

Date: October 27, 2021	Originator's files:
To: Chair and Members of Budget Committee	
From: Shari Lichterman, CPA, CMA, Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer	Meeting date: November 22, 2021

Subject

2022 Budget Engagement Results

Recommendation

That the 2022 Budget Engagement Results report dated October 27, 2021 from the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer be received for information.

Executive Summary

- The 2022 Budget is currently focused on public safety, investing in public infrastructure and investing in our green assets.
- The City's budget process is transparent and offers residents many ways to engage. The City's 2022 Budget engagement phase ran for five weeks from September 13 to October 15.
- The campaign targeted residents based on their needs, activities and communication channel preferences in an effort to increase awareness about the City's Budget, specifically regarding the programs, services and value residents and businesses receive for their tax dollars.
- The Budget Allocator saw 964 respondents submit their opinions and preferences over a four-week engagement period from September 20 to October 15; with 272 written comments received from those using the tool.
- In total, 7,044 residents participated in the one City-wide and three ward-specific Budget Engagement Sessions. This year, 1,861 people received the session on their Facebook feed and 61 people were actively engaged (likes, comments, shares) in the session.

Background

The City's Business Planning and Budget process is an important annual activity. Each year, the City maintains its commitment to strong financial management by delivering a thoughtful, balanced and transparent budget and business plan.

The City is moving into 2022 with COVID-19 pandemic recovery plans in place and a continued commitment to good financial planning. The 2022 Budget currently focuses on public safety, investing in public infrastructure like transit and road improvements and investing in green assets. By maintaining business practices, continuing to look at streamlining opportunities and innovations, the City adapts to an ever-changing environment and prioritizes resources where they are needed most.

Budget engagement is an important element in the budget process as it offers residents the opportunity to share their feedback on the City's spending. During the Budget engagement period, residents, businesses and community groups are asked to share their comments and feedback about the budget with Council and City staff, using the budget allocator tool, by joining a budget engagement session, on social media, attending a Budget Committee meeting (in person or virtually) or via [Mississauga.ca/budget](https://mississauga.ca/budget).

Through these engagement activities, members of Council gain valuable insight into community priorities and needs. Over the past several years, the City has seen increased interest from residents and businesses regarding the Budget, which has built trust and confidence in City decision-making.

The City's Budget shapes and directs how our city works and funds more than 200 City services that residents and businesses rely on each day.

Feedback from the public helps inform and guide Budget discussions and decisions.

Comments

Overall, the 2022 Budget Engagement campaign results were comparable to previous Budget engagement campaigns – seeing ongoing interest from residents and businesses to share their input and feedback. This year's campaign ran for five weeks (weeks from September 13 to October 15) aligned to report schedules and Committee meeting dates (the 2021 Budget campaign ran for six weeks last year).

A targeted multi-phased strategy was implemented that used multiple channels and tactics to ensure residents received budget information that was clear, timely, relevant and accessible on multiple platforms. The engagement approach considered residents' preferences on how they would like to receive information about the 2022 Budget (e.g., social media channel, print, and website). To raise awareness and interest among the City's diverse audiences, staff leveraged

media relations, social media, digital outreach, advertising (including multicultural) throughout the engagement period.

Engagement and Consultation

The City's 2022 Budget engagement process offered many ways for residents and businesses to learn about, engage with and provide their feedback about the proposed budget.

Budget Engagement Tactics	Metrics (As of October 15)
Advertising & Promotion	Print Ads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse Communities Print Ad: circulation of 207,750 Mississauga News (English) Print Ad: circulation 139,000 Online Ads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmatic Ads (English and multicultural): impressions 1,041,659; Clicks; 1055; Click through rate: 0.10%
Print and Digital Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eBlast (standalone story specifically regarding Budget) to City Subscribers: sent to 32,025 subscribers; open rate: 31.24% eNewsletter Story Distribution: sent to 64,333; 166 viewed the Budget stories Stay Connected Newsletter: 232,000 newsletters are being distributed Budget Website (unique visits): 4,833 unique pages views Budget Allocator: 964 respondents; 272 comments
Social Media Channels <i>Corporate Channel: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram & LinkedIn</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 82 posts on the Corporate social media channels (72 organic posts; 10 ads) 1,025,701 impressions 7,286 engagements 1,222 video views (Mayor's video – social media)
311 <i>Inquiries and information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquiries and information requests to 311 (telephone/email): 8 budget inquires
Media Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 news releases issued: reach of 10,480,322; 99 per cent neutral coverage
Budget Engagement Sessions	Budget Engagement Sessions* (City-wide and three ward-specific sessions): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7,044 residents participated in the City-wide and three ward-specific Budget Engagement Sessions This year, 1,861 people received the session on their Facebook feeds and 61 people were actively engaged (likes, comments, shares) in the session

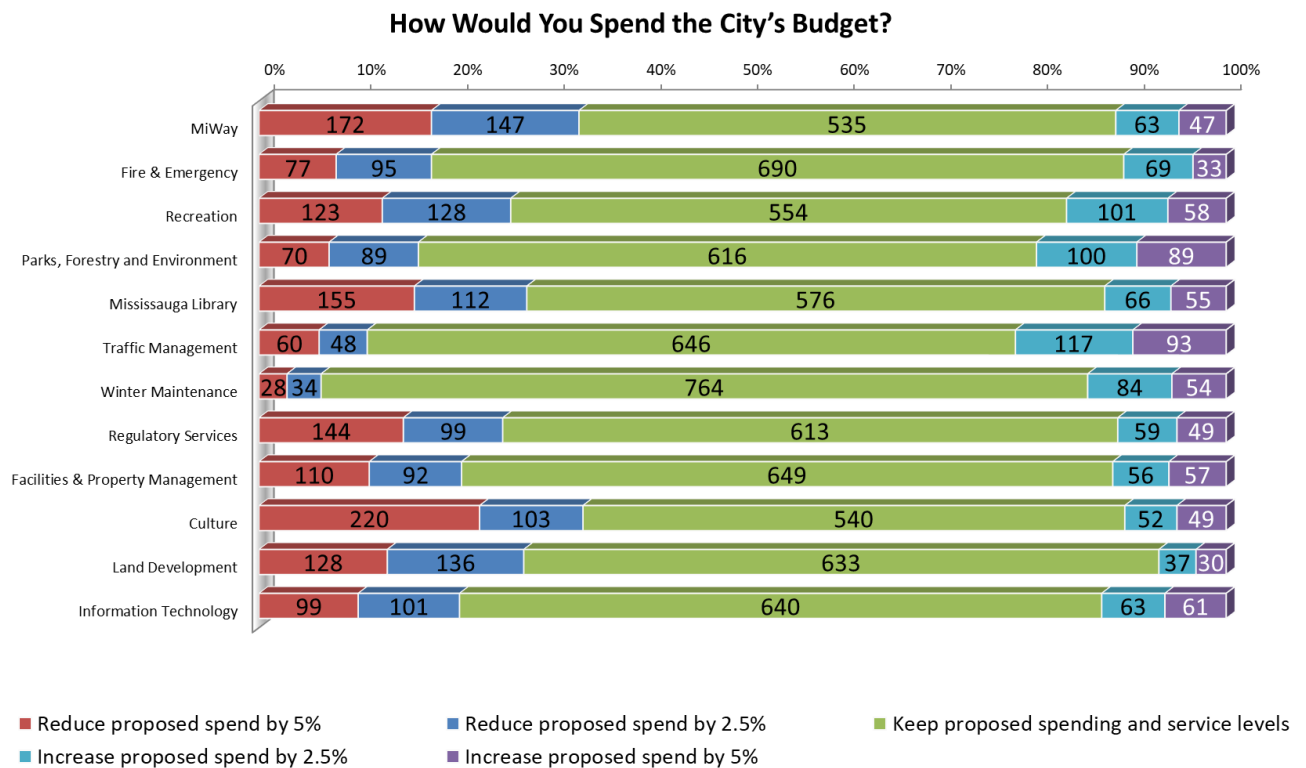
Budget Allocator (Service Area results appear in Appendix 1; comments appear in Appendix 2)

The online budget allocator tool helped taxpayers understand where property tax dollars go and how spending decisions affect the more than 200 City services – like transit, roads, winter maintenance and fire and emergency services.

- 964 participants completed the 2022 Budget Allocator Tool
- 272 comments were received; 32 per cent of comments were about MiWay and Roads

Trends/Observations

- 79 per cent of respondents proposed to maintain spending on Winter Maintenance
- 22 per cent of respondents proposed to increase spending on Traffic Management
- 20 per cent of respondents proposed to increase spending on Parks, Forestry & Environment
- Overall - participants leaned towards either keeping proposed funding or increasing it for services such as Fire, Parks, Forestry & Environment, Winter Maintenance and Traffic Management and decreasing funding for Culture, Library, Recreation and MiWay



In completing the allocator, respondents provided comments in the following service areas:

Topic	Comments	Percentage
MiWay	51	19%
Roads (Traffic Management and Winter Maintenance)	36	13%
Culture	26	10%
Fire and Emergency Services	26	10%
Library	24	9%
Recreation	24	9%
Land Development Services	20	7%
Information Technology	18	6%
Regulatory Services	18	6%
Parks, Forestry and Environment	16	6%
Facilities and Property Management	13	5%
Total	272	100%

Budget Allocator Tool Demographic Information

This year, we invited residents to share some additional information (e.g., race, age and income level) about themselves to help us understand their spending priorities for City services and programs.

One of our principles for meaningful engagement within the Council-adopted Community Engagement Strategy is inclusivity. It is the City's goal to ensure that participation reflects the diversity of our city by collecting demographic information to understand more about who is engaging with us.

Of the 964 participants who completed the Budget Allocator tool, 917 participants chose to complete the demographic survey (95 per cent of users) as part of the allocator tool.

- 709 were residential property owners
- 4 own only a commercial property
- 24 own both commercial/residential
- 180 did not own any property

The top three ethnic groups to complete the survey were White (European), South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Indo-Caribbean, Bangladeshi) and other. The majority of survey participants were between the ages of 45 and 55, whose household income was \$100,000-149,000 before taxes.

Next Steps

As Budget Committee receives and deliberates the proposed 2022 Budget, City digital channels, media and social media will continue to promote:

- updates during budget deliberations
- the approaching Council budget vote
- Council approval of the 2022 Business Plan & Budget

Stormwater Charge Campaign Update

At the June 2021 Budget Committee meeting, Council noted an opportunity to clarify the City's Stormwater Charge for residents, many of whom perceive it as a tax. The City's Stormwater Charge is a 'user-paid' charge for residential and commercial property owners that is separate from the property tax. The amount charged is calculated based on how much stormwater runs off the property.

This dedicated fund helps the City construct new stormwater infrastructure and replace and maintain its existing stormwater infrastructure, valued at \$5.29 billion.

In August 2021, the Stormwater team partnered with the Strategic Communications & Initiatives team to launch a proactive education campaign. It helped to raise awareness and inform Mississauga residents and businesses about the City's Stormwater Charge, the benefits it provides to prevent flooding and erosion and how the charge supports stormwater infrastructure, operations and maintenance.

The following were used to share these messages:

- Social Media (City's corporate channels and Stormwater channel)
- Media Stories
- Inserts into the Region of Peel water bills (electronic and print)
- City-wide Print Newsletter – *Stay Connected*
- eNewsletter story
- Videos (three which ran on the City's social media channels including the City's website)
- Content update on the Stormwater web pages

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact as Budget engagement was included in the 2021 Budget.

Conclusion

The findings from the 2022 Budget Engagement outreach efforts, primarily received through the Budget Allocator tool, show that the majority of respondents agree with the City's funding allocation within the proposed 2022 Budget. The results also confirm the desire of many residents to be engaged in the City's budget process. As we move into the future, a thorough review of the Budget engagement activities will be done to ensure the City continues to engaged residents and business in a thoughtful manner and to receive input and feedback that can help to inform budget discussions and deliberations.

Attachments

Appendix 1: 2022 Budget Allocator Service Area Results

Appendix 2: 2022 Budget Allocator Comments



Shari Lichterman, CPA, CMA, Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer

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