

A green icon representing a budget, featuring a dollar sign, a calculator, and a stack of papers.

2023 Budget

Appendix A: Consultation Summary Report
Draft 2023 Budget
March 2023

Background

The City's Draft 2023 Budget includes a Five-Year Draft Financial Plan (2023 – 2027) and a 10-Year Capital Plan for Council's consideration, focusing on public safety, infrastructure investment and water upgrades.

This year's municipal budget is forecasting a 5.0 per cent tax rate, which includes a 1.7 per cent increase for police services costs and 1.0 per cent for critical infrastructure. Each year, as part of the budget process, our community is encouraged to provide feedback, share ideas and rank priorities. During this consultation process, it is important for Council to hear from the community to align existing and future Strategic Priorities with the budget and other planning initiatives.

Summary

Public input was open from **Feb. 7 through to Feb. 16** and included, for the first time, a combination of in-person and online opportunities for community members to help shape the City's budget. The primary goal was to hear from the West Kelowna community to understand priorities, preferred measures for taxation and level of understanding of the information presented.

The consultation provided multiple ways to get involved. The community was invited to share their priorities at an Open House or on [OurWK.ca/2023Budget](https://www.ourwk.ca/2023Budget), ask questions and learn more about the budget process and complete a questionnaire. Paper copies of the questionnaire and Budget Open House Display Boards were also available at the Open Houses, City Hall or available by request by emailing info@westkelownacity.ca or calling the Communications and Engagement Department at 778-797-1234.

Results of what we heard are highlighted in this report and reflect the opinions of those that participated. For complete results and comments from questionnaire respondents, see **Attachment B: Questionnaire Response Report and Ideas Report**.



Online and in-person engagement

Throughout the consultation period, the City’s engagement platform, [OurWK.ca](https://ourwk.ca) gained 15 new registrants and has a total of 569 active users as part of the City’s online engagement community.

The methods to provide input included:

- **OurWK.ca/2023Budget** with a reciprocal link from the City’s website westkelownacity.ca
 - Review the Display Boards
 - Online questionnaire
 - Ask us a question
 - Contribute an idea
- **In-person Open Houses (2):**
 - February 8, 2023 – Lakeview Heights Community Hall, 860 Anders Road, West Kelowna, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
 - February 15, 2023 – West Kelowna Yacht Club, 6111 Gellatly Road, West Kelowna, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
 - Attendees invited to speak to staff and Council members in attendance to discuss the budget, the 10-Year Capital Plan and 2023 capital projects.
 - Invited to complete a printed questionnaire



What we heard

With the return of in-person engagement for Budget consultation for the first time since 2019, the drop-in format for the sessions had a total of 42 people attend.

Dates, Time and Location	Top Themes	Attendees
Budget Open House #1 February 8 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. Lakeview Heights Community Centre, 860 Anders Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many projects on the go? • Why increase needed for Fire dept when we have no high-rise buildings started/scheduled • Funds better spent on making roads safer 	15
Budget Open House #2 February 15 4 p.m. - 8 p.m. West Kelowna Yacht Club, 4111 Gellatly Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about not enough funds in water reserves • Water plants should have life cycle depreciation plan • Request for more help for seniors • Pickleball courts resurfacing • Growth for JBMAC – too small for size of CWK. Start donation campaign. 	27

In total, we received 47 submissions of the questionnaire (44 online submissions and 3 paper copies). It is important to note that responses could be completed anonymously and participants were not required to answer all questions.



Questionnaire highlights:

Based on reviewing the Draft 2023 Budget material, how well do you understand the City's revenue, expenses, the services the City provides, the proposed tax increase, etc.?

- 89.1 % said they reasonably understand (41 people)

Municipal property taxes are the primary way to pay for services provided by the City of West Kelowna. Due to the increased cost of maintaining current service levels and infrastructure, the City must balance taxation and service delivery levels. Which of the following five options would you suggest we pursue?

- 33% selected increase taxes to enhance expanded services increase (15 people)
- 24% said the City should pursue introducing cost recovery through user pay fees to reduce taxes (11 people)
- 22% said cut additional programs and services to reduce taxes (10 people)
- 16% said cut services to maintain current tax level (7 people)
- 18% said increase taxes to maintain services at current levels (8 people)

**Note, respondents of printed questionnaires selected more than one option for this question totalling more than 47 responses.*

When asked to rank services and infrastructure from 1 (being the highest priority) to 9 (being the lowest priority) respondents ranked the following:

1. Water
2. Fire services
3. Parks, recreation and/or facilities
4. Police services
5. Road improvements
6. Road maintenance (e.g., snow removal, pothole repair)
7. Sidewalks
8. Sewers
9. Development Services (e.g., business licensing, development applications)

When asked what is most important regarding financial planning at the City:

- 66% balance savings contributions and borrowing (29 people)
- 27% increase savings in reserves for capital projects and borrow less (12 people)
- 3% other (see Appendix B for more information)

In evaluating communications methods as part of the consultation process, 83% of respondents said they agreed or somewhat agreed they had an opportunity to share their views accurately.



How we connected

In addition to the broader outreach initiatives, stakeholders, including direct invitation to Neighbourhood Associations, were also notified about the public engagement opportunities using several notification methods – all of which included the link to the online engagement website ([OurWK.ca/2023Budget](https://www.ourwk.ca/2023Budget)) and the email address (info@westkelownacity.ca).

During the engagement period, we interacted with the public and stakeholders in a variety of ways:

- 515 visitors to the online engagement platform, [OurWK.ca/2023Budget](https://www.ourwk.ca/2023Budget)
- 219 people were informed (clicked through the content)
- 423 people were aware (visited at least one page)
- 47 people completed the questionnaire (3 paper copies received)
- 11 total contributions to the Ideas tool

Who we heard from



47

questionnaires
received on **OurWK.ca**



11

ideas contributed



5

emails received

How we connected



515

total visitors to online
engagement platform
OurWK.ca



2,041

unique pageviews to
City's main webpage

2

e-News update issued
and direct notification to
residents' associations



Aware: **423** (viewed the project page)
Informed: **219** (clicked through content)
Engaged: **51** (questions/comments made)



3,611

recipients of e-News

Social media interactions



3,178

total social media
impressions



857 views our posts



1,420 viewed our posts



1,035 viewed our posts



Social media

Weekly posts were shared on the City's social media channels to create awareness of the engagement and how to participate, including: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. During the engagement period, nine posts were shared across all channels.



Highlights:

- 3,178 total social media impressions
- Facebook: 857 post views, 52 engaged with the post (likes, comments, shares, reactions)
- Twitter: 1,420 post views, 41 engaged with the post (likes, retweets, comments)
- Instagram: 1,035 post views, 19 likes



Print and digital advertising

During the engagement period, we ran two print newspaper ads in the local West Kelowna weekly paper, WestK News, to promote the engagement period.

To further inform our community, two digital signs were also placed at the intersection of Bartley and Highway 97 to inform commuters of the two Open Houses.



Sharing what we heard

Thank you to everyone who participated and shared their thoughts in the Draft 2023 Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan. We will share what we heard with Council prior to the final reading of the Five-Year Financial Plan Bylaw and development of Council's Strategic Priorities in the spring. The What We Heard Report will be posted on the City's website and shared through Council Highlights during the second and third reading of the Financial Bylaw.