



Staff Report to Council - for Information

Title: 2024 Budget Survey Analysis

From: Edward Henley, Director of Corporate Services

Date: December 14, 2023

Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

Report Summary:

In September 2023 respondents from all municipalities across Bruce County provided valuable feedback about the 2024 County budget through an online survey. The implementation of the public survey was in line with the new Strategic Plan commitment to implement public consultation for the County budget.

Initial insights were shared as part of the budget discussions on October 12th, 2023 and considered in the creation of the 2024 budget. The report that follows and the attachment provide a summary of some key findings as well as a summarization of the common themes found in the open-ended responses provided.

Background:

The 2024 budget survey had 380 respondents, with 158 respondents opting to provide open-ended feedback. As discussed in the budget presentations, responses to the directed questions indicate that there is an opportunity to improve public understanding of what Bruce County taxes pay for. Improvements in this area may positively impact the value respondents feel they receive for their tax dollars and position the community to provide more feedback in the future.

The respondents recognized the importance of setting aside funding for infrastructure replacement. The 2024 budget acted on this by increasing transfers to capital reserves by over \$2.7 million in 2024 and working to sustain higher contribution levels in the 2025 to 2028 projected periods.

The top themes identified from the open-ended feedback included a desire for investment in infrastructure, roads, bridges, and winter maintenance, a need for affordable housing, a desire for continued pursuit of good governance and sound fiscal responsibility, and continued support for health care, including long term care, senior services, and paramedic services.

Bruce County will continue to welcome public feedback annually to inform the Bruce County budget.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

The information received as part of the budget survey was used to guide the decisions of staff and council for the 2024 budget and as the county moves forward.

There are no staffing, legal or IT considerations.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

The Corporate Services department has worked closely with the CAO's department and Human Services Data Analysis Coordinator to understand the common themes of the survey and summarize the information in a useful format.

Results of the survey have been shared with Senior Management in order to guide budgeting and decision-making processes. Following the presentation of this report the results will also be circulated to our local municipal partners and external stakeholders.

Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Growth and Innovation - Promote responsible growth

Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:

The 2024 Budget Survey represents the first steps in undergoing public consultation as part of the county's annual budgeting process.

Report Author:

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Departmental Approval:

Edward Henley, Director of Corporate Services

Approved for Submission:

Derrick Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer