



# City of Port Moody

## Report to Finance Committee

Date: March 24, 2023  
Submitted by: Finance and Technology Department – Financial Services Division  
Subject: 2023 Budget Consultation Summary

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### Purpose

To provide the Finance Committee with a summary of the results from the public consultation undertaken for the 2023-2027 Five-Year Financial Plan.

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### Recommended Resolution(s)

**THAT the report dated March 24, 2023 from the Finance and Technology Department – Financial Services Division regarding 2023 Budget Consultation Summary be received for information.**

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### Executive Summary

The 2023 Budget Consultation was facilitated through [engage.portmoody.ca](https://engage.portmoody.ca), the City's online engagement hub where participants register to learn about the City's plans and projects, share ideas, and provide feedback. Between February 28 and March 19, 2023, participants had access to the annual budget survey, budget resource information, FAQs, and could pose questions and comments to staff.

377 individuals completed the online survey and 183 (49%) individuals provided feedback or comments for Council members.

- 72% of survey respondents indicated that they received good (62%) or excellent (10%) value in relation to the taxes and utility fees that they pay.
- 45% of survey respondents wanted to maintain current service levels through a tax increase.
- 28% of respondents wanted to keep tax rate the same as last year through reduced services levels; in contrast, 14% wanted enhanced service levels through a larger tax increase.
- 56% of respondents said to leave subsidies and user fees the way they are (no change), while 25% wanted decreased subsidies so users pay more than they do now, while 8% wanted to increase subsidies so users pay less than they do now.

## Background

The City utilized its digital public engagement platform for the 2023 budget consultation. The annual budget survey, budget resource information, and FAQs were posted on the project page, and staff answered questions from community members. The Engage Port Moody hub allowed Council to see questions and comments from the community as they were posted.

Staff introduced the 2023 Financial Plan to the Finance Committee on February 21, 2023, where the following resolution was passed:

FC23/004 THAT the report dated February 9, 2023 from the Finance and Technology Department – Financial Services Division regarding the Draft 2023-2027 Financial Plan – Operating Budget be received for information;

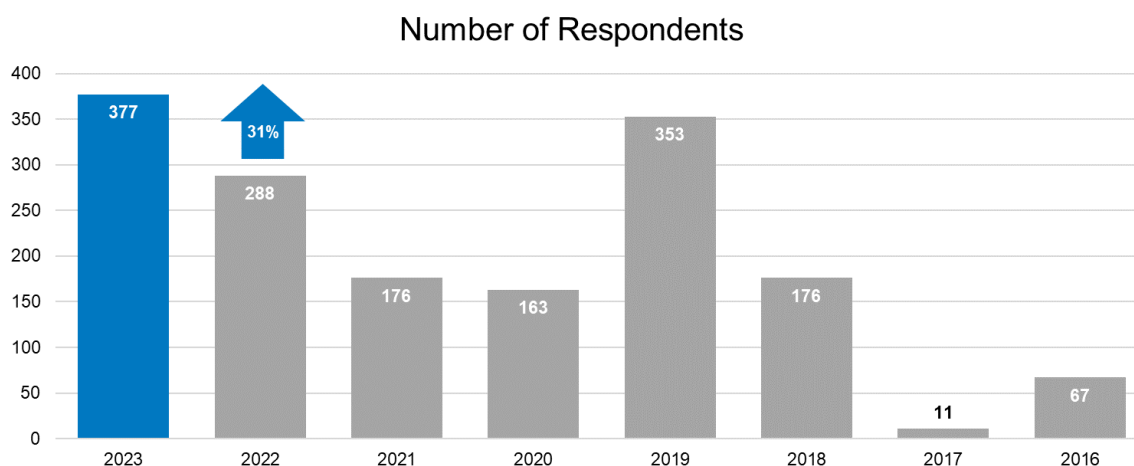
AND THAT a draft proposed budget increase of \$5,496,000, which represents an estimated 11.33% tax rate increase, be used for the City's 2023 Public Budget Consultation.

## Discussion

The full public engagement summary can be found in **Attachment 1**.

### Public Engagement Process

Feedback was invited from February 28 to March 19, 2023, through Engage Port Moody, the City's online public engagement hub. The City received 377 survey responses, of which 347 (92%) were from residents and 30 (8%) were from businesses. 2023 public budget consultation had a record high participation rate, with a 31% increase over 2022 and surpassed our previous record of 353 (2019).

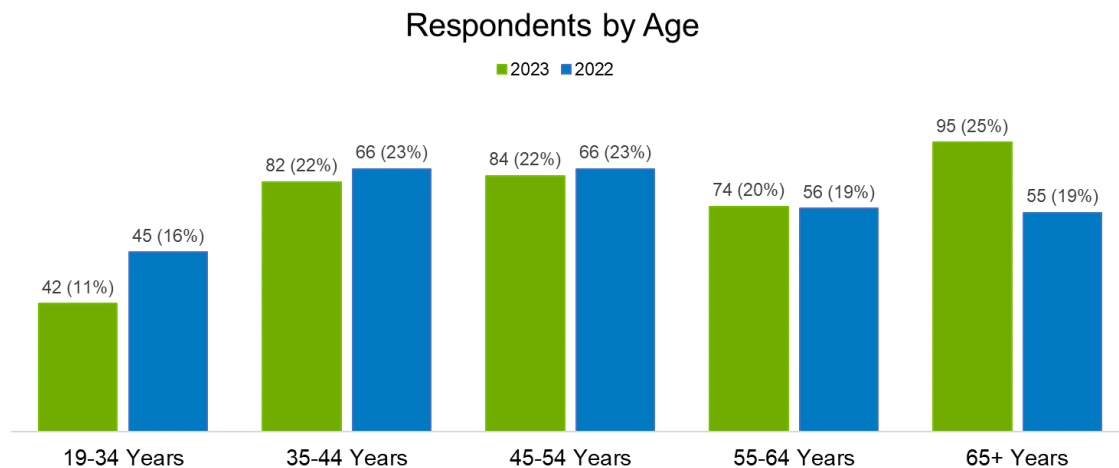


Public engagement highlights from [engage.portmoody.ca/2023budget](https://engage.portmoody.ca/2023budget):

- 377 engaged participants contributed to one or more feedback tools
- 686 informed participants visited multiple project pages, contributed to a tool, or downloaded documents
- 1,000 aware visitors viewed this project page

### Respondents by Age

The age of respondents was fairly consistent with 2022. However, 2023 saw an increase in respondents aged 65 years and older, and a small decrease in respondents aged 19-34 years.



### Respondents by Neighbourhood

In 2023, the City received a decreases in respondents (as a percentage) from:

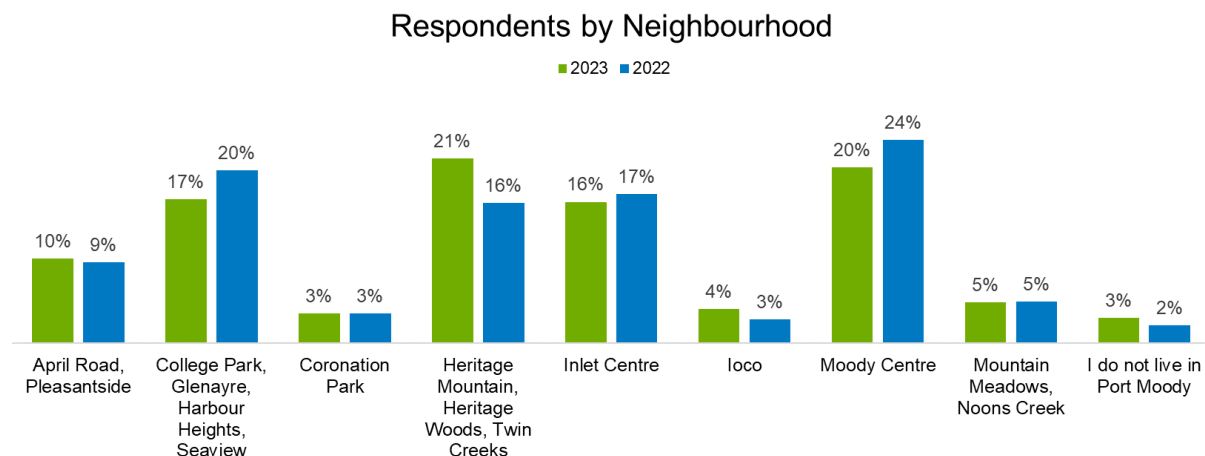
- College Park, Glenayre, Harbour Heights, Seaview;
- Inlet; and
- Moody Centre.

The City received an increase in respondents (as a percentage) from:

- April Road, Pleasantside;
- Heritage Mountain, Heritage Woods, Twin Creeks;
- Ioco; and
- Non-residents.

The City received consistent in respondents (as a percentage) from:

- Coronation Park; and
- Mountain Meadows, Noons Creek.



## Key Findings:

### Overall value of City services and programs relative to tax and utility fees paid

72% indicated that they receive excellent (10%) or good (62%) value for City services and programs. This finding is slightly down from 2022 survey findings which 73% felt they received excellent (10%) or good (63%) value.

### How to balance service levels and tax rates (general)

45% of respondents wanted to maintain current service levels through a tax increase, and 14% wanted to enhance service levels through a larger tax increase. These percentages were lower than 2022, which found 49% of respondents wanting to maintain current service levels through a tax increase, and only 12% wanting to enhance service levels through a larger tax increase.

28% of respondents wanted to reduce service levels to keep the tax level the same as last year, which is a slight increase from 27% in 2022. 8% of respondents wanted service level reduced further to achieve a reduction in the tax rate, which is 2% higher than 2022 (6%).

5% of respondents were not sure how Council should balance service levels and tax rates, which is slightly lower than 2022 (6%).

### How to balance service levels and tax rates (for specific service areas)

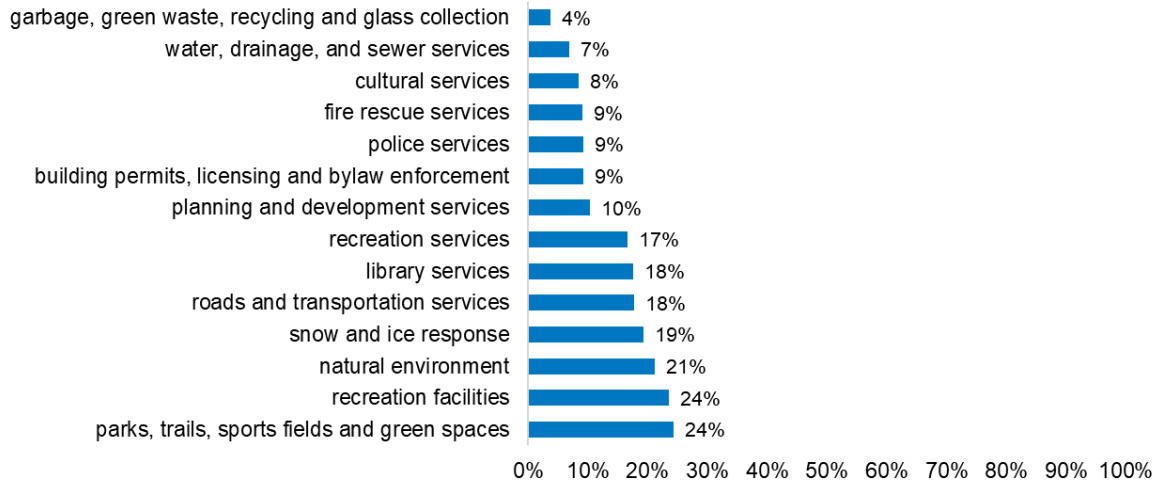
Respondents were asked a series of questions about how Council should balance service levels and tax rates for specific service areas. Dollar figures (based on the average residential property) were included for the proposed 2023 budget and for the approved 2022 budget.

Response options included:

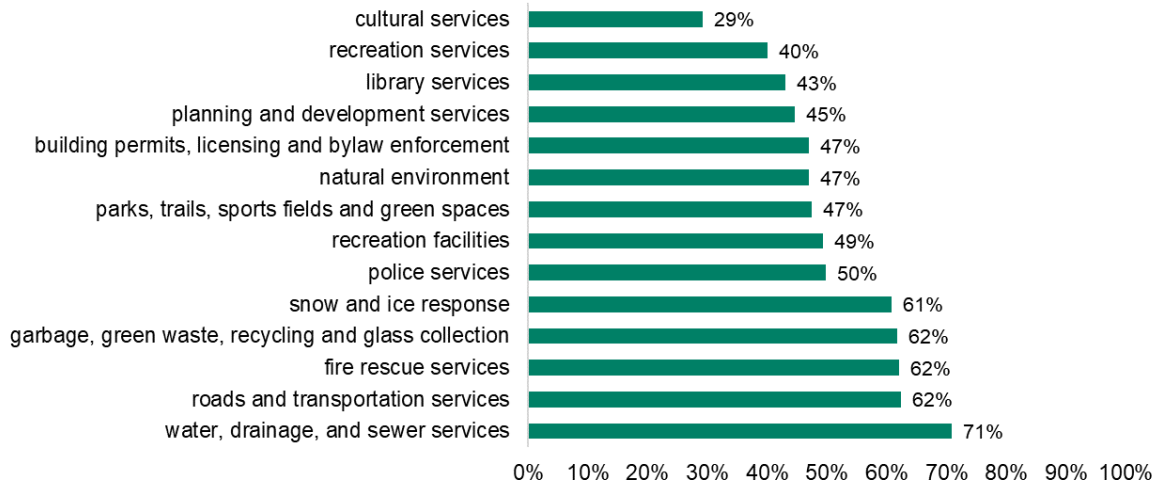
- Enhance service levels by collecting a larger dollar amount
- Maintain current service levels by collecting the proposed dollar amount for 2023
- Reduce service levels by collecting the same dollar amount as in 2022
- Further reduce service levels by collecting a lower dollar amount than in 2022
- Not sure

Below are summary charts of aggregated information based on the five response options for the 14 service areas. **Attachment 1** presents the five responses options by specific service area.

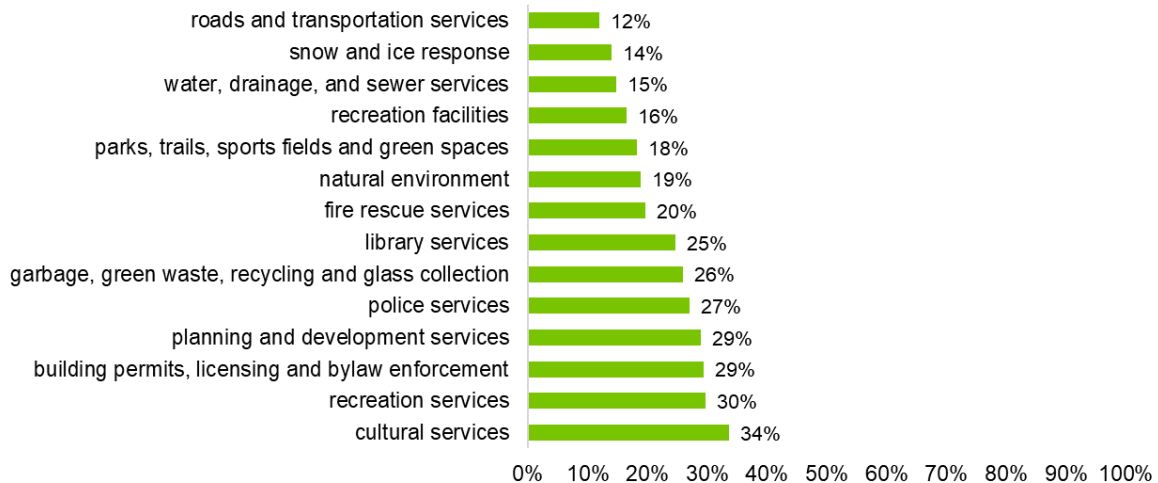
### Enhance service levels by collecting a larger dollar amount



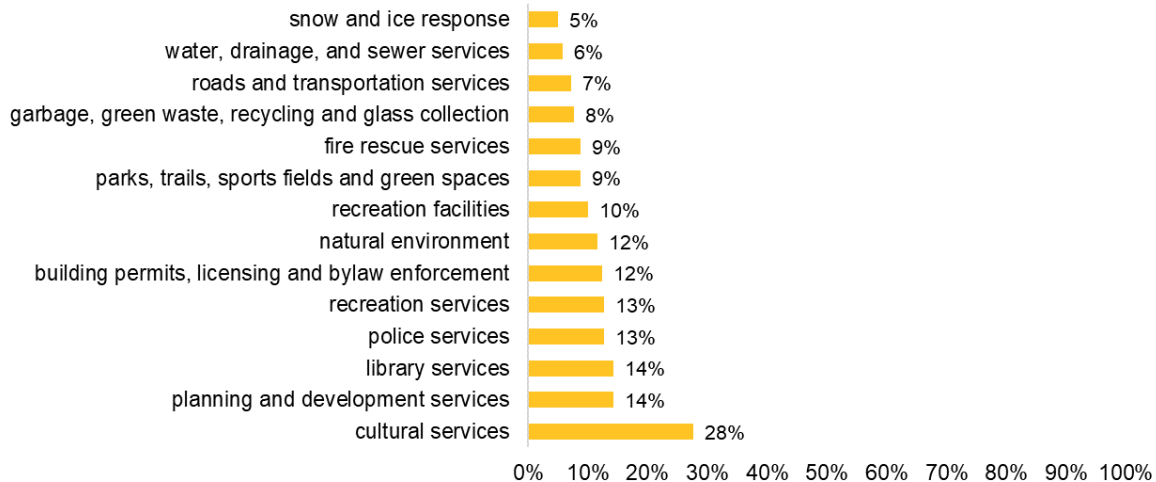
### Maintain current service levels by collecting the proposed dollar amount for 2023



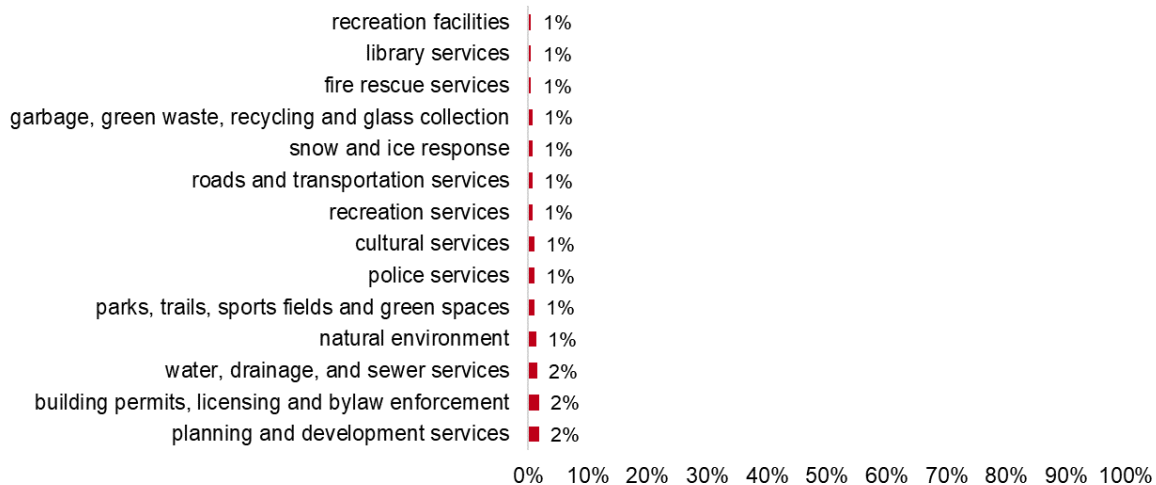
### Reduce service levels by collecting the same dollar amount as in 2022



### Further reduce service levels by collecting a lower dollar amount than in 2022



### Not sure



### Subsidies and User Fees

56% of respondents wanted the City to leave subsidies and user fees the way they are. 8% said to increase subsidies so users pay less than they do now, while 25% said to decrease subsidies so users pay more than they do now. 6% said to remove subsidies entirely so users pay the full cost, and 5% were not sure how Council should subsidize City programs.

### Qualitative Comments

Survey respondents were asked: If you would like to see service levels **enhanced** in one or more of the City's service areas, please tell us which specific services or programs you think should be added or improved. The most common themes that emerged include the following:

- Protecting and expanding green space, parks, fields, trails, playgrounds, off-leash dog parks, as well as enhancing active transportation opportunities.
- Enhancing our recreation services, library space and services, and expanding on the work we do as a "City of the Arts"

Survey respondents were asked: If you would like to see service levels **reduced** in one or more of the City's service areas, please tell us which specific services or programs you think should be cut or scaled back. The most common themes that emerged include the following:

- Reducing spending in non-essential services and finding efficiencies in how the City provides services.
- Reducing spending in cultural services, particularly City-funded festivals and events.
- Reducing spending in police and fire rescue services.

Survey respondents were given an opportunity to provide additional comments about the 2023-2027 Budget (see **Attachment 1** for sample excerpts). Some of the themes that arose from those comments include:

- Reducing expenses through amalgamation, and generating revenue through other avenues such as paid parking, developer contributions, and economic development.
- Addressing the state of the City's infrastructure, facilities, and transportation networks, especially in light of new developments.
- Easing the tax burden on taxpayers.

### 2022 Citizen Survey

Regardless of the number of survey respondents, staff feel it is also useful to reference the most recent Ipsos Reid Citizen Survey (2022). Between April 12, 2022 and May 13, 2022 feedback was received from 988 Port Moody residents through a telephone survey of randomly-selected respondents and an online survey submitted by self-selected respondents (**Attachment 2**).

Key findings from the 2022 Citizen Survey – Financial Planning section include:

- Perceptions of the City's value for taxes  
Overall, 83% of citizens say they receive "very good value" (14%) or "fairly good value" (70%) for the taxes they pay to the City of Port Moody. Overall perceptions (combined "very/fairly good value" responses) are down 6% from 2018, and the intensity of ratings (e.g., "very good value") is down 12%. While overall perceptions remain on par with the municipal norm, the percentage saying they receive "very good value" for their municipal taxes in Port Moody is lower than average.
- Recreation and traffic top citizens' list of service improvements  
When asked on an open-ended basis which City programs and services they would most like to see improved, the two most frequent responses are "recreation" (14%) and "traffic congestion" (13%), consistent with 2018. Other mentions include "planning/land use/City growth management" (9%, up 6%), "arts and culture (heritage, music, etc.)" (9%, up 5%), and "parks/greenspace/trails" (8%, no change). Nearly one quarter (24%) are unable to identify any specific City programs or services in need of improvement (includes 21% saying "none/nothing" and 3% saying "don't know").
- Citizens continue to prefer tax increases over service cuts  
When given the choice between increased taxes or reduced services, 52% of citizens opt for tax increases while 38% say they would prefer service cuts. Specifically, 17% say "increase taxes to enhance or expand services" and 35% say "increase taxes to maintain services at current levels" compared to 29% saying "cut services to maintain current tax level" and 10% saying "cut services to reduce taxes". The preference for tax

increases over service cuts is consistent with 2018; however, with slightly fewer saying increase taxes and slightly more saying cut services, the gap separating the two options has narrowed this year. It is also less than the municipal norm.

- Most citizens do not have any suggestions for non taxation revenue generating ideas  
Of the suggestions that are provided, paid parking and reduced spending top the list. Overall, 57% of citizens are unable to offer any specific suggestions for non taxation revenue generating ideas that they would like City Council to consider (includes 51% “none/nothing” and 6% “don’t know”). Of the open-ended suggestions that are provided, the two most frequently mentioned responses are “more parking meters/paid parking” (6%, on par with 2018) and “reduce spending (includes reduce staff/salaries)” (6%, up 3%).

## Other Option(s)

If directed, staff could conduct further consultation with the public regarding the 2023 Financial Plan; however, the Five-Year Financial Plan and corresponding Tax Rates Bylaw must be adopted by Council prior to May 15, 2023.

## Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with the receipt of this report for information. However, the consultation could be used to increase or reduce the proposed tax rate increase.

## Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

Public engagement for the 2023 Budget Consultation was facilitated through [engage.portmoody.ca](https://engage.portmoody.ca), an online platform where participants register to learn about plans and projects, share ideas, and provide feedback. Participants could take a survey and ask a question.

Opportunities for public engagement were promoted through:

- in person promotion at the Mayor’s Town Hall on Snow and Ice Response;
- a newspaper ad that ran March 2 and 9;
- posts and reminders on the City’s social media channels;
- an eNewsletter that was emailed to 2500+ participants registered on Engage Port Moody;
- an email invitation to participate was sent to the Citizens Advisory Group;
- a media release;
- a news items posted on the City’s website, with email alert to those registered;
- a feature box on the home page of the City website; and
- a digital ad posted on both Pattison digital billboards as well as to the Newport digital sign.

While public engagement results may provide the City with valuable information, please note the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of all Port Moody residents.

## Council Strategic Plan Objectives

The 2023 Budget Consultation aligns with Council's strategic priority of Exceptional Service – Provide exceptional service to our residents, businesses, and stakeholders, by encouraging open communication, partnerships, and a 'can do attitude' and the objective and action of providing the public with transparent and open government, and opportunities to provide input on City issues. The Budget Consultation also aligned with the following:

- increased access to City information;
- commit to effective public engagement; and
- encouraging public participation.

## Attachment(s)

1. Attachment 1 – 2023 Budget Consultation – Public Engagement Summary
2. Attachment 2 – 2022 Ipsos Reid (excerpts)

## Report Author

Tyson Ganske, CPA, CGA  
Manager of Financial Planning

## Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2023 Budget Consultation.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - 2023 Budget Consultation – Public Engagement Summary.pdf - Attachment 2 - 2022 Ipsos Reid (excerpts).pdf
Final Approval Date:	Mar 30, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Mar 26, 2023 - 7:48 AM

Stephanie Lam, City Clerk and Manager of Legislative Services - Mar 27, 2023 - 9:37 AM

Lindsay Todd, Manager of Communications and Engagement - Mar 27, 2023 - 10:48 AM

Tim Savoie, City Manager - Mar 30, 2023 - 2:11 PM