

## Attachment #1

# *What We Heard: Budget 2024 Public Engagement Summary Report*

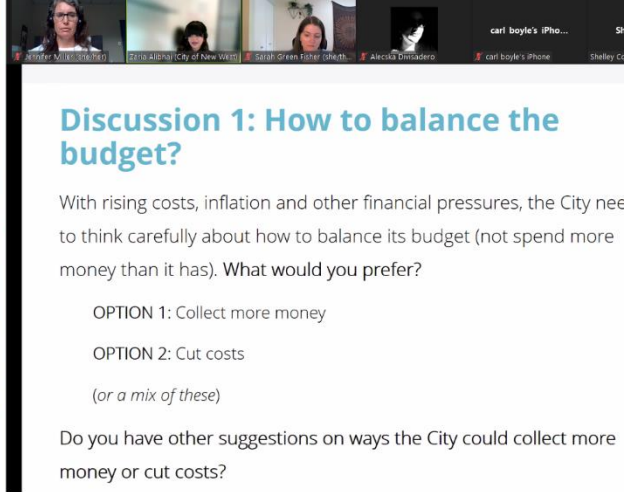


# NEW WESTMINSTER

## What We Heard: Budget 2024 Public Engagement Summary Report

August 2023





A variety of engagement activities were completed from June-August 2023 to gather community input on the City’s 2024 Budget. Pictured here, clockwise from the top left: New to New West Intercultural Festival; virtual workshop with members of the New Westminster Tenants Union; workshop with program participants at the Library; workshop with adult language class at New Westminster Secondary School.

*We recognize and respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsundered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. We acknowledge that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. As a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.*

# Budget 2024 Public Engagement Summary Report

August 14, 2023

## **Introduction**

The City of New Westminster's Budget 2024 public engagement process reflects a renewed focus on inviting community input on the City's financial plan following the 2022 municipal election. The engagement activities and questions were developed in recognition of Council's new strategic priorities, and in response to direction from Council to seek community input on capital spending priorities and hear from under-represented demographic groups.

Community engagement for the 2024 City Budget was active early June through early August 2023 and included a community survey and online discussion forum, four targeted workshops with under-represented groups, and additional outreach activities. In total, more than 1,500 people visited the [Budget 2024 Be Heard New West webpage](#), and approximately 600 community members participated in the engagement activities.

Additional budget engagement materials, documents and resources are available on the [Budget 2024 page on Be Heard New West](#), including additional photographs of in-person engagement activities, the verbatim input from the workshops, survey and discussion forum, FAQs, and other information.

The purpose of this summary report is to share with City Council, engagement participants, and the New Westminster community:

1. [What engagement activities were completed](#)
2. [A summary of what we heard](#)
  - a. [Targeted Outreach and Workshops with Under-Represented Groups](#)
  - b. [2024 City Budget Survey](#)
  - c. [Online Discussion Forum](#)
3. [Demographic information about participants & representation analysis](#)
4. [Next steps](#)

# 1. Engagement Process

The Budget 2024 Engagement process started in June 2023 with the launch of our Be Heard New West project page, online survey and online discussion forum. Active engagement was underway from June 2 until August 2, 2023. In addition to the broad online engagement activities, there was a focus on reaching under-represented voices through targeted outreach and workshops. Engagement activities included:

- **Be Heard New West Project Webpage**
  - Launched June 2, 2023
  - 1,562 unique visitors as of August 2, 2023
- **Online Survey**
  - Open June 2 through July 10, 2023
  - 470 responses
- **Online Discussion Forum**
  - Open June 2 through July 10, 2023
  - 68 contributions made by 20 participants
- **Booth at New to New West Intercultural Festival and Information Fair**
  - June 3, 2023 outside the Welcome Centre
  - Talked to approximately 50 attendees
- **Virtual workshop with the Community Action Network (CAN)**
  - July 12, 2023 (via Zoom)
  - 13 participants
- **Workshop with adult language class**
  - July 13, 2023 at New Westminster Secondary School
  - 19 participants
- **Workshop with Conversation Circles program participants**
  - July 29, 2023 at the Main Branch of New Westminster Public Library
  - 37 participants
- **Virtual workshop with members of the New Westminster Tenants Union**

- August 2, 2023 (via Zoom)
- 4 participants

New Westminster residents were invited to participate in the survey through the following methods:

- Email notice to various City email databases – sent to approximately 8,500 subscribers in total:
  - Be Heard New West subscribers (two emails sent)
  - Parks & Recreation subscribers
  - Invest New West business newsletter subscribers
  - Citypage Online newsletter subscribers (four emails sent)
- Email outreach to various community groups and volunteers, such as committee members, Residents Associations, and others
- Social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- Social media advertising (sponsored posts)
- Posts in popular community Facebook groups, such as New Westies are the Besties and New Westminster Community Group
- Print advertisement in the Record newspaper
- Print notices in Citypage in the Record newspaper (four editions)
- Digital advertising in the New West Anchor e-newsletter
- Notice on the homepage of the City's website
- Posters and digital notice board graphics in City facilities
- Flyers distributed at the City Hall bill payment counter during the property tax payment deadline period
- Promotion in public meetings and events, such as a Seniors Week workshop at Century House on June 6, 2023

**NEW WESTMINSTER**  
**BUDGET 2024**

**Help shape the City's to-do list!**

- What parks improvements do you think we need right now?
- How would you rank our transportation projects?
- Do you support City Council's new strategic priorities?

**Strategic Priorities:**

- Community Belonging and Connecting
- Safe Movement of People
- Homes and Housing Options
- People-Centred Economy
- Asset Management and Infrastructure

**Share your views on these and other questions in the Budget 2024 Survey.**

[beheardnewwest.ca/budget2024](https://beheardnewwest.ca/budget2024)

**SURVEY OPEN UNTIL JULY 3, 2023**  
**WIN A \$50 GIFT CARD**

**BE HEARD NEW WEST**

Left: Print advertisement in the Record newspaper (graphic also used on social media and in other promotions).

Below: Flyer distributed in City Hall at the bill payment counter.

**What's your preference for the 2024 tax rate?**

We want your input!  
Take our Budget 2024 Survey and share your thoughts on the 2024 tax rate, City spending priorities, and MORE!

**BUDGET 2024**

**BE HEARD NEW WEST**

[beheardnewwest.ca/budget2024](https://beheardnewwest.ca/budget2024)

*Important Note: this summary of engagement input does not reflect a representative sample of the New Westminster community. The input captured here reflects the views of those who self-selected to participate, and may not be representative of the views of other community members and interested groups. Please see section four – About Participants, starting on Page 48 – for some demographic information and representation analysis.*

## 2. What We Heard

### Targeted Outreach and Workshops with Under-Represented Groups

Based on direction from City Council to aim for better representation in the demographics of budget engagement participants, efforts were made to specifically reach renters in New Westminster and racialized community members (people of colour). These groups in particular are under-represented in the City's online public engagement activities, based on demographic information collected through the Be Heard New West online platform.

City staff reached out to existing community contacts where organizations are working with these demographic groups, and worked to schedule discussions with already-established groups at their regular meetings and programs. A total of four workshops were held in July and early August. In addition to the workshops, staff conducted email outreach to existing contacts, and staffed a booth at the New to New West Intercultural Festival on June 3, 2023. The Budget engagement was promoted at the festival, and attendees were invited to answer two questions adapted from the online survey.

A total of 123 people were reached through these efforts, which are listed and pictured below in chronological order:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Demographic groups represented</b>
New to New West Intercultural Festival	June 3, 2023	Spoke to approx. 50 attendees	Newcomers, renters, first language other than English, racialized residents
Workshop with Community Action Network (CAN) Leaders	July 12, 2023	13	Renters, people with lived experience of poverty / low income, racialized
Workshop with adult language class at NWSS	July 13, 2023	19	Newcomers, renters, first language other than English, racialized



Workshop with English Conversation Circles program participants	July 29, 2023	37	Newcomers, renters, first language other than English, racialized
Workshop with New Westminster Tenants Union	August 2, 2023	4	Renters, seniors, people with lived experience of low income

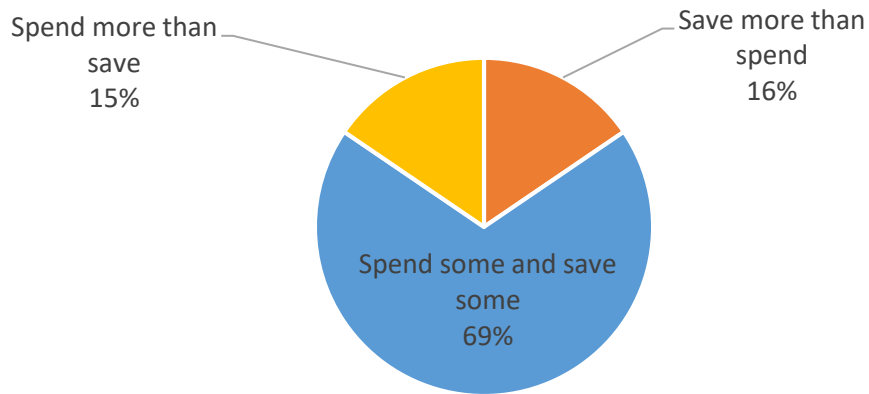


At most of these workshops and events, participants were invited to answer two multiple-choice questions that were adapted from the online survey. The questions and consolidated responses, across all of the events, are included below:

**Question 1: In general, how do you think the City should make its budget (money) decisions?**

Choice	Percentage	Count
<b>Total Responses: 71</b>		
Save more than spend	15.5%	11
Spend some and save some	69%	49
Spend more than save	15.5%	11

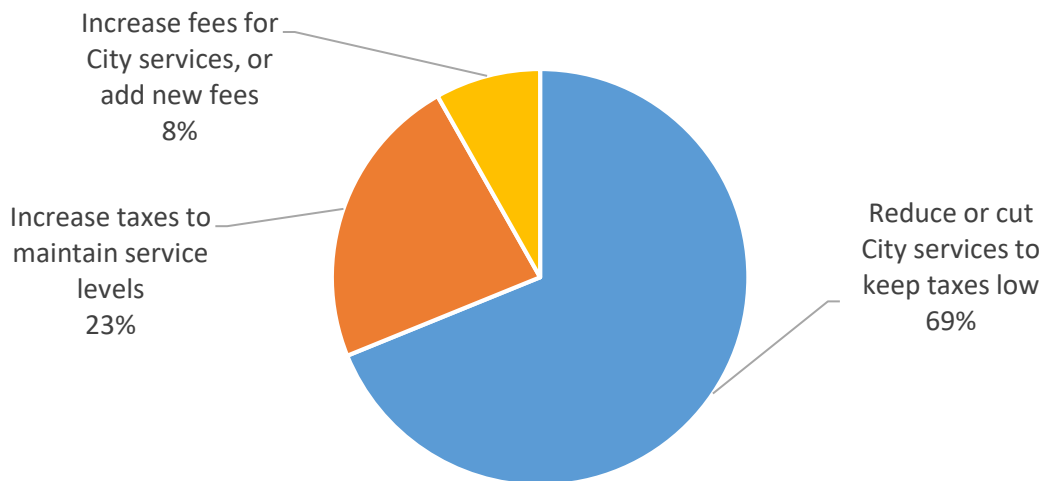
In general, how do you think the City should make its budget (money) decisions?



**Question 2: How do you think the City should balance its budget?**

Choice	Percentage	Count
<b>Total Responses: 61</b>		
Reduce or cut City services to keep taxes low	69%	42
Increase taxes to maintain service levels	23%	14
Increase fees for City services, or add new fees	8%	5

How do you think the City should balance its budget?



At the four workshops that were held with the groups listed above, the same format was followed: introductions and icebreaker, a short presentation about the City's budget to set the context for the discussions (based on information in the [Budget 2024 Infographic](#)), and two facilitated discussions based on two different questions.

The discussion questions and key themes from the participants' input across all four workshops are included below:

**Workshop Discussion 1:** With rising costs, inflation and other financial pressures, the City needs to think carefully about how to balance its budget (not spend more money than it has). **What would you prefer?**

- Option 1: Collect more money
- Option 2: Cut costs
- *(or a mix of these)*

Do you have other suggestions on ways the City could collect more money or cut costs?

### **Discussion 1 Key Themes:**

- **Mix of opinions on options, but majority of support for mix of collecting more money and cutting costs:** Overall, workshop participants were split on whether the City should balance the budget by collecting more money (i.e. increasing taxes and fees) or cutting costs (i.e. reducing service levels). A few participants spoke clearly in favour of raising taxes, while a few others said it's better to cut costs than raise taxes. However, the majority of participants said they support a mix of these two approaches.
- **Concerns about percentage spent on police, and suggestions to reallocate some of that money:** Several participants expressed surprise at the 29% of the City's operating budget being spent on police services (based on the 2023 budget). A few suggested that some of that money should be reallocated to social services and/or programming to help prevent the need for more policing. A couple of others suggested that more information is needed about the crime rate and utilization of the police budget in order to decide if it should be cut. It's important to note that not all participants shared these concerns. A couple of participants said they were comfortable with the level of spending on policing.

- **Invest in improvements in order to attract more participation and spending / increase revenue:** Several workshop participants suggested that the City should focus on attracting more activity, participation and spending in the community by investing in improvements such as more events and programming, improving commercial areas and local business, and installing fast EV chargers to draw people to come and spend time here. Another suggestion was to support residents with finding quality employment so they have more income to spend and can contribute higher fees and taxes.
- **Ideas for how to collect more money:** A few participants had specific ideas for how the City could collect more revenue, such as increasing fines for bylaw infractions and doing more bylaw enforcement to levy fines – in particular for bylaw infractions in commercial rental housing buildings. Another suggestion was to attract investment from business, industry, and institutions such as post-secondary education. A couple of participants didn't have specific ideas but said if someone can come up with a good idea that people want, it could make money.
- **Support for the most vulnerable / addressing homelessness:** Several participants spoke about wanting the City to maintain or increase service levels for vulnerable residents, such as seniors, children, low-income households, and community members experiencing homelessness. One participant said one of the reasons people like living in New Westminster is the social services and variety of services offered here. A related theme was comments about the City's role in supportive housing and addressing homelessness. Several participants spoke about the high cost of living and how everything is getting more expensive.
- **Suggestions to review each department and increase efficiency:** A couple of workshop participants suggested that a thorough analysis should be completed for each department's use of resources and budget in order to identify possible efficiencies, reallocation to other areas, and other possible strategic changes to maximize existing resources.

**Workshop Discussion 2:** Sometimes the City can get extra money that wasn't expected, like a grant from other levels of government. The City must decide how to spend this money. We could:

- Spend the money on something practical like a repairs or maintenance,

- Put the money into savings for a future need,
- Spend it on something we really want (but may not need),
- Or a combination of options.

### **How would you like to see the City use this kind of extra money?**

#### **Discussion 2 Key Themes:**

- **Mix of opinions on options, but majority of support for combination of options (distribute the money across different areas):** Again, workshop participants had mixed opinions on where to allocate unexpected or extra money. There was some support for spending all of the money on the needs of today, and only a few participants suggested saving all of the money as their priority. Overall, the majority of participants supported a combination of spending some and saving some.
- **Spend on housing / tenant supports and protections:** Several participants said they would like any extra money to go towards housing and/or any direct housing supports. Comments included support for services addressing and preventing homelessness, developing policies and programs to protect and support renters, and buying buildings from problematic landlords and demonstrating how renovations / repairs can be done without displacing tenants.
- **Spend on maintenance and repairs:** Several participants said their highest priority would be to spend the extra money on maintenance and repairs.
- **Save some in case of emergencies:** Several participants expressed support for saving some money in case of future emergencies and needs.
- **Supports for seniors and other vulnerable residents:** Several participants said they would like to see extra money directed towards supports for seniors, as well as children/youth and low-income residents. Related to this theme were comments about providing opportunities for social connections, helping to address loneliness and isolation, and offering inclusive and accessible programming.
- **Programs and rebates for cooling:** A few participants spoke about directing some money towards rebates or incentives to provide cooling in rental units

/ buildings, and the need for vulnerable residents to be supported in accessing cooling measures.

- **Spend on protecting the environment/trees:** A couple of participants said they would like to see some money go towards protection of trees, adding more trees, and protecting the environment.
- **Create more jobs:** A couple of participants suggested using some money to provide job opportunities.

## 2024 City Budget Survey

The purpose of the online survey was to consult the community on priorities and several key aspects for the 2024 and ongoing budgets. The survey asked for the community's feedback on some key questions from City Council and staff, to help validate and learn more about how our budget decisions align with community priorities, and make adjustments when there is a growing gap or concern.

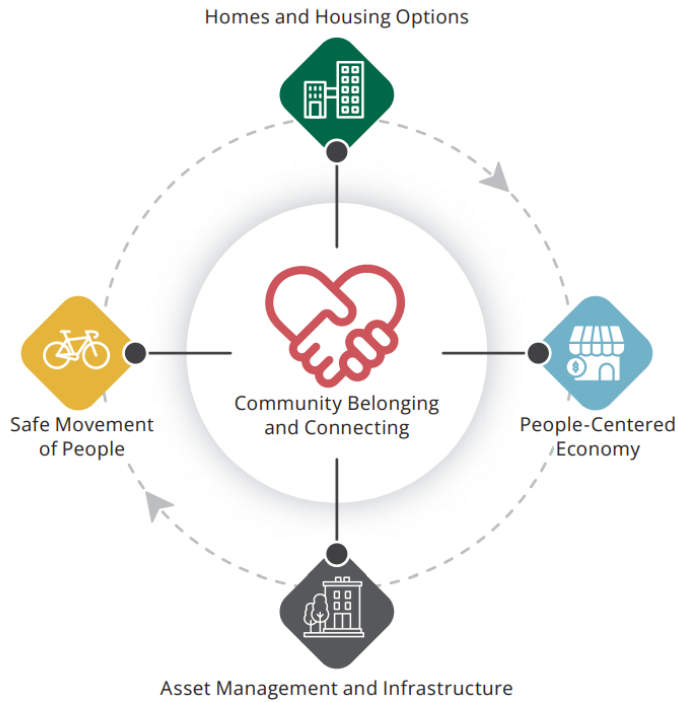
New this year, a prize draw was offered and a \$50 gift card to a local business of their choice was awarded to three respondents who opted in to participate in the draw. The online survey was open from June 2 through July 10, 2023 and received 470 responses. Below is a summary of the results.

### [Part 1: Financial Planning](#)

When City staff begin to prepare their departmental budgets for next year, they will be responding to several changes in the City's financial outlook. These include aligning the City's work plans with Council's new strategic priorities, the ongoing rise in inflation, increased population, and new staff and other resources that will be needed to operate the new *təməsewtx*<sup>w</sup> Aquatic and Community Centre. Another key budget driver includes third-party funding like the Provincial Government support from the Growing Communities Fund and opportunities for other grants.

**Question 1:** Over the last several months Council has been working through a strategic planning process to identify its priority work areas for the next few years. On May 8, 2023, Council adopted [this plan](#).

The 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities Plan identifies five areas of focus:



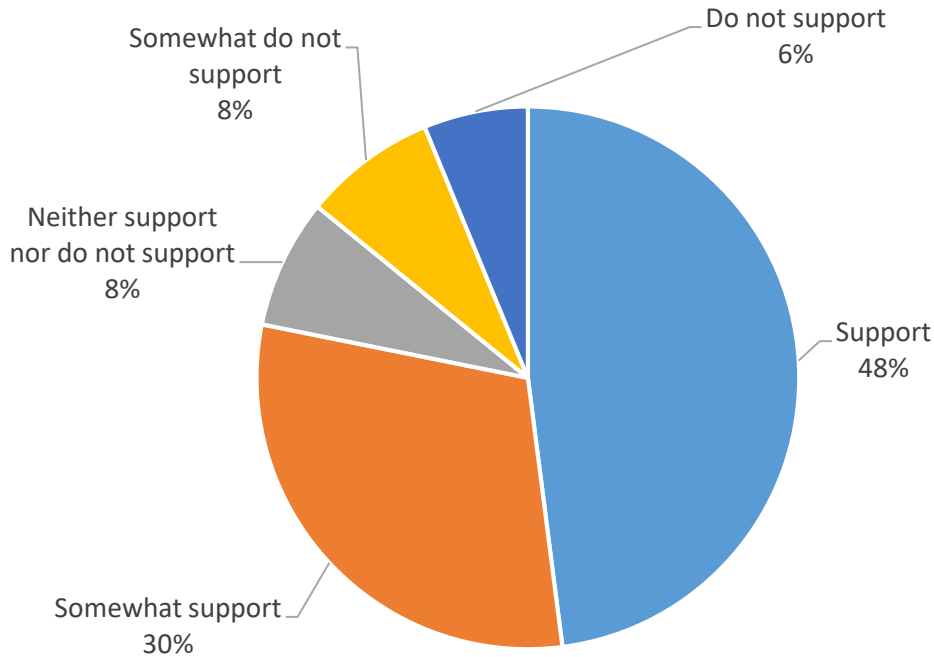
These priorities are grounded by several contexts through which all work should be considered: **reconciliation, public engagement, climate action and environment, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism (DEIAR).**

It is expected that the 2024 City Budget will include additional resources for these focus areas. Also, City staff have typically structured the annual budget around Council’s priorities to show how money is being allocated.

**In considering how City funds are allocated, what is your level of support for using Council’s five strategic priorities, as listed above, as a guide for prioritizing spending and how the City’s budget is structured?**

Choice	Percentage	Count
<b>Total Responses: 467</b>		
Support	48%	224
Somewhat support	30%	141
Neither support nor do not support	8%	36
Somewhat do not support	8%	37
Do not support	6%	29

What is your level of support for using Council’s five strategic priorities as a guide for prioritizing spending and how the City budget is structured?



**Question 2:** OPTIONAL: Please share why you chose that answer or any comments about Council’s new strategic priorities.

*Below is a summary of the key themes across the responses. In some cases, several themes have been applied to one individual response, based on the content; this means that a single response can be counted multiple times. Note that sample comments are not edited for spelling and grammar – they are reported exactly as entered by participants.*

212 Responses		
Theme	# of Mentions	Sample Comments
General support for strategic priority areas	42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I appreciate the time it takes to develop strategic priorities and I believe these are</li> </ul>



		<p>important priorities to me personally as well.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I deeply support the Council's new strategic priorities. New Westminster has the potential to be an incredibly equitable and accessible city, but we absolutely need to be prioritizing anti-racism, reconciliation, safe movement for people instead of car-centric infrastructure, and genuinely affordable housing, in order to get there. This is a good start.”</li> <li>• “While they are, necessarily, somewhat vague, I think the priorities are very well chosen. I’m glad to see an emphasis on housing, which is a growing need. And the emphasis on asset management and community connections will help New West remain strong in areas we are already strong.”</li> <li>• “Well developed strategies grounded in humanitarian values. Well done!”</li> </ul>
<p>Lack of clarity around strategic priority areas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vague terminology;</li> <li>• How areas will be prioritized, and;</li> <li>• How budget will be allocated to each area</li> </ul>	<p>31</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It would be helpful to find out the priority levels on the five areas mentioned. ie infrastructure would be the number one priority.”</li> <li>• “You have provided objectives and outcomes, but no indication of how you will achieve the outcomes to meet the objectives. It looks good, but how?”</li> <li>• “Those all sound good, but what other options were considered, and what is the ACTUAL plan?”</li> <li>• “There is no details on what percentage of the budget will go to each area. Also the priorities are vague.”</li> <li>• "I would far prefer to see a list of concrete goals, rather than this kind of nebulous, blue-sky thinking. I.E. ""This year, we will be looking at adding X additional parks, we will</li> </ul>

		<p>be protecting this neighbourhood from over-development, we will be ensuring homes for X additional people, we will be providing THESE new community services and maintaining THESE existing ones."</p>
<p>Opposition to <i>Safe Movement of People</i> as a priority</p>	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Safe Movement of people should not be prioritized as council's vision of such has negative impacts on both traffic flow and access to businesses."</li> <li>• "I am not sure what 'Safe Movement of People' means? Does that mean more police protection from anti social elements then it makes sense but if its for more bicycle lanes as shown in the pictorial description then that is not supported."</li> <li>• "Bicycle lanes are too confining. They are neither good for businesses, pedestrians, motorists or cyclists. They are generally unused and seem to cause more trouble than good."</li> <li>• "Too much focus on active transportation which is not making our streets safer, it's in fact making them more dangerous."</li> <li>• "I think the Council has wasted a lot of money on changes to roads that have not made them safer or easier to navigate."</li> </ul>
<p>Support for <i>Homes and Housing Options</i> as a priority</p>	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Housing is extremely important and I support steps towards affordable housing for all."</li> <li>• "If we can get housing that included affordable housing and those for homeless that would address a huge need."</li> <li>• "I support the specific goals and objectives. In particular New West needs housing options for the marginalized communities."</li> <li>• "Those 4 core areas, with Homes &amp; Housing at the top reflecting its urgent need for attention, all feed into the overarching goal of community belonging &amp; connecting. I</li> </ul>

		think it's a clear expression of what most of us would like to see."
Support for <i>Community Belonging and Connecting</i> and a <i>People-Centered Economy</i>	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "People first ♥"</li> <li>• "I believe strongly in centering people before profits, and love to see anything that helps transition away from a capital-based economy."</li> <li>• "Looking after each other and neighbors is an important priority."</li> <li>• "I like how all the priorities are focused on people and connections/communities."</li> </ul>
Spend wisely and look to save money	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I would also like to see finding efficiencies/reduce costs as a priority"</li> <li>• "I feel, given what I have seen in my 26 years living in New Westminster, more should be done to cut costs, return livability that has been eroded and get more out of the money already and currently being spent."</li> <li>• "I'm okay with the priorities listed as long as the City focuses on the basics - roads, sewers, waste management, snow removal etc and not wasteful spending on "pet projects" that make for good PR. Taxes are VERY high in New Westminster and it's time the City reprioritizes."</li> <li>• "We need to hold back on the addition of "new areas of focus" and start being more fiscally responsible to the taxpayers. Flat out- we simply cannot continue to spend our way into the future. We as a City need to start cutting frills and start rolling back the tax burden on the City's population."</li> </ul>
Focus spending and work on core City functions	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Focus on Core City responsibilities."</li> <li>• "Council should focus on city services and spend less time and money on provincial/federal responsibilities like trying to solve regional housing crisis by over densifying"</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Many of these are beyond the responsibilities of a city government and are not an effective use of tax funds; there is duplication and resources wasted interacting with other levels of government.”</li> </ul>
Support for <i>Safe Movement of People</i>	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Safe Movement of People must include everyone not just bikes. Physically challenged people and elderly must be included. Also vehicles buses and roadways are also part of safely transporting people.”</li> <li>• “I like that we are seeing safety of travel since we already have a great transit system.”</li> <li>• “I highly support spending on housing and creating safer streets for people. Build more bike lanes and pedestrian spaces.”</li> </ul>
Support for <i>Asset Management and Infrastructure</i>	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Asset Management and Infrastructure during economic instability should be in the forefront of all decision making”</li> <li>• “Asset management and infrastructure is a bigger concern than some of the other points. Taking care of the city roads, pipes, sidewalks is essential and needs some more focus, some places in NW are terrible.”</li> <li>• “Focus on Roads, swage, drinking water, public safety, side walks, waste removal, sidewalks, parks, removing bike lanes, limiting truck traffic in the city &amp; focusing on a community based environment, limiting rush hour traffic”</li> </ul>
General opposition toward strategic priority areas	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It doesn't resonate with the issues me and my neighbors are experiencing.”</li> <li>• “It's not really aligned with the needs of the community. Its really focused on the councillors activism.”</li> <li>• “Wrong focuses in my opinion.”</li> </ul>

Safety is a concern and should be a priority	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I feel there should have been more attention allocated to the rate of crime, car break ins and random violence, all with the same small group of perpetrators.”</li> <li>• “I have concerns that public safety is not specifically mentioned. It could be argued that all five strategic priorities would enhance public safety (e.g. generally people are safer when housed, e.g. pedestrians should feel safe when moving through the downtown, e.g. connecting with and supporting the City's street entrenched folks lead to them to being safer, etc) but without specifying, I believe each of the five priorities will be come independent silos and the common thread that binds them, as well as staffing and resources, will be overlooked.”</li> </ul>
Support for the inclusion of <i>Climate Action and Environment</i> in the plan	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm happy to see climate action (particularly mitigation given the alarming changes we are seeing right now) and I think it will be an issue that, if not addressed, will undermine all other efforts to improve quality of life for residents.</li> <li>• Climate action is a priority, and the investment priorities should be on enablement (people taking responsibility for their own lives) over provision (providing opex based services to people), I want to see progressive, forward focused and innovative solutions.</li> </ul>

A number of smaller themes (10+ comments) also emerged in response to this question. Themes included:

- Supporting small business and the local economy is a priority
- The importance of reconciliation
- Opposition to spending City dollars on housing
- Focus on keeping tax rates low

**Question 3:** An overarching goal of the City’s budget is to maintain the financial health of the City. The work is guided by the following principles to ensure the budget is:

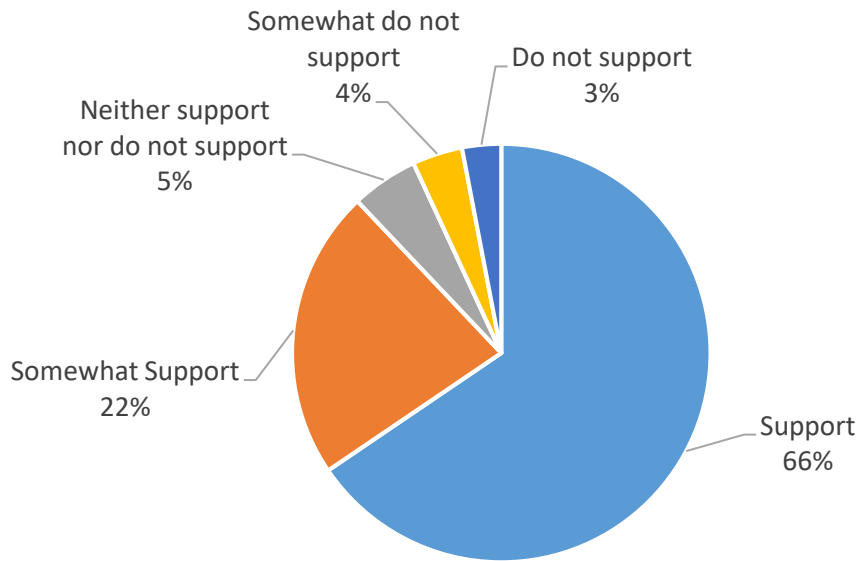
- **Sustainable:** Maintain assets in a state of good repair through reasonable property tax / utility rates increases, and without disruptions to services. Living within our means;
- **Adaptable:** The ability to change debt levels or leverage reserves, ability to ramp up or down on spending;
- **Stable:** Predictability of City’s sustainable revenue sources and less reliance on external funding or third party funding; and
- **Accountable:** Fiscally prudent and responsible; the ability to ensure that the City’s financial decisions are in the best interest of all.

These principles help to ensure the City has manageable levels of debt and maintains stable reserves (savings) to support reasonable year-over-year tax increases and respond to emerging priorities.

**What is your level of support for these principles as a foundation for the City’s financial planning?**

Choice	Percentage	Count
<b>Total Responses: 464</b>		
Support	66%	304
Somewhat Support	22%	104
Neither support nor do not support	5%	24
Somewhat do not support	4%	18
Do not support	3%	14

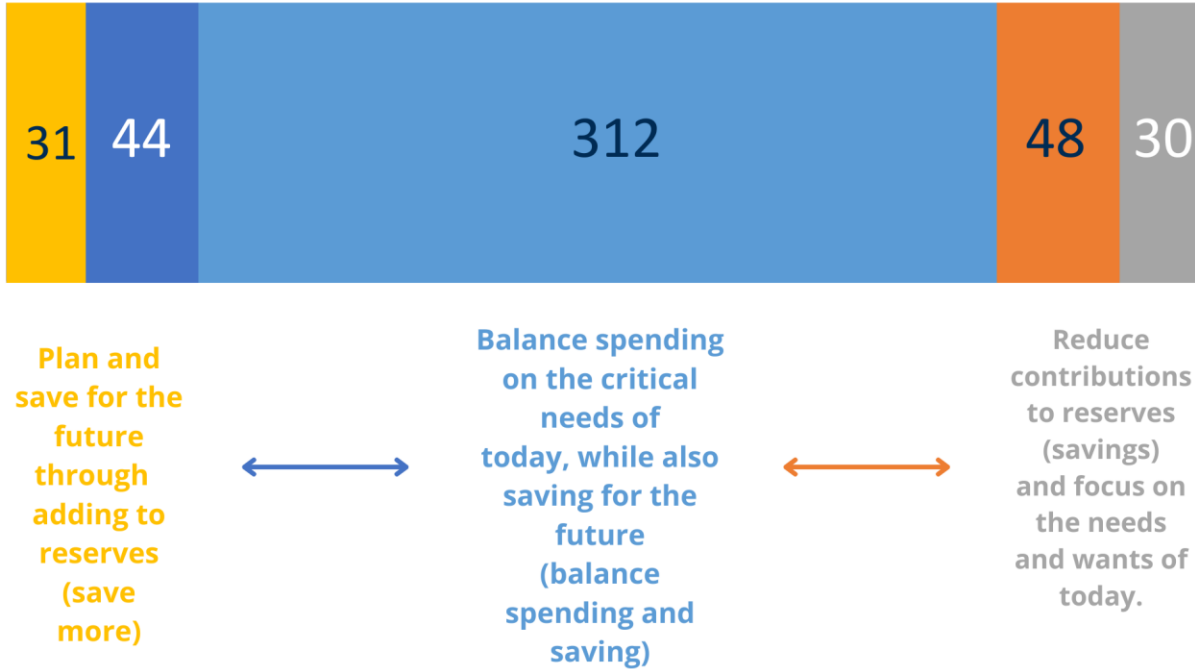
What is your level of support for these principles as a foundation for the City's financial planning?



**Question 4: In general terms, how would you like to see the City make its financial planning decisions?** Select one of the three options, or somewhere in between.

Choice	Percentage	Count
<b>Total Responses: 465</b>		
Plan and save for the future through a greater focus on adding to reserves (save more)	7%	31
- somewhere in between -	10%	44
Balance spending on the critical needs of today, while also saving for the future (balance spending and saving)	67%	312
- somewhere in between -	10%	48
Reduce contributions to reserves (savings) and focus on the needs and wants of today (save less) Note: this would lead to significant tax increases in future years.	6%	30

In general terms, how would you like to see the City make its financial planning decisions? Select one of the three options, or somewhere in between.



**Question 5:** By law, the City of New Westminster is required to balance its annual **operating** budget. This means the City cannot borrow money, use credit, or run a deficit to pay for day-to-day operations. There are several options the City can consider in order to increase revenues or cut expenses in order to achieve this balance. **Please rank the following methods and options you would like the City to consider as a way to balance the 2024 budget.** (1= most preferred choice)

Note: You do not need to rank all of the choices.

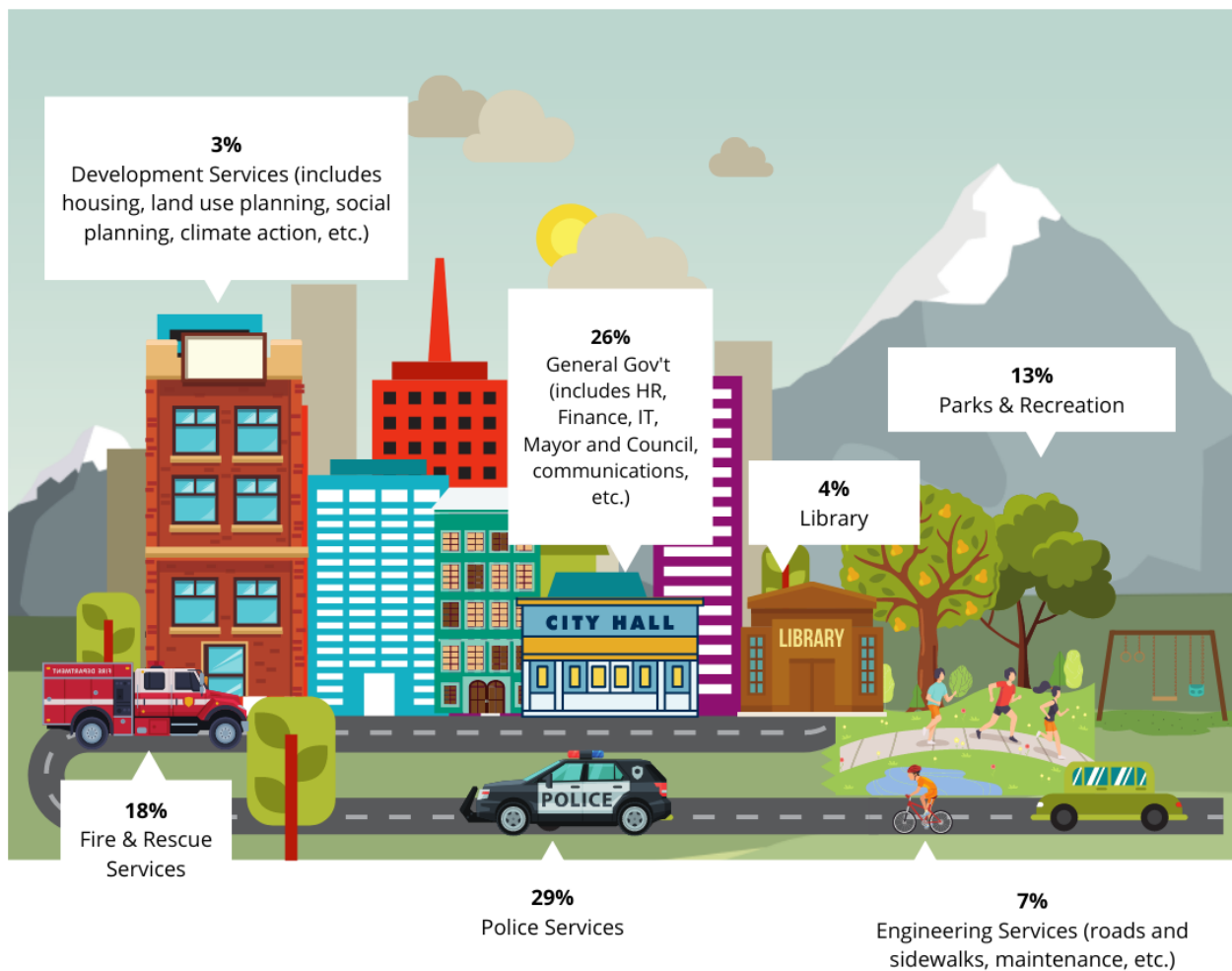
Methods to Balance the Budget	Average Score (1=most preferred choice)	Overall Rank
<b>Total responses: 463</b>		



Increase user fees for City services that currently have fees	2.91	1
Introduce new user fees for some City services that currently have no fees	2.92	2
Continue to offer the same services, but not to the same level. For example, reduced hours at facilities	3.12	3
Postpone non-critical infrastructure projects (for example, new amenities)	3.18	4
Increase property taxes (for both residential and business)	3.55	5
Reduce the number/type of services the City offers (i.e., no longer offer some services)	3.96	6

## [Part 2: Taxation](#)

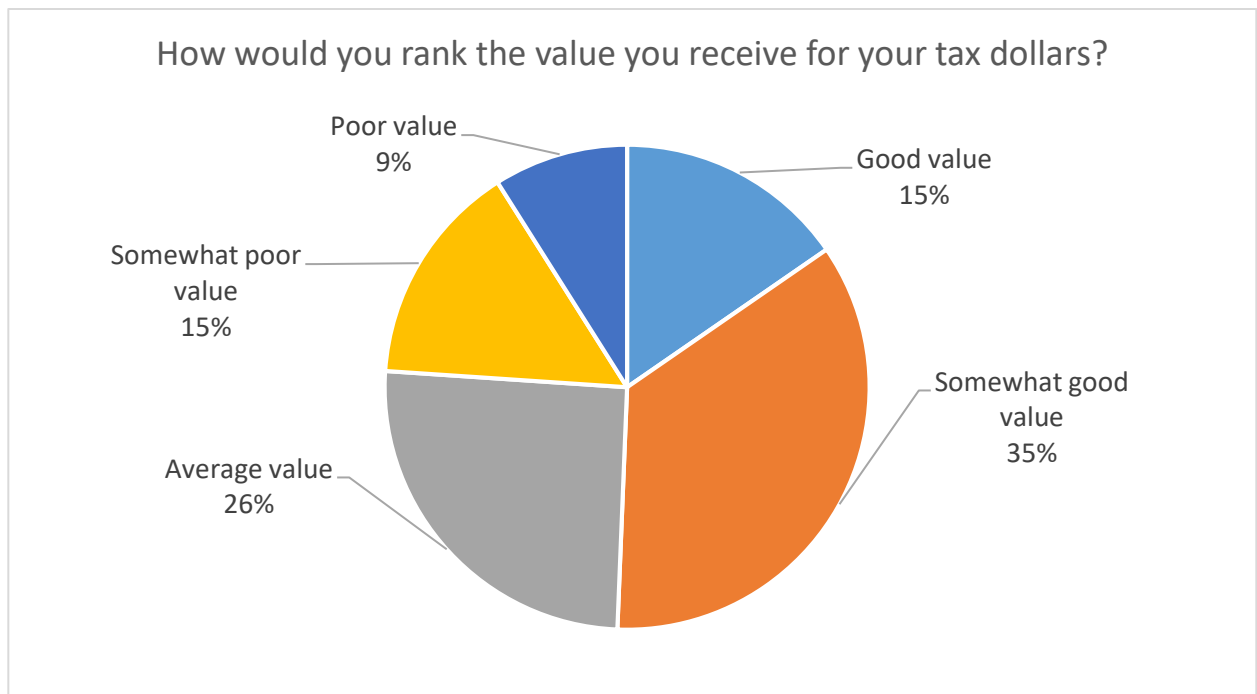
City services are funded largely from property tax payers across New Westminster. Renters also contribute to property taxes through their rent. A portion of the money collected annually through property taxes is also sent to other authorities: the Provincial Government, Translink, Metro Vancouver, etc. The total municipal taxes collected for New Westminster is approximately \$105 million for 2023 and funding is allocated to the Operating Budget as follows:



[Click here for more information on the services and programs your tax dollars fund.](#)

**Question 6:** Thinking about all the programs and services that you receive and that the City of New Westminster provides, how would you **rank the value you receive for your tax dollars?**

Choice	Percentage	Count
<b>Total Responses: 468</b>		
Good value	15%	72
Somewhat good value	35%	165
Average value	26%	119
Somewhat poor value	15%	70
Poor value	9%	42



**Question 7:** OPTIONAL: Please tell us a little bit about why you feel that way about the value you receive for your tax dollars. Are there any particular services you feel are providing good value, or on the flip side are not providing good value?

*Below is a summary of the key themes across the responses. In some cases, several themes have been applied to one individual response, based on the content; this means that a single response can be counted multiple times. Note that sample comments are not edited for spelling and grammar – they are reported exactly as entered by participants.*

294 Responses		
Theme	# of Mentions	Sample Comments
Reduce the amount spent on General Government (including staff costs and overhead)	54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “General Government 26% -this should be reduced and funds put to other areas serving the citizens of New Westminster. All the jobs are high paying and as such the number of those positions should be reduced.”</li> <li>• “I believe instead of making cuts to the residents, our general gov't could be much more cost effective. Salaries and other costs within this areas should be very carefully considered.”</li> <li>• “If it is absolutely necessary to spend 26% on general gov't expenses then tax payers should have information to understand why.”</li> <li>• “Its hard to say without comparing to other cities of similar sizes. But it feels like a ridiculous amount of money is being spent on staffing costs when there are literally buckling sidewalks and roads full of potholes everywhere in the city.”</li> <li>• “Too much is being spent on "general government" which is just fancy talk for administration. General administration</li> </ul>

		shouldn't be more than 10% of the cost of delivering services.”
The proportion spent on policing is too high	53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “29% for police services seems excessive. How does this line up with other communities (e.g., Pit Meadows, Pt Moody, Poco, Ft Langley).”</li> <li>• “29% to Police is absolutely ridiculous when only 3% of the budget goes to helping people who need housing and community building. This needs to change.”</li> <li>• “I do not think police services should have such a high % of funds while development, parks&amp;rec and library combined dont even have that much. It needs to be distributed better. More money to social and community services to address root causes of crime up-stream rather than the ineffectual way we do it now.”</li> <li>• “I don't love that the police budget takes up 29% of the total. I believe that we have downloaded too many responsibilities to the police that shouldn't be their job (wellness checks for example).”</li> <li>• “The percentage going to police services seems too high. Surely the library and development services could use a little of that.”</li> </ul>
Increase funding or find better value for Engineering Services (roads, sidewalks, etc.)	51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I feel that I could get better value from the monies spent on road maintenance, especially the very poor road surface remediation performed by contractors when working on infrastructure improvements and repairs. The number of patches, trenches and general inconsistencies in New West roads is pretty embarrassing</li> </ul>

		<p>compared with other communities in BC, Canada and even other countries.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I think more should be spent on improving our sidewalks, roadways.”</li> <li>• “I know road/infrastructure maintenance can be very expensive so am glad to still see development of new bike lanes etc. ”</li> <li>• “The most of roads and sidewalks throughout the city are in ill repair. Roads are often dug up repeatedly by the various departments in engineering, sometimes even the same department. Coordinating projects on the same street would save costs and reduce the inconvenience of residents.”</li> </ul>
General satisfaction with the allocation for funds and the value for tax dollars	42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I know the City has had a lot of serious issues to contend with over the past few years, and all of that cost money. I know there have been staffing issues as well; things can't get done if there's nobody to do them. I think City services are good, all things considered.”</li> <li>• "I see investment in infrastructure, a responsive and fair city hall, and a thriving community with character that's rare for Metro Van.”</li> <li>• “I support City operations and value the services we receive.”</li> <li>• “I think we actually get a lot of bang for our tax bucks, considering that New West is a small city without a huge tax base.”</li> <li>• “I've lived and/or worked in New Westminster for 42 years and am very happy with how my tax dollars have been allocated.”</li> </ul>
Poor value for police budget	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We aren't getting good value for police services. They're slow to respond to</li> </ul>

		<p>calls and non-emergency is unreachable. They claim to perform foot patrols but are not visible especially at night.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I wish I could still laugh at the hold times for non-emergency calls to the NRPD, but it's now crossed the threshold and can no longer be considered funny, but just sad.”</li> <li>• “A lot of tax dollars, and more and more every year, go to policing. What is the ROI for policing, particularly relative to other community services such as the library.”</li> <li>• “Despite paying a lot for policing you sure don’t see it.”</li> </ul>
<p>Poor value for tax dollars</p>	<p>27</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “simply put,.. I need to see more actual improvement for my tax dollars,.. not Public Relations spin on how good things are when they are not”</li> <li>• “I feel that the value I receive for my tax dollars is poor, primarily due to the lack of enticing activities for youth in our city.”</li> <li>• “Other municipalities deliver better public services (Burnaby, Port Coquitlam, District of North Vancouver). New Westminster seems concerned with pet projects that siphon money from big capital projects...”</li> <li>• “The city is not particularly efficient. It is hands in many areas without capacity to achieve much. I feel ore and more supportive partnerships with not for profits would optimise City aspirations and strategic goals more efficiently and effectively...”</li> </ul>

<p>Increase funding for Development Services</p>	<p>26</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Very difficult decisions to be made. Some concern about the 3% that includes climate action and social planning which are two areas that are in crisis at the present time...Concentration on climate change and social issues such as homelessness and the overdose crisis need everyone’s attention.”</li> <li>• “There are real challenges with affordability, housing, substance abuse, and mental illness though that are not being adequately addressed. More police does not solve any of these problems. I would like to see some of that diverted into mental health and housing initiatives. 29% for police vs 3% for development services seems like a gross imbalance.”</li> <li>• “I would like to see more on Development Services, 3% is low in amount and in ratio among others expenses.”</li> <li>• “I think there should be an emphasis on housing and climate action. I would be interested in more transparency around why certain services require more funding than others.”</li> </ul>
<p>Concerns around spending on extraneous initiatives and jurisdiction of other levels of government</p>	<p>20</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Too many pet projects and too much focus on issues that should be funded by provincial and federal government's. Too many vanity projects like bike lanes.”</li> <li>• “I feel that the City is spending more than necessary in funding initiatives that are more appropriately the purview of senior levels of government. Spend more time on advocacy and lobbying to ensure engagement by</li> </ul>



		<p>those levels of government to whom we are already providing taxation dollars to do this work.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “There seems to be little accountability to efficiency of spending. i would love to see, maybe it's been done, an external review of all spending at city level to identify where changes can be made that increase services without expenses or simply identify opportunity to save funds. there are likely things that are none essential. ie. does it make sense to spend millions on a bike lane from douglas college to 1st street on agnes when there are homeless struggling? do we really need a poet laurete??”</li> </ul>
<p>Increase funding for Parks and Recreation</p>	<p>20</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Park and recreation should be given more attention. This city is quite boring that I'd rather go to another city in the weekends and spend my money outside this city. The city can give more license to food trucks to open in pier park or other high traffic paths.”</li> <li>• “Secondly, while I appreciate the parks and recreation services we currently have, they are by far poorer than our neighbouring municipalities- lacking in facilities, program costs exceed what other municipalities charge, and many are difficult to get to without a car. I find myself going to Burnaby, Coquitlam, Surrey or Vancouver for many recreational activities which says a lot.”</li> <li>• “There are essentials yes (Police, fire), but the parks and rec and other more public facing services need more support.”</li> </ul>

<p>Appreciation for Parks and Recreation</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “On the other hand I think that parks and rec is offering incredible value for their portion of the budget and really helps to make this city feel like a community.”</li> <li>• “As a parent, parks and recreation services are really great. I'm really happy with the bike lines and christmas/spring break/summer camp options. The city's parks are beautiful.”</li> <li>• “I really think that recreation is providing exceptional value - from the children’s programs to seniors.”</li> </ul>
<p>Property tax rates are too high</p>	<p>16</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I'm a long time resident and the rate of property tax increases is unsustainable. I don't live beyond my means and the city shouldn't either.”</li> <li>• “You are taxing us too much!! Especially older homes that are not worth that much and we’re paying through the roof!! Even with a senior discount it's way too much.”</li> <li>• “Providing better value means keeping taxes to modest or no increase. A 6.4% increase is quite a lot of tax revenue considering the new builds that also come online to support this revenue target, existing households still saw large increases.”</li> </ul>
<p>Increase funding for the library</p>	<p>15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “There are areas I would like to see better funded (libraries for example) - and I recognize that resources are limited and I generally feel that New Westminster has the right priorities.”</li> <li>• “That 4% to the library is doing way more to support the community than the 30% to police.”</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Libraries are the best value ever and their budget should probably be increased.”</li> </ul>
Invest more money into Downtown	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It would be great to see more downtown - a library branch, a community centre w amenities. It's too bad the Anvil Centre isn't utilized for more programs. We have a toddler and purposely live downtown bc we don't have a car and there just isn't a ton to do. Also more parks downtown other than along the Quay.”</li> <li>• “Some parts of our community, especially downtown, look tawdry and worn. The number of homeless people in our community is still alarming.”</li> <li>• “Also can we put some money and beautify Columbia St-Front street (along the Pier Park). It's our downtown back street but it's where everyone goes through and see our city. Broken street divider, unruly bushes along the fence. Please help erase the stereotype of a dirty, poor, stinky Downtown New West.”</li> </ul>

In addition to the themes listed above, survey respondents also made comments related to the following themes (15+ mentions):

- Invest more money in Queensborough
- Divert some of the police budget to alternate models of policing
- An appreciation for the library

**Question 8:** Each year, staff provide City Council with a budget outlook, which includes a potential property tax increase. The outlook is largely driven by **fixed cost increases** due to inflation, or other **external cost increases** like emergency communications, WorkSafe compensation, insurance policy renewal, etc. In addition to inflationary cost increases, staff will work with Council for **investments** in either existing City services or new services that support delivery of Council's strategic priorities.

With the changing financial landscape, **affordability challenges and inflation** are leaving little room to enhance existing City services, which creates **significant pressure on the City's ability** to keep property tax increases at or below inflation.

**With these factors in mind, when it comes to municipal taxes, what is your preference for the tax rate for 2024 as it relates generally to service levels?**

*Note: if you are a renter, please consider the tax rate relative to levels of service the City is able to provide, and offer your perspective on service levels.*

Examples of tax increase amounts are as follows. Note this only accounts for the portion of your total tax bill that goes towards municipal taxes:

**A 4% tax increase would mean:**

- \$96.00 for the year (approx. \$8.00 per month) for a strata property with an assessed value of \$647K
- \$164.00 for the year (\$13.67 per month) for an average single family home with assessed value of \$1.58M

**A 5% tax increase would mean:**

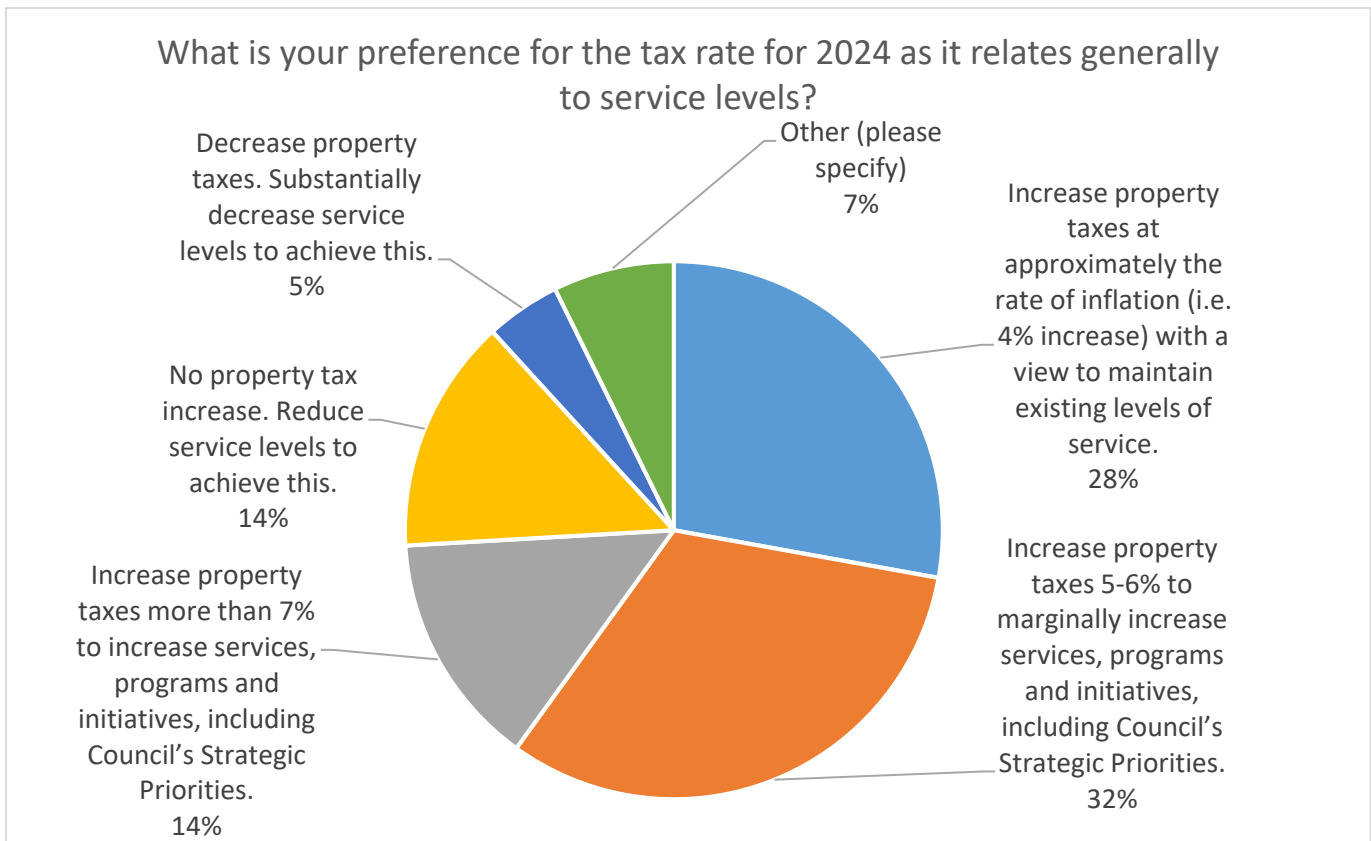
- \$111.00 for the year (approx. \$9.25 per month) for a strata property with an assessed value of \$647K
- \$201.00 for the year (approx. \$16.75 per month) for an average single family home with assessed value of \$1.58M

**A 7% tax increase would mean:**

- \$142.00 for the year (approx. \$11.83 per month) for a strata property with an assessed value of \$647K

- \$276.00 for the year (approx. \$23.00 per month) for an average single family home with an assessed value of \$1.58M

Choice	Percentage	Count
<b>Total Responses: 467</b>		
Increase property taxes at approximately the rate of inflation (i.e. 4% increase) with a view to maintain existing levels of service.	28%	130
Increase property taxes 5-6% to marginally increase services, programs and initiatives, including Council's Strategic Priorities.	32%	150
Increase property taxes more than 7% to increase services, programs and initiatives, including Council's Strategic Priorities.	14%	66
No property tax increase. Reduce service levels to achieve this.	14%	66
Decrease property taxes. Substantially decrease service levels to achieve this.	5%	21
Other (please specify)	7%	34



**A total of 34 comments were provided by those who chose “other, please specify.”** Below is a summary of the key themes across the comments. In some cases, several themes have been applied to one individual response, based on the content; this means that a single response can be counted multiple times.

Theme	# of Mentions	Sample Comments
Think outside of the box/ look for creative solutions	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Rather than reducing service, can we not consider more creative solutions such as engaging citizens in voluntary work or activities, partnering with businesses on certain services, or coordinating with other governments?”</li> <li>• “Why do you say if the tax does not increase we have to decrease service levels. Are we operating as efficiently as reasonably possible? Look outside the box.”</li> <li>• “We should be more open to collaborative and creative solutions rather than try to tackle everything in a silo (especially when the challenges are not distinct).”</li> </ul>
Reduce the budget, cut costs, find efficiencies	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “CNW budget is bloated and it needs to be reduced. Do not fill positions, create a volunteer work force to help out.”</li> <li>• “Hold taxes steady and seriously look at efficiencies within the city. Look to share duplicate roles with Burnaby.”</li> <li>• “Looking at other areas that we could be more cost effective without cutting services or making living in the city unaffordable needs to happen.”</li> </ul>

Increase taxes 2%	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Down the middle, a marginal increase of maybe 2% and look to save funds elsewhere.”</li> <li>• “Increase property tax 2%, maintain services at current levels, increase fees on some services and increase efficiencies in all departments.”</li> </ul>
Adopt a land value tax model	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Changes taxes to a land usage model. High density properties shouldn't be subsidizing detached homes.”</li> <li>• “Implementation of a land value tax would be preferred.”</li> </ul>
Focus on “essential” / infrastructure work	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Increase my taxes but don't instead contributing to unclear “strategic priorities” just use it to continue to provide services and save the rest.”</li> <li>• “Increase taxes to ensure you are properly managing the infrastructure of the city. Take proper care of the assets we have.”</li> </ul>

### [Part 3: Capital Spending](#)

The Capital Budget largely supports renewal and upgrades for existing City assets like the new community centre, or water and sewer main replacements. While the Operating Budget is about paying for day-to-day City services, the Capital Budget is about paying for long-term physical infrastructure.

Capital projects are funded from the City's reserves or savings accounts, which are funded over many years of planned contributions to ensure the money is available when infrastructure needs to be replaced. Some funding for capital projects also comes from third-party grants, such as from Translink and/or Provincial and Federal governments.

When new initiatives or growth-related assets – such as a new electrical sub-station, a larger community centre, or a new theatre – are added to the City's existing asset base, then the City needs to borrow money (take on debt) or take from reserves that were planned for current and future renewal of existing assets.

The level of City reserves (savings) is a key determination of the City's financial health and long-term sustainability to maintain public infrastructure in a state of good repair. A healthy level of City reserves also helps support stable tax rates over the long-term, and helps plan for the needs of a growing population.

The City's current five-year capital plan is estimated at over \$400 million of renewed /upgraded or new assets across New Westminster. [Click here for more information about the 2023 capital plan and an overview of planned projects.](#)

The following questions ask about your priorities within different categories of **planned capital projects** or spending. The types of projects listed in this section include many of the **major projects identified to either start or continue in 2024**. [Click here](#) for more information on the current capital plan (2023-2027), starting on Page 37.

Think about **which are most important to you, and the community as a whole**, and **rank them in order** of which you feel should **get the most support / money**. You do not need to rank all of the choices.



**Question 9:** Transportation capital projects: (1=most important, 9 = least important)

Transportation Projects	Average Score (1=most important)	Overall Rank
<b>Total responses: 465</b>		
Sidewalk repairs, new sidewalks and expanding pedestrian areas	2.8	1
Road repairs and paving	3.77	2
Public realm improvements (such as sidewalks, lighting, seating, etc.) in major pedestrian areas such as Sixth Street and Sixth Avenue in Uptown	4.28	3
Building new sustainable transportation routes (cycling, wheeling, walking) and improving existing greenways	4.59	4
Street lighting renewal and improvement	5.04	5
Adding new bus shelters and benches at bus stops	5.54	6
Traffic signal replacements and adjustments	5.65	7
Install traffic calming measures such as speed humps, curb extensions, etc.	5.77	8
Improving rail crossing safety and advancing whistle cessation	5.82	9

**Question 10:** Parks improvement capital projects: (1=most important, 10 = least important)

Parks Projects	Average Score (1=most important)	Overall Rank
<b>Total responses: 461</b>		
Tree Planting – installation of trees in parks, public lands, and city boulevards (part of multi-year project)	3.58	1
Westminster Pier Park Expansion – westward expansion of park into lands dedicated to the City from adjacent development project.	3.94	2
Playgrounds - repair and renewal of existing playground structures	4.14	3
Park Lighting - replacement of end of life pedestrian lighting infrastructure along Westminster Quay esplanade (part of multi-year project)	4.59	4
Public Seating - small scale projects to increase availability of public seating in parks and outdoor public spaces	4.74	5
Outdoor Swimming Pools - maintenance of Hume Park Outdoor Pool to extend facility service life	5.13	6
Spray Parks – renewal of existing spray park at Hume Park	5.98	7
Artificial Turf Sport field – replacement of end of life synthetic turf playing surface at Queen’s Park East Field	6.71	8
Outdoor Fitness Equipment Stations – increase inventory of public fitness equipment across park system (part of multi-year project)	6.73	9
Sport Courts (tennis) – repair and maintenance of existing courts at Simcoe Park	7.25	10

**Question 11:** Facilities and amenities capital projects: (1=most important, 6 = least important)

Facilities and Amenities Projects	Average Score (1=most important)	Overall Rank
<b>Total responses: 460</b>		
Repairs and upgrades to existing civic buildings and facilities to keep them in a state of good repair	2.62	1
Contributions / support for affordable housing projects	2.8	2
Rehabilitation and repair to older civic buildings and facilities to extend their service life	3.23	3
Contributions / support for daycare	3.49	4
Seismic and safety upgrades to the Massey Theatre	3.99	5
Retirement of older buildings and facilities that have reached the end of their service life	4.22	6

**Question 12:** Utilities capital projects: (1=most important, 8 = least important)

Utilities Capital Projects	Average Score (1=most important)	Overall Rank
<b>Total responses: 445</b>		
Sewer separation work – creating new sewer pipes to remove stormwater from the combined sewer system (required by Province)	2.92	1
Replace aging water mains and add new water mains	3.21	2
Replace aging sewer mains and add new sewer mains	3.31	3

Maintain and expand electrical infrastructure	4.13	4
Rehabilitation and repair to sewer pump stations	4.78	5
Sapperton district energy system (renewable energy system for entire neighbourhood)	5.05	6
Replace garbage and recycling collection trucks at end of life	5.35	7
Expand Bridgenet fibre optic infrastructure	6.14	8

**Question 13:** Climate action-related capital projects: (1=most important, 4 = least important)

Climate Projects	Average Score (1=most important)	Overall Rank
<b>Total responses: 450</b>		
Building retrofit and heat pump incentive programs for property owners	2.27	1
Implement the eMobility Strategy with various initiatives such as technical support for EV charging in multi-family buildings, e-bike programs, etc.	2.28	2
Upgrades at City-owned buildings to reduce GHGs; for example, install more efficient HVAC systems when existing HVAC reaches end of life	2.39	3
Replace City fleet vehicles with EVs when vehicles reach the end of service life	2.82	4

**Question 14:** OPTIONAL: Please share any comments you may have on the City's capital budget, and the types of projects you feel should be prioritized for the benefit of the community.

*Below is a summary of the key themes across the responses. In some cases, several themes have been applied to one individual response, based on the content; this means that a single response can be counted multiple times. Note that sample comments are not edited for spelling and grammar – they are reported exactly as entered by participants.*

147 Comments		
Theme	# of Mentions	Sample Comments
Focus on infrastructure and maintaining assets	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Focus on retrofits and upgrades to existing infrastructure and facilities before adding new assets. Spending \$20M on Massey Theatre while not even addressing its poor energy efficiency and high GHG emissions is short-sighted and contradicts Climate Action goals. Every dollar poured into that facility is done at the expense of other facilities, at the expense of climate action, and at the expense of future generations.”</li> <li>• “Our city is old - dollars are needed to upgrade and maintain sewer, water and electrical.”</li> <li>• “Aging infrastructure should be prioritized to prevent disruption.”</li> <li>• "Increasing our electrical, sewer/drainage and roads needs to be maintained,. Far to many potholes on our main streets”</li> </ul>
Climate projects are a priority	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I wish there was more focus on climate action in areas that are not specifically the climate action</li> </ul>

		<p>related capital projects. Climate is going to affect playground structures, climate is going to affect water mains, climate is going to affect every single aspect of every city capital project and it should be framed that way when put to the public as WELL as when the Council considers every single project.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I definitely think there needs to be a lot of focus on climate-related upgrades and improvements and amenities.”</li> <li>• “I understand that maintaining and replacing infrastructure is most essential but I would also like to see investment in projects that increase sustainability.”</li> <li>• “Pls keep the climate crisis in mind when making these decisions. Tax the rich so the poor can live safely.”</li> </ul>
<p>Save money / defer “nice to haves”</p>	<p>18</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Urgent necessary work must be done first. If any money is left, then look to the “that would be nice” stuff.”</li> <li>• “Focus on what is needed during this time of inflation, cut back on nice to haves like paying for retrofitting and heatpumps for property owners. Try to stretch the service life of City vehicles, do they really need to be replaced this year? Think about being frugal while still providing good service. Cut back on the bells and whistles. I think the city is wasteful and could do a lot with what they have to make improvements without needing more money.”</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Cut costs. Save money. Projects should have a very quick ROI”</li> </ul>
Prioritize electric and micro-mobility	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Full support for alternative vehicle solutions such as electric scooters, electric bicycles, and electric skateboards. A city rental program for such personal electric vehicles as performed in other cities.”</li> <li>• “I drive an EV and believe any investment in electric infrastructure will provide tremendous dividends down the road.</li> <li>• “Why only technical support for EVs? How about make it mandatory for buildings to have EV chargers if you really care about climate action.”</li> </ul>
Prioritize supporting retrofits, particularly in strata properties	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Please kindly consider overriding strata bylaw to allow heat pump being installed at each owner's discretion. Heat pump is sufficient and effective in reducing heat hazard and help to slower the negative impact of climate change. It's encouraged by the Government and should not be banned by individual strata.”</li> <li>• “There needs to be viable options and incentives offered to MURBs, rental and strata (esp now that they too are rentals per recent legislative changes) for EV charging and heat pump/home cooling in suites. Currently I see very little offered to this sector of housing compared to SFD.”</li> <li>• “Would like to see multi-unit complexes afforded the same level</li> </ul>

		of support for energy efficiency upgrades as single-detached homes.”
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In addition to the themes listed above, survey respondents also made comments related to the following themes (10+ mentions):

- Prioritize investment in housing
- Invest less in climate related projects
- Prioritize parks and recreation projects
- Prioritize all types of capital investments in Queensborough
- Decisions on our prioritizing our utilities should be left to the professionals



**Question 15:** From time to **time, the City may receive additional funding that was not expected** or factored into the financial plan. For example, we sometimes receive grants from the Provincial or Federal governments, we receive a portion of Provincial gambling revenue, and we recently sold carbon credits to set up the Climate Action Reserve Fund.

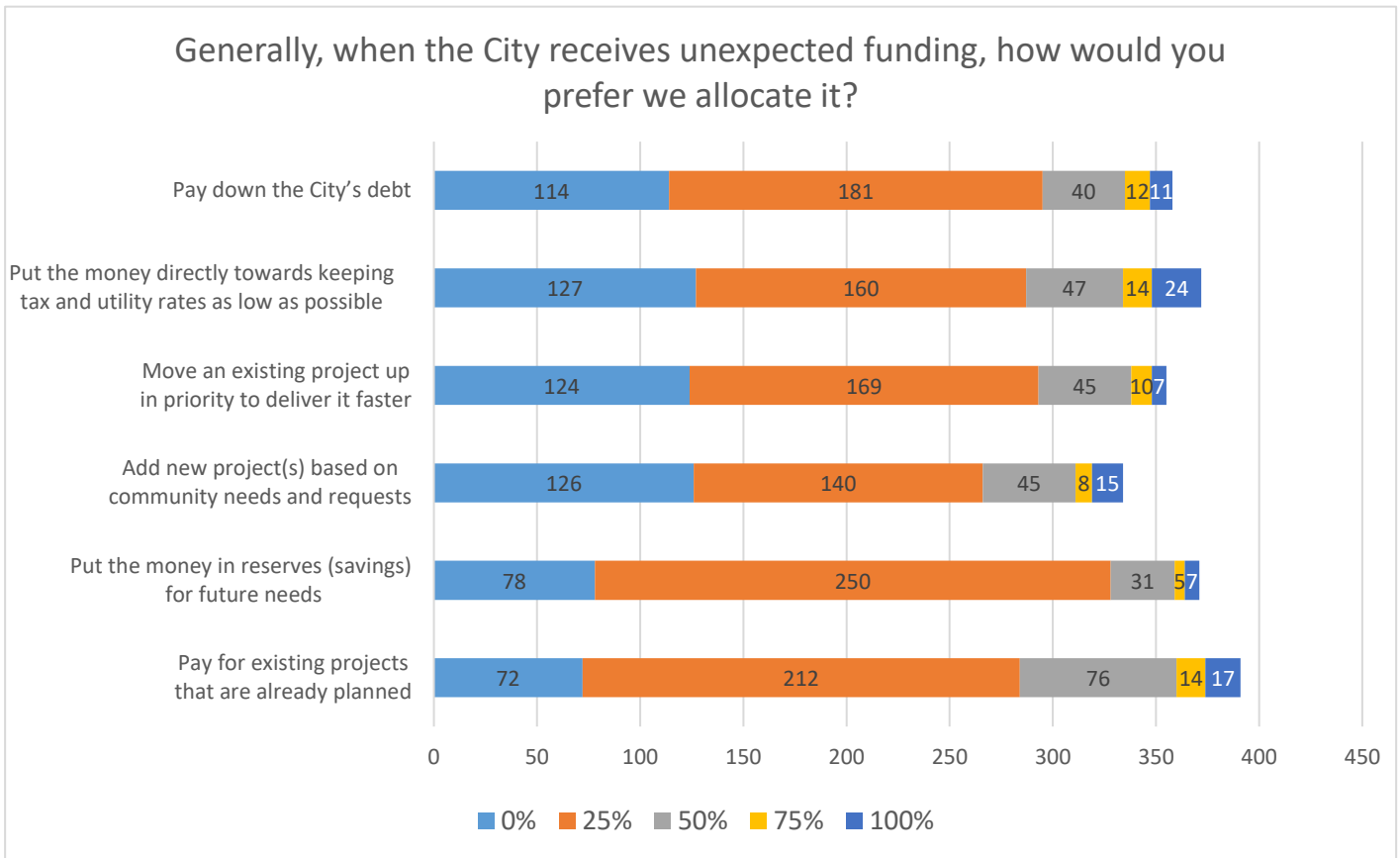
Similar to when you receive unexpected money in your household budget – i.e. a government credit, your income tax return, or a monetary gift – the City must decide how to allocate these funds. Like with your household budget, we could **spend the money on something practical** like a repair or home maintenance, **put the money into savings** for a future need, or **spend it on something we really want** (but may not need). Or, we could direct some of the money to each of those areas.

**Generally, when the City receives such funding, how would you prefer we allocate it?**

Using the table below, indicate how you would like the City to distribute any unexpected funding that may come from other levels of government or other sources. **Be sure not to allocate more than 100%!**

Options for allocation of funds	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
<b>Total responses: 467</b>					
Pay for existing projects that are already planned	72	212	76	14	17
Put the money in reserves (savings) for future needs	78	250	31	5	7
Add new project(s) based on community needs and requests	126	140	45	8	15
Move an existing project up in priority to deliver it faster	124	169	45	10	7

Put the money directly towards keeping tax and utility rates as low as possible	127	160	47	14	24
Pay down the City's debt	114	181	40	12	11



## Online Discussion Forum

Building on the online survey, an online discussion forum was also launched on the Budget 2024 Be Heard page where community members could share their thoughts publicly in real-time and discuss the budget with each other.

**The discussion forum asked participants for additional comments on the survey question about how the City should allocate any additional funding it may receive by way of grants and other funds.**

The discussion forum was open from June 2 through July 10, 2023 and received 68 contributions by 20 participants. Contributions include comments, replies, likes, and dislikes. In total, 18 comments were made by nine users (other participants only indicated likes/dislikes on the comments by these nine residents). The full discussion forum is [publicly available in full on the Be Heard page](#). A summary of the discussion is included below.

**Save money:** Comments included the need for financial prudence, pausing “non-essential” and “vanity” projects such as bike lanes, and putting money into reserves.

**Invest in transportation projects:** Suggestions included standardizing pedestrian crossings, building more bike lanes, traffic calming, better public transit, and accessible parking.

**Invest in Queensborough:** Comments focused on a need for more recreation options, active transportation infrastructure, schools, and amenities in the neighbourhood.

**Invest in climate related initiatives:** Suggestions included tree planting, supporting the vision of a 15-minute city, investing carbon credits in electrical infrastructure, and expanding district heating.

### 3. About Participants

Given the focus on targeted outreach with under-represented groups for the Budget 2024 engagement, it's important to recognize that the same demographic data is not available for all participants. Be Heard New West users provide demographic information when they register on the site, including postal code, year of birth, connections to New Westminster, and other optional details such as Indigenous identity, if they have a disability, if they were born outside of Canada, and other lived experience. This same information was not collected from the targeted outreach participants.

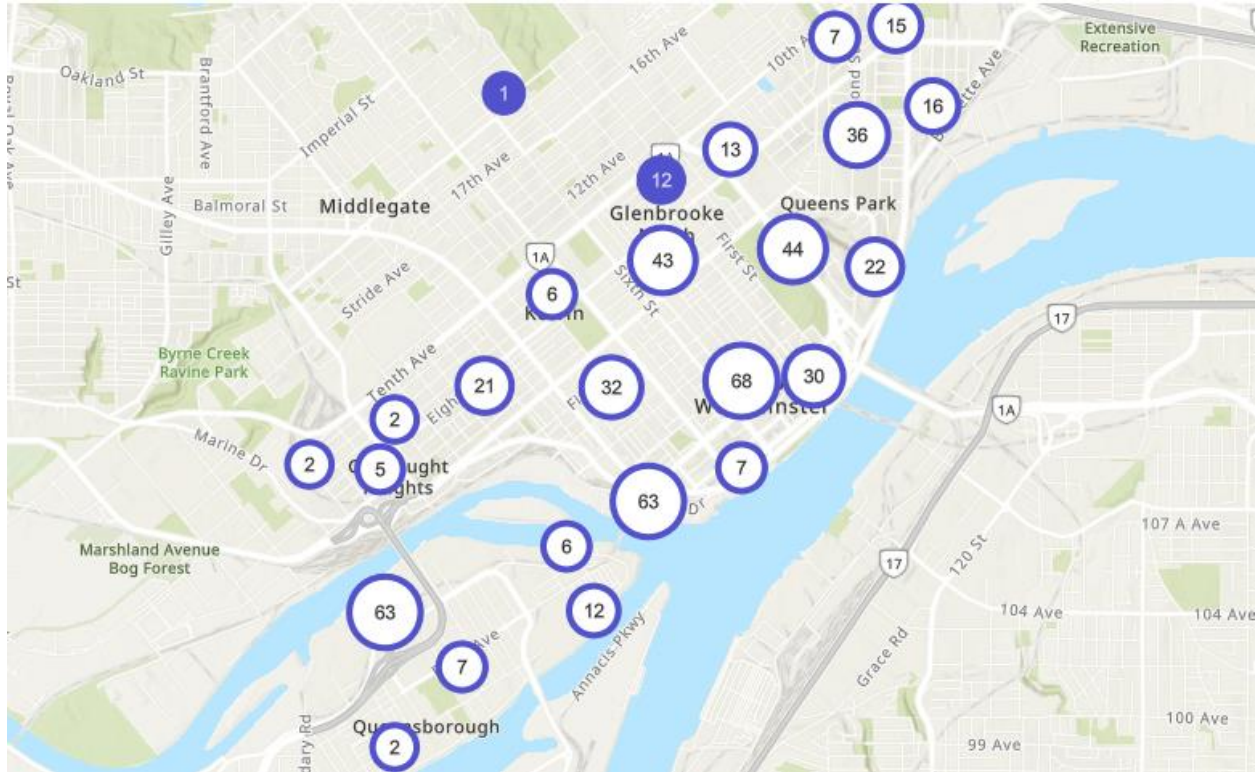
We can report on and consider the demographic profile of community members who shared input online through the survey and discussion forum; however, we cannot compare the characteristics of the full 600 participants with the Census profile of New Westminster.

Therefore, the demographic analysis below should be considered incomplete, and taken into context with the known/observed demographics of more than 100 participants in the targeted workshops and New to New West Intercultural Festival, including:

- Newcomers
- Renters (tenants)
- Racialized community members
- First language other than English
- People with lived experience of poverty / low income

## Neighbourhood Spread of Online Engagement Participants

A total of 477 Be Heard users participated in online engagement activities (survey and discussion forum) from the following areas and neighbourhoods across New Westminster:



Map of New Westminster and beyond, showing the number of Be Heard participants from different neighbourhoods / areas of the city.

## Demographic Analysis of Online Engagement Participants

Demographic analysis has been completed for 477 unique participants who shared input online on Be Heard New West. The characteristics of this group of users were compared to the most recent demographic profile of New Westminster residents from the 2021 Census.

Again, this same demographic information was not collected from participants in the targeted workshops nor the New to New West Intercultural Festival, so the demographic profile of all participants is not clear.

As we see in most City of New Westminster engagements, among online participants, residential property owners were highly over-represented (79% of online participants; 55% of residents according to Census), and tenants were highly under-represented (21% of participants; 45% of residents according to Census). An additional 1% of participants identified as being under or unhoused members of the New West community.

For age ranges of online participants, there were only five online responses from residents age 19 or younger, so this age group was highly under-represented. Ages 20-34 were also under-represented compared with 2021 Census data. Conversely, the 35-49 year old and 50-64 year old age group were over-represented. The 65+ age was similar to Census representation, within 5%.

In terms of other demographic information provided by online participants, we can compare with Census data on Indigenous, immigrant, new immigrant (arrived within past five years) and visible minority proportions of the New Westminster community. Based on this comparison, immigrants, visible minorities and newcomers were all highly under-represented amongst Be Heard participants. Indigenous people and parents of children under 18 were similar to 2021 Census representation.

### Analysis of all Participants when Including Known Characteristics of Targeted Participants

While the same data is not available for the 123 people reached through the targeted workshops and outreach, when the known demographic profiles of these groups is considered we can conclude that at least some of the over- and under-representation in online participants has been mitigated – namely, the over-representation of property owners, and under-representation of immigrants, visible minorities and newcomers have all been significantly mitigated. Residents age 19 and under remain highly under-represented among all participants.

## 4. Next Steps

This engagement summary report will be provided to Council at its August 28, 2023 regular meeting, and shared on the [Be Heard New West Budget 2024 page](#). The full workshop notes and verbatim written comments from the survey will also be posted to the Be Heard page.

As the Finance Department works with City staff across departments to develop their draft budget submissions for 2024, the engagement summary report and key highlights of community input will be reviewed, considered and incorporated into the draft budgets as much as possible. City staff will continue to reference the engagement input through Council's deliberations on the 2024 budget.

There will be a series of workshops with City Council on the 2024 budget, starting in October 2023. These workshops are open to the public to attend or watch online, and they are recorded for future public viewing. Community members are encouraged to follow along the Budget 2024 process on the Be Heard project page. The page will be updated as the process continues.