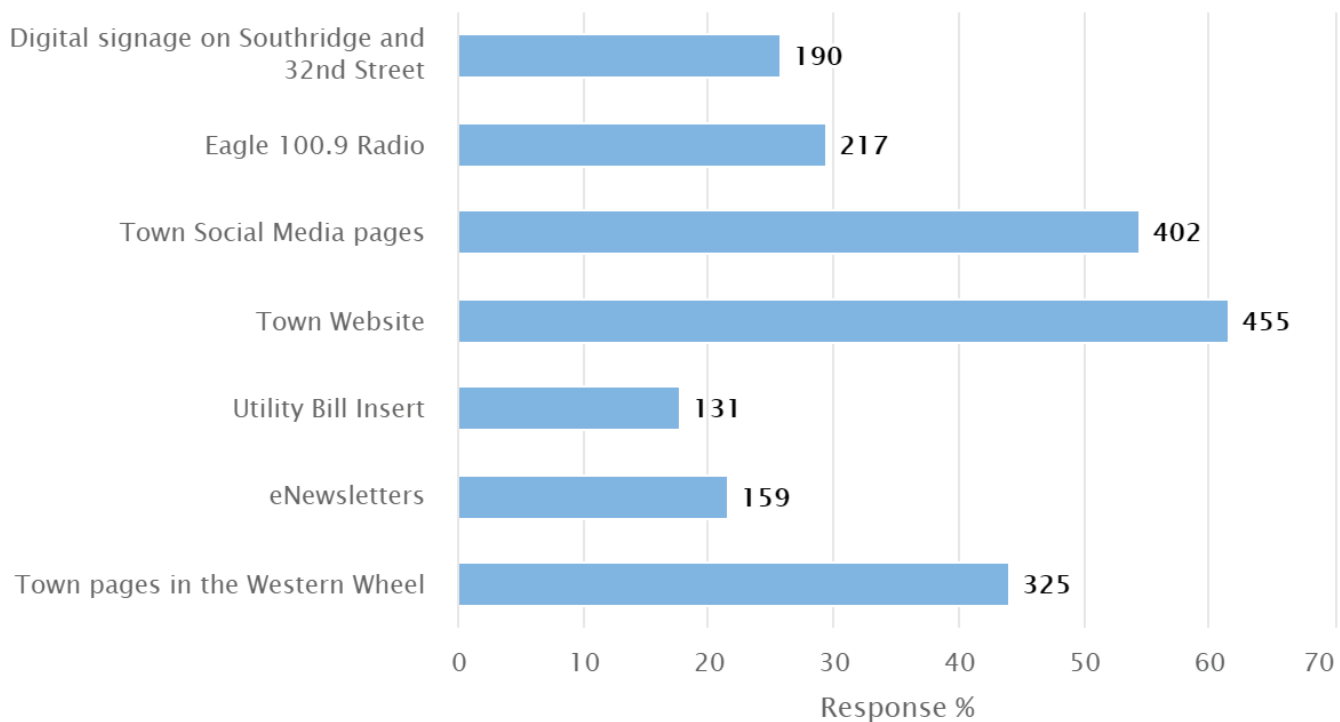
BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

How do you keep informed on Town information?

Choose all that apply

How do you keep informed on Town information?

739 Answered





BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!

Where else do you find information about the Town?

"Talking to business owners, restaurant owners, people who have a stake in the community and want to stay here."

"Spotify ads."

"Community Facebook groups."

"Word of mouth."

"Friends and family."

"OkotoksOnline.com."

"OkotoksToday.ca."

"Program guide book."

"Local coffee shops."

"Postings at the Recreation Centre."





BUDGET 2021 - Have Your Say!



Town of Okotoks & Economic Development Facebook Pages

20,994 people reached
698 engagements
2,458 video views

**people who saw the Budget Phase 2 video*



Town of Okotoks YouTube Channel

114 video views

**people who saw the Budget Phase 2 video*



Town of Okotoks Instagram Channel

1,123 video views

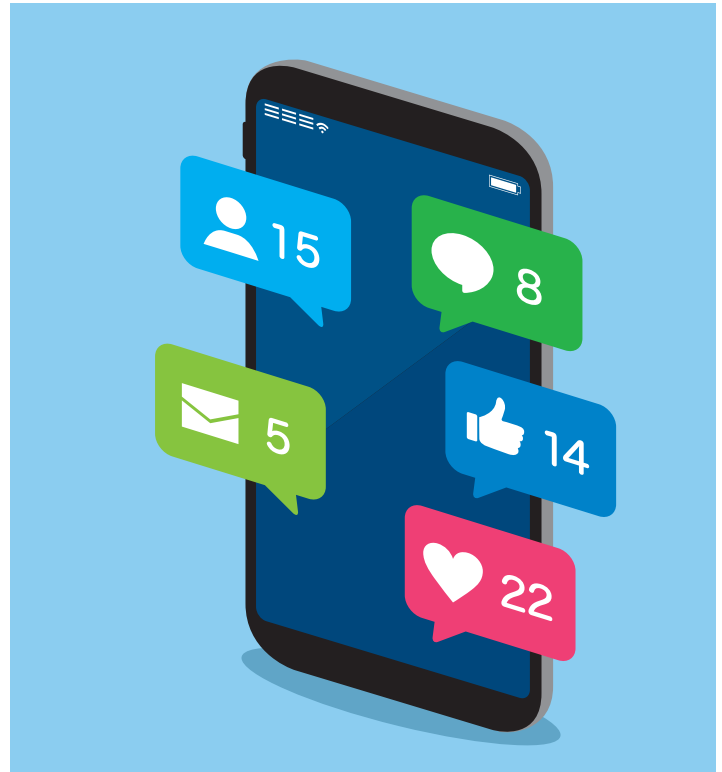
**people who saw the Budget Phase 2 video*



Town of Okotoks Twitter Channel

558 video views
5,431 impressions

**people who saw the Budget Phase 2 video*



Social Media Reach

Over the course of the survey, various methods of communications were utilized to promote the Budget 2021 Phase 2 Online Survey including eNewsletter mailouts, Eagle 100.9 radio advertisements, LED signage, and the Okotoks Western Wheel Town Pages. Social media was also used on all Town of Okotoks and Okotoks Economic Development pages. Budget advertisements were also targeted on the Okotoks Today and Okotoks Online local media websites. Additionally, the engagement platform providers promoted the survey through their Facebook social media channel. To target a younger demographic, a Budget promo ad ran on the Spotify Music App.

Ethelo Facebook Ads



- 7 paid targeted ads
- 16,830 people reached
- Additionally promoted on 3rd-party Okotoks groups



Ethelo Spotify Ad

- 799 people reached
- Largest demographic age range reached: 18-24 & 45+ years
- 18 survey click throughs