

THE CORPORATION OF THE  
**CITY OF WHITE ROCK**  
CORPORATE REPORT



**DATE:** September 9, 2024  
**TO:** Mayor and Council  
**FROM:** Candice Gartry, Director, Financial Services  
**SUBJECT:** Results - Budget Survey 2025

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**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council receive the corporate report dated September 9, 2024, from the Director of Financial Services, titled “Results – Budget Survey 2025” for information.

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On June 21, 2024, the City of White Rock launched its budget survey for the 2025 fiscal year on the *Talk White Rock* online platform. The Survey was promoted through social media, newspaper ads, and a one-page mailer. The survey closed on August 25, 2024. A total of 530 visits were registered on the Survey site, with 215 completing it, representing 0.98% of the City’s population. The results, while informative, are not statistically significant.

**Key Findings:**

1. General Awareness and Priorities:
  - 75% of respondents indicated they live in White Rock.
  - 50% of respondents were aware of how the City’s budget is allocated, while 34% were not.
  - Engineering Infrastructure, Public Safety, and Emergency Services were rated as the highest priority areas for additional investment.
2. Satisfaction with City Services:
  - Respondents were most satisfied with Emergency Services (53%) and Parks and Open Spaces (52%).
  - Dissatisfaction was highest with Transportation Infrastructure (43%) and Planning, Business, and Development (39%).
  - Common concerns included permit wait times, bylaw enforcement, and infrastructure conditions.
3. Program and Service Levels:
  - 52% of respondents supported maintaining current program and service levels, while 30% supported reductions.
  - Only 14% favored expanding services, with varied opinions on how expansions should be funded.

4. Capital Investment Priorities:

- Engineering Infrastructure and Emergency Equipment were the top priorities for capital investment, each receiving 53% support.
- Cultural Facilities and a New Community Hub were deemed the lowest priorities.

5. Engagement in Future Budgets:

- Respondents expressed a desire for more information on tax allocation and the budget process.
- The preferred methods for future budget input were online surveys and submitting questions online.

6. Demographics:

- A majority (77%) of respondents were 55 years or older, with a fairly balanced gender distribution.
- Most respondents did not have children under 18 living with them and primarily spoke English at home.

## **INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

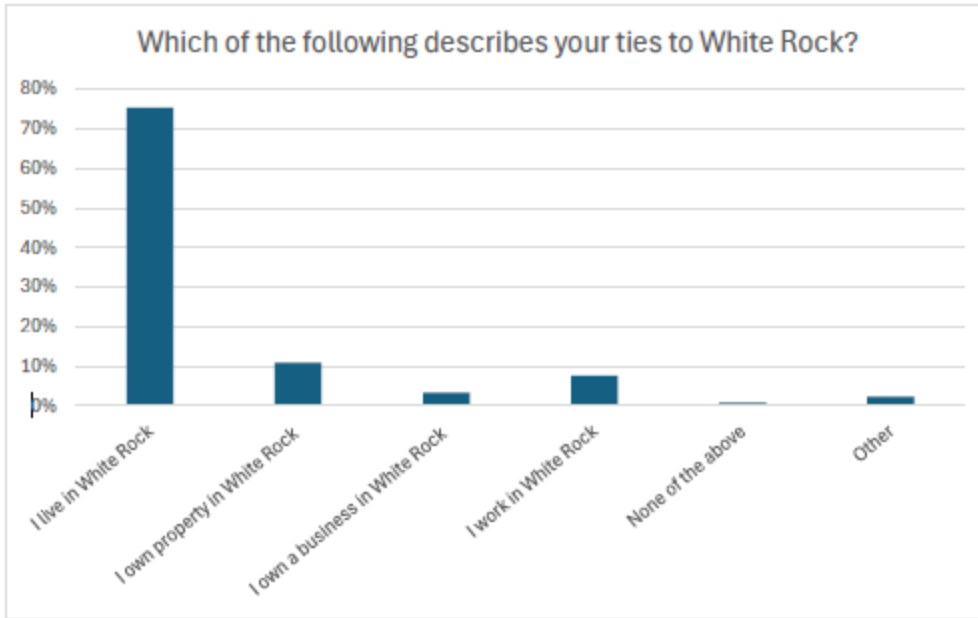
On June 21, 2024, the City of White Rock's budget survey for the 2025 budget year (the "Survey") was launched on the City's *Talk White Rock* online platform. The Survey was promoted through the City's social media channels, two advertisements in the Peach Arch Newspaper, and a one-page mailer sent to all addresses in the City. The Survey closed on August 25, 2024. This report summarizes the Survey results.

The Survey site had 530 visitors (303 in 2023) and received 215 responses (163 in 2023). With only 215 respondents, the results represent just 0.98% of the City's population and are therefore not statistically significant although they are informative.

### **Section 1 – General Questions**

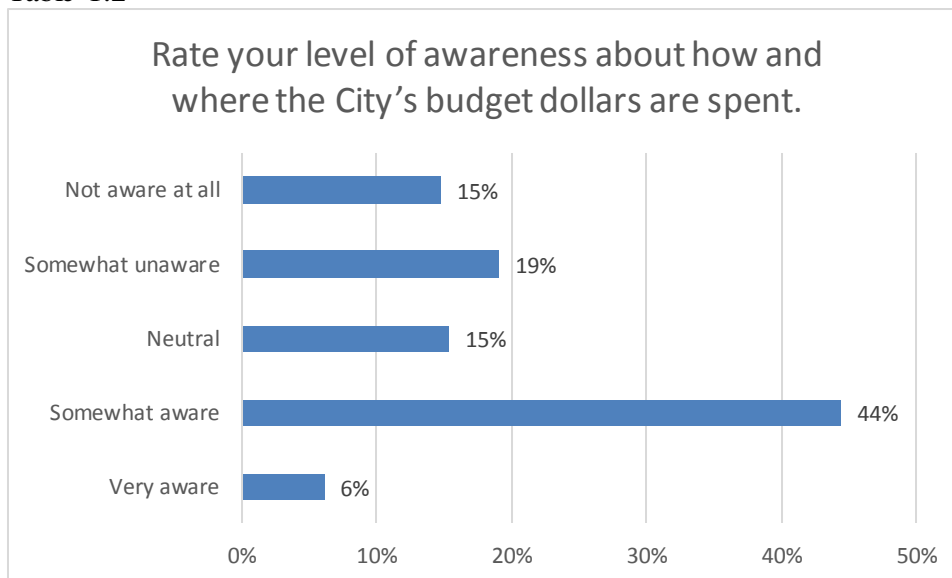
The first section of the Survey included two general questions. In the first question, participants could select multiple answers to indicate they belonged to more than one category. The majority of respondents (75%) indicated that they live in White Rock (Table 1.1) that follows.

Table 1.1



The second question stated that the City is working to provide more information on the City’s budget process and seeks community and resident feedback to guide the next budget. It then asked participants to rate their awareness of how the City’s budget dollars are spent. As shown in Table 1.2, 50% of respondents were either *Very aware* or *Somewhat aware* of how the City’s budget dollars are spent, while 34% were either *Not aware at all* or *Somewhat unaware*.

Table 1.2



**Section 2 – Importance and Satisfaction Questions**

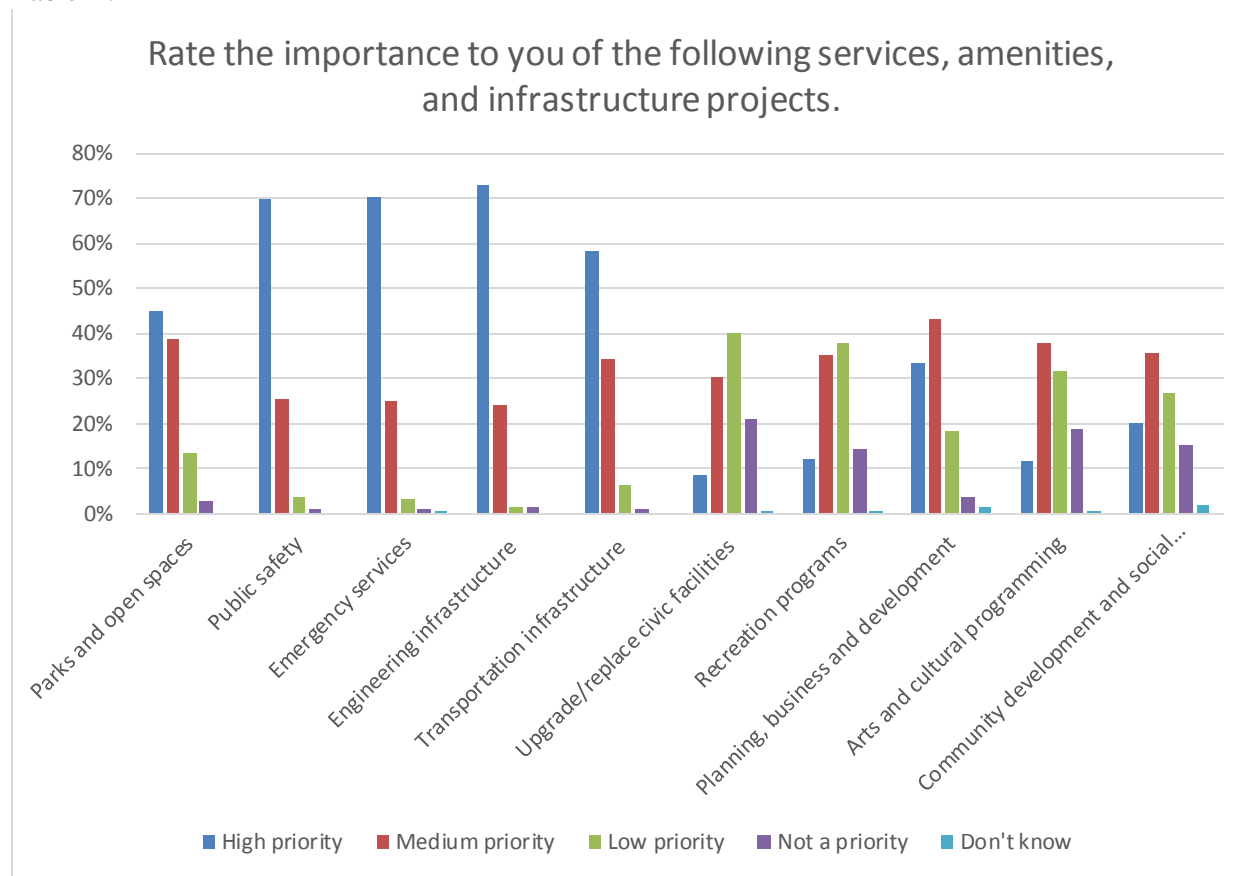
The first question in this section asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with 10 amenities and services provided by the City. Overall, 40% of respondents rated the 10 areas as High Priority, 33% rated them as Medium Priority, and 18% rated them as Low Priority (Table 2.1) that follows.

The top *High Priority* area was Engineering Infrastructure at 73%, followed by Public Safety and Emergency Services, both at 70%. Transportation Infrastructure ranked third at 58%, and Parks and Open Spaces came in next at 45%, with the remaining areas at 33% or less.

The top five *Medium Priority* areas were Planning, Business and Development at 43%, followed by Parks and Open Spaces at 39%, Arts and Cultural Programming at 38%, Community Development and Social Services at 36%, and Recreation Programs at 35%.

The top *Low Priority* and *Not a Priority* areas were Upgrade/Replace Civic Facilities, followed by Arts and Cultural Programming, Community Development and Social Services, and Recreation Programs.

Table 2.1



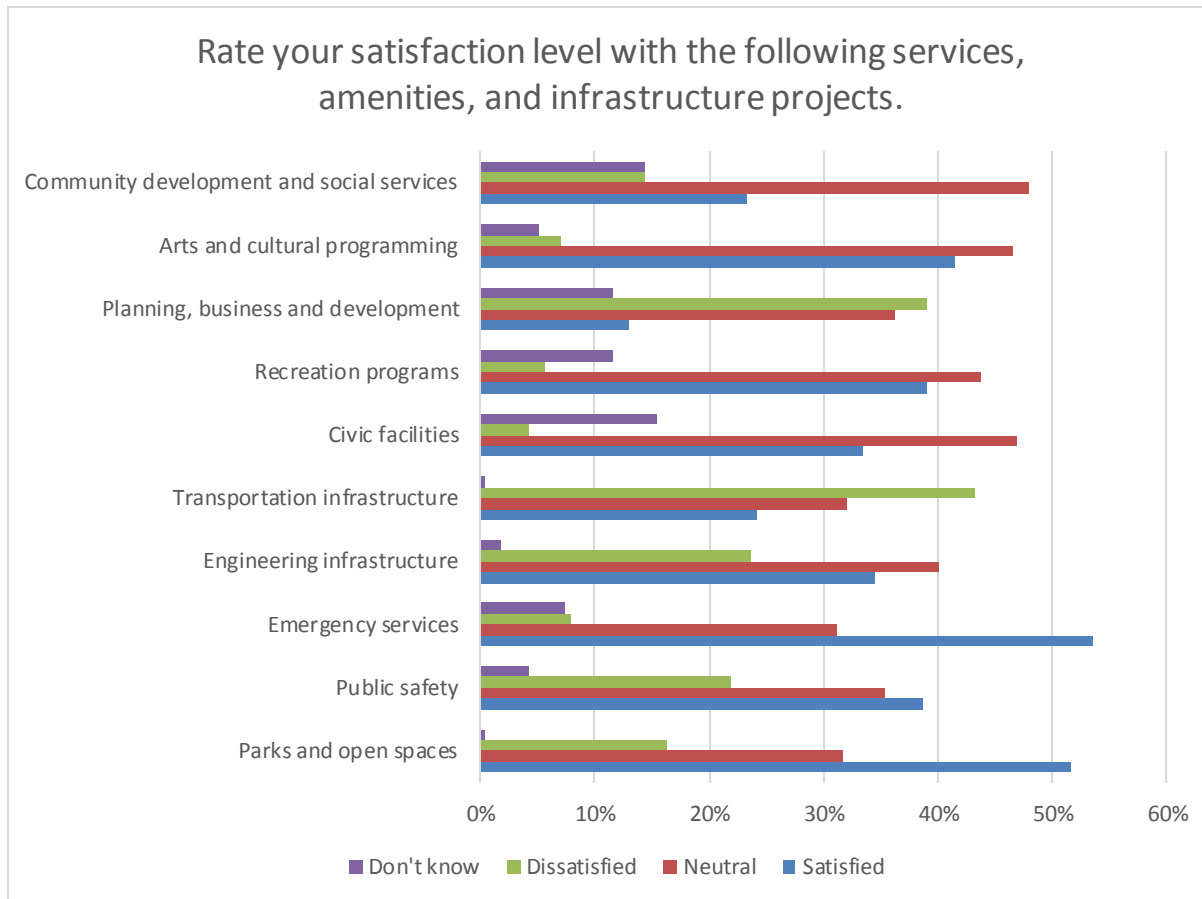
Notes:

- Examples of Engineering infrastructure include water, sanitary sewer, drainage, climate adaptation, garbage, green waste and recycling.
- Examples of Transportation infrastructure include roads, sidewalks, path maintenance and road improvements.
- Upgrade/replace civic facilities includes facilities such as the Kent Street Activity Centre/Seniors Centre, Community Centre and Community Hub.
- Examples of Planning, business and development services include bylaws, licensing, permitting, city planning.
- Examples of Arts and cultural programming include festivals and public art.
- Community development and social services include things like social support programs.

Next, respondents rated their satisfaction with the same amenities and services provided by the City. Table 2.2 that follows shows that respondents were most satisfied with Emergency Services

(53%), followed by Parks and Open Spaces (52%), Arts and Cultural Programming (41%), and Public Safety and Recreation Programs (both at 39%). The highest dissatisfaction was with Transportation Infrastructure (43%), followed by Planning, Business and Development (39%), Engineering Infrastructure (24%), and Public Safety (22%).

Table 2.2



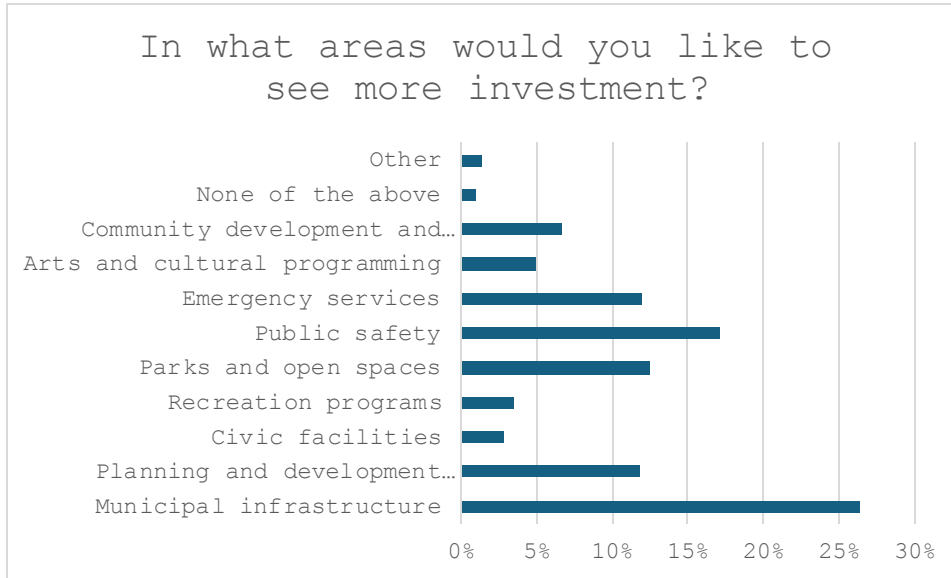
Respondents who selected dissatisfaction with a service or amenity were asked to comment on why. A total of 133 respondents provided comments which have been included in **Appendix A**. Common themes included development permit wait times, bylaw enforcement, city infrastructure, solid waste, and the condition of roads and sidewalks. Public Safety and Community and Social Services also received significant comments.

### Section 3 – Additional Investment Areas

The first question in this section asked respondents to select areas where they would like the City to increase investment. The highest-rated area was Municipal Infrastructure at 26%, followed by

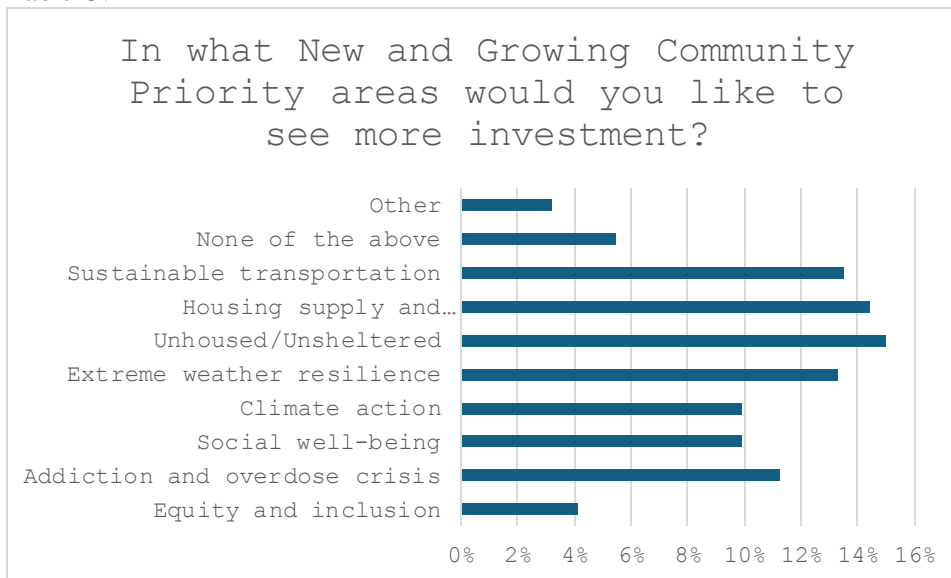
Public Safety at 17%. Tied for third place were Planning and Development Services, Parks and Open Spaces, and Emergency Services, all at 12% (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1



Respondents were then asked which *New and Growing Community Priorities* they would like to see more investment in. The top five areas were Unhoused/Unsheltered at 15%, followed by Housing Supply and Affordability at 14%. Tied for third place were Extreme Weather Resilience and Sustainable Transportation, both at 13%, with Addiction and Overdose coming in at 11% (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

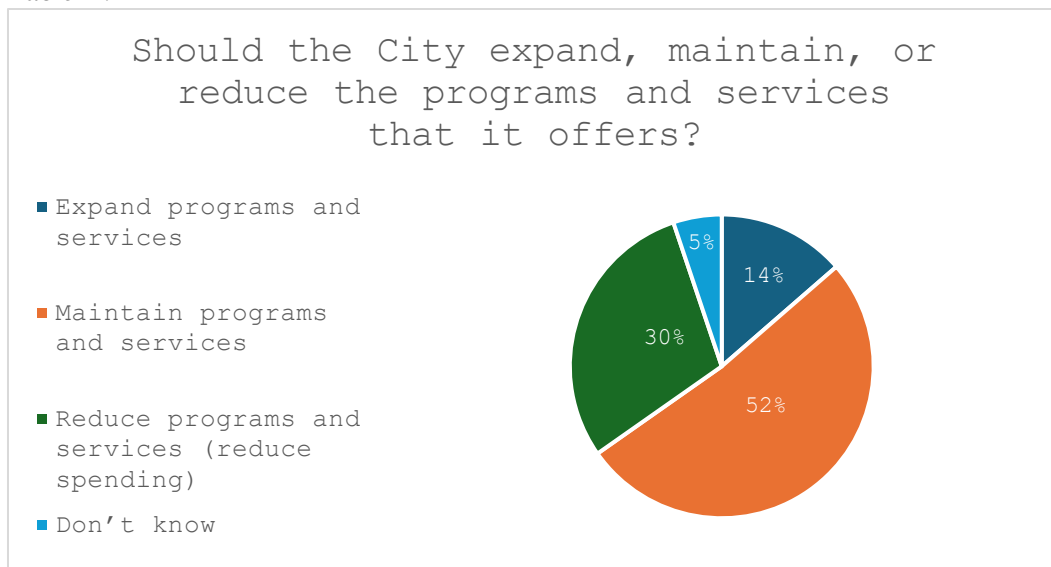


### Section 4 – Expand, maintain, or reduce programs and services

In Section 4, participants were asked whether the City should Expand, Maintain, or Reduce programs and services, and how expansions or maintenance should be funded.

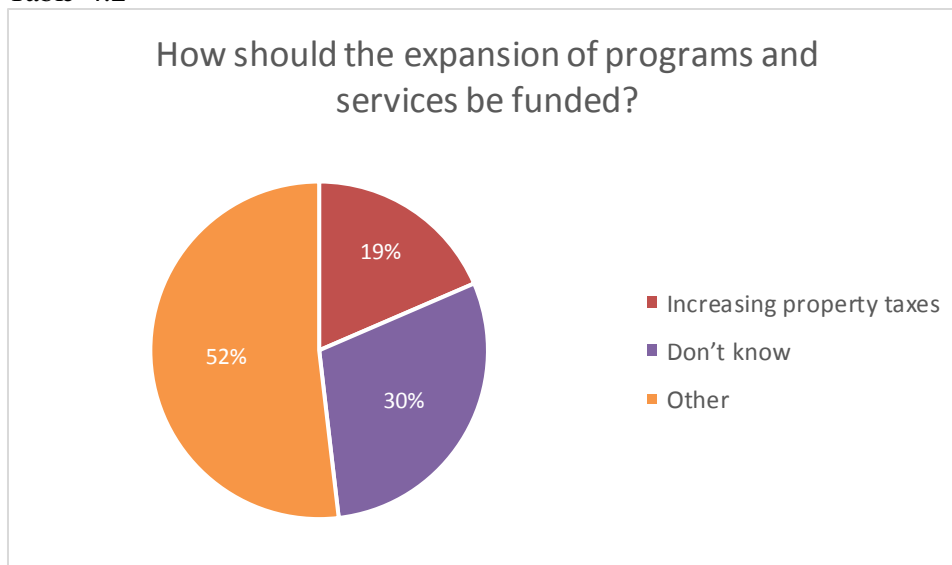
Table 4.1 shows that the majority (52%) supported maintaining programs and services, while 30% favored reducing them. Only 14% supported expansion, with 5% selecting *Don't know*.

Table 4.1



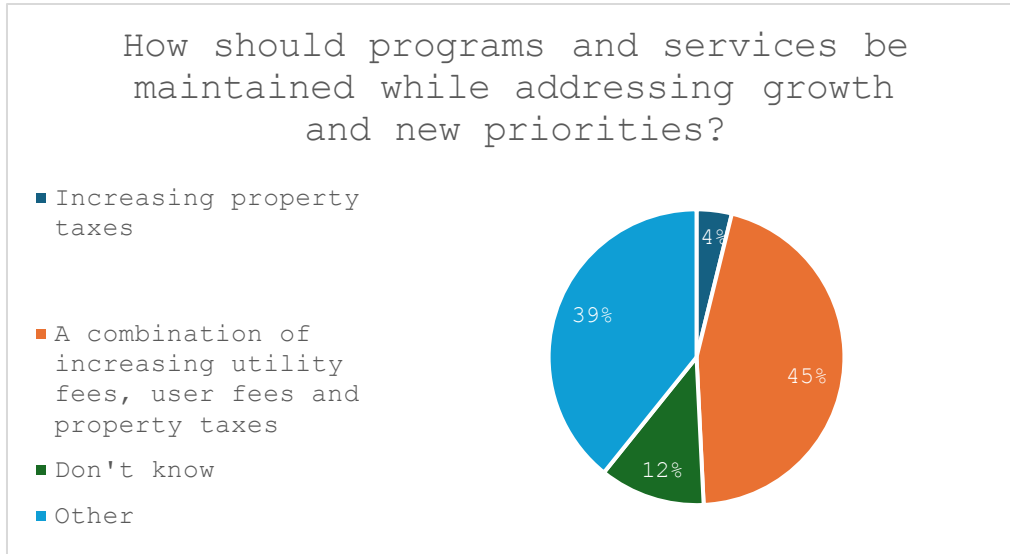
For those who selected *Expand* programs and services, they were further asked how this should be funded (Table 4.2). The majority selected *Other* and were invited to comment, with responses included in Appendix A. Suggestions included spending less, cutting back on programs and staff, selling excess water, attracting more businesses, raising fees and taxes, and increasing ticketing/by-law enforcement.

Table 4.2



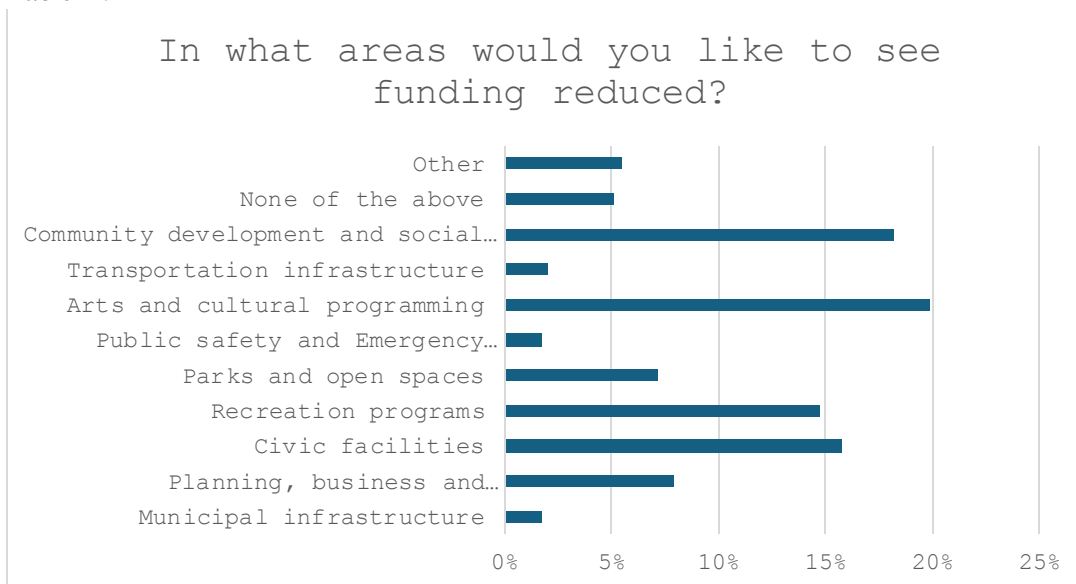
Respondents who selected "Maintain" programs and services (Table 4.1) were also asked how this should be funded, given the City must maintain a balanced budget. The majority responded with "Don't know" or "Other." Comments for this question were similar to those in the previous question and have also been included in Appendix A.

Table 4.3



The final question in this section asked respondents to select areas where they would like to see funding reduced (Table 4.4). The top areas for reduced investment were Arts and Cultural Programming (20%), followed by Community Development and Social Services (18%), Civic Facilities (16%), and Recreation Programs (15%). Comments from those who selected *Other* are included in Appendix A and focused on City efficiency, staffing levels, and spending, with some suggesting merging with the City of Surrey to reduce costs.

Table 4.4



Similar to some previous questions, those respondents who selected *Other* in the above question (Table 4.4) were asked to provide comments. The comments can be found in Appendix A.



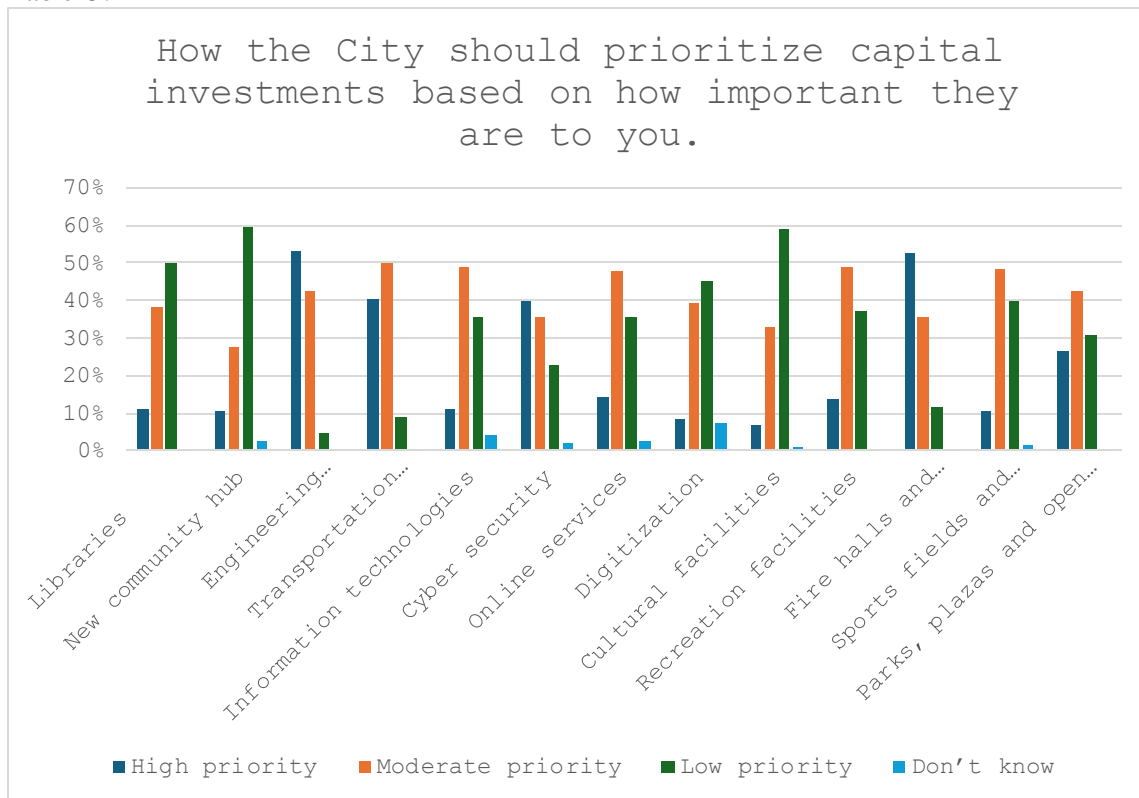
Comments focused on efficiencies within the City, with mention of staffing levels, as well as on spending. As with previous areas within the Survey, some respondents listed merging with the City of Surrey as a possible way to reduce costs.

**Section 5 – Capital (asset improvement) funding priorities**

In Section 5, the Survey asked participants to prioritize areas of capital investment based on importance. Table 5.1 summarizes the responses, showing that Engineering Infrastructure and Fire Halls and Emergency Equipment were rated as the highest priorities, each receiving 53% of votes within their category. Cybersecurity and Transportation Infrastructure were tied for second at 40%, followed by Parks, Plazas, and Open Spaces at 27%.

Recreation and Culture Facilities and Parks, Plazas, and Open Spaces were the top areas rated as Cultural Facilities and a New Community Hub were rated lowest for capital investment, each at 59%, followed by Libraries at 50% and Digitization at 45%. Recreation Facilities came in at 37%.

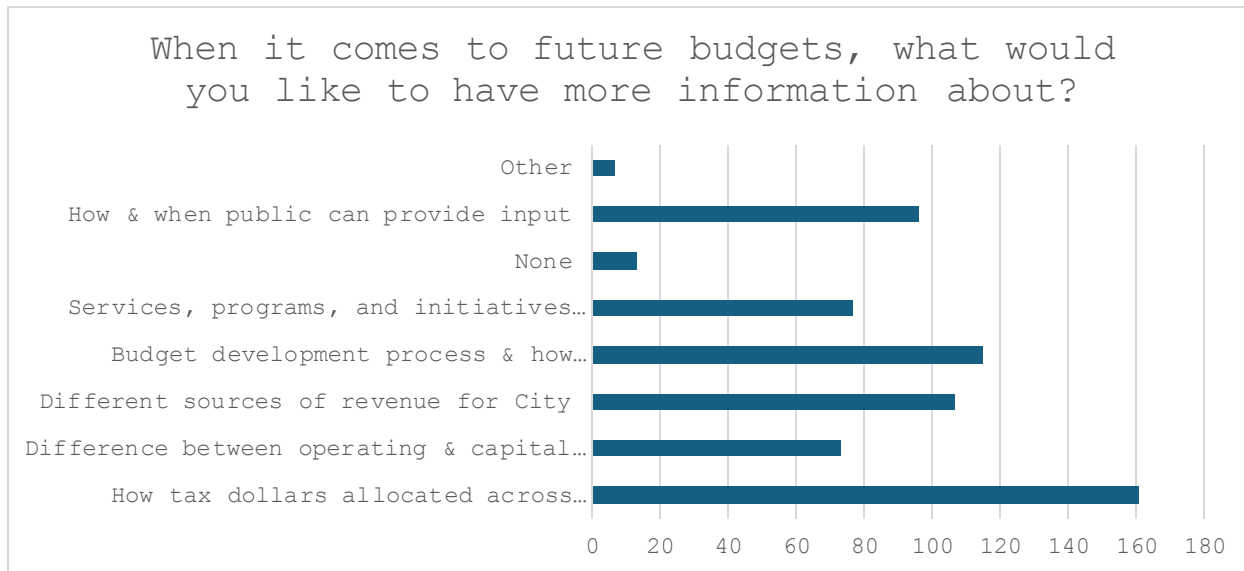
Table 5.1



### Section 6 – Future Budgets

The two tables in Section 6 ask questions about future budgets. Table 6.1 shows that most respondents would like more information on *How tax dollars are allocated across different departments and services*. The other top areas of interest were the *Budget development process & how Council decisions are made* and *Different sources of revenue for the City*.

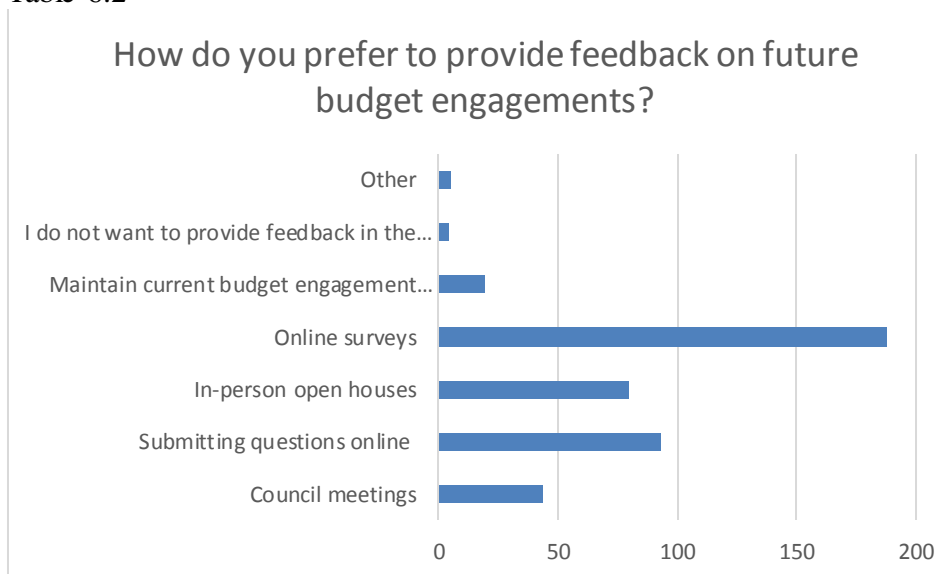
Table 6.1



Similar to some previous questions, those respondents who selected *Other* in the above question (Table 4.4) were asked to provide comments. The comments can be found in Appendix A.

The next question asked respondents how they would like to provide input on future budgets. Table 6.2 shows that the vast majority (188 votes) prefer online surveys, followed by submitting questions online (93 votes) and attending in-person open houses (93 votes).

Table 6.2



**Section 7 – Demographics**

The final section focused on the demographics of Survey participants. Table 7.1 shows that 33% of respondents have lived or owned a business in White Rock for less than five years, while 19% have lived or owned a business in White Rock for more than 25 years.

Table 7.1

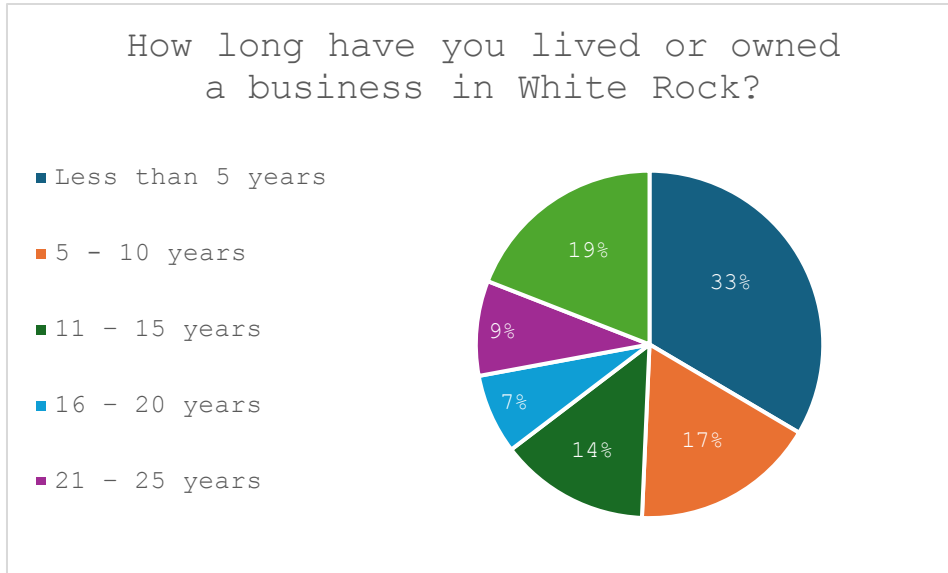


Table 7.2 indicates that 67% of respondents are 55 years or older, with 46% aged 65 or older.

Table 7.2

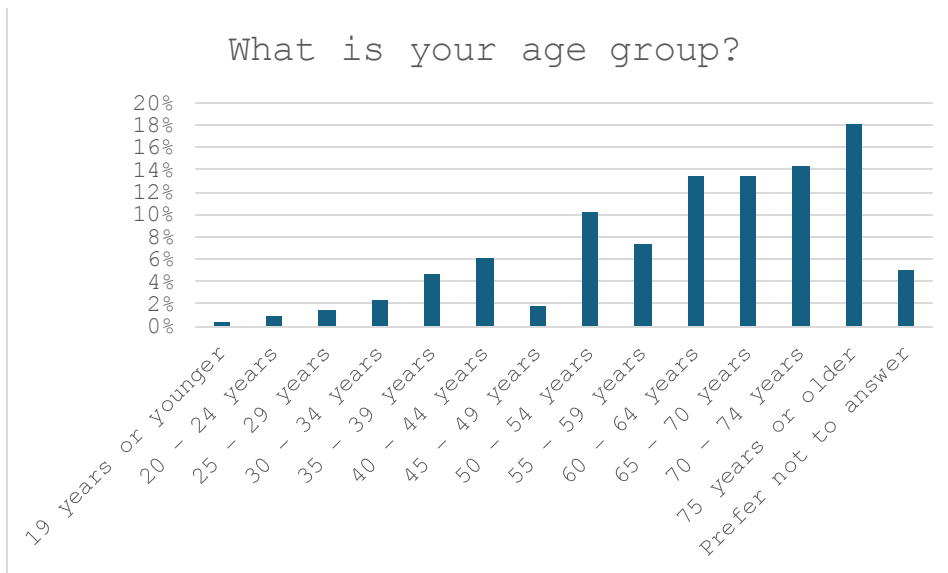


Table 7.3 that follows shows a fairly even gender distribution, with 47% male and 46% female respondents. The majority of respondents did not identify with any of the groups listed in the table (Table 7.4) that follows.

Table 7.3

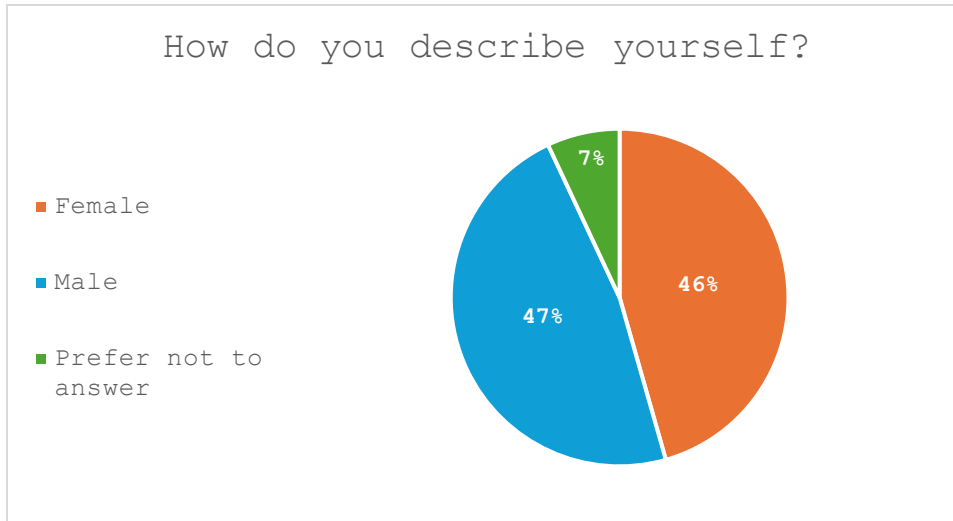


Table 7.4

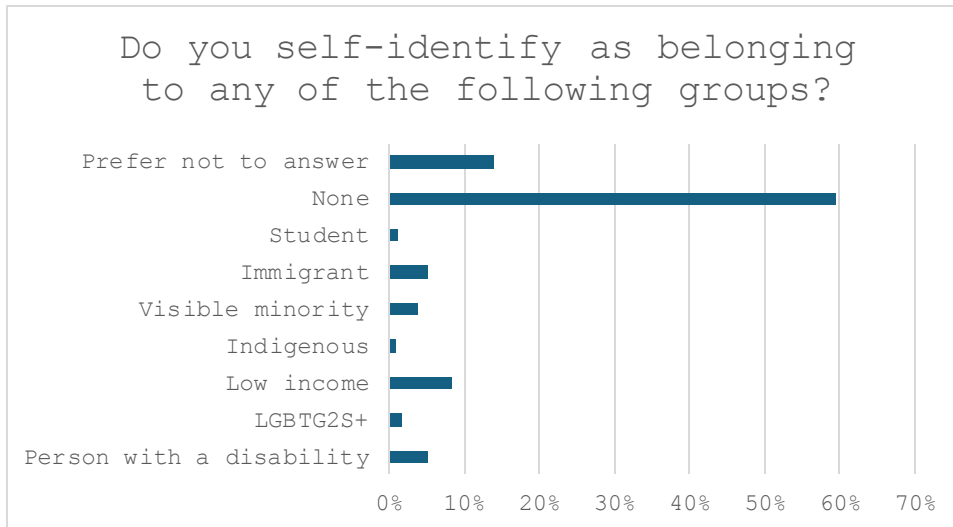


Table 7.5

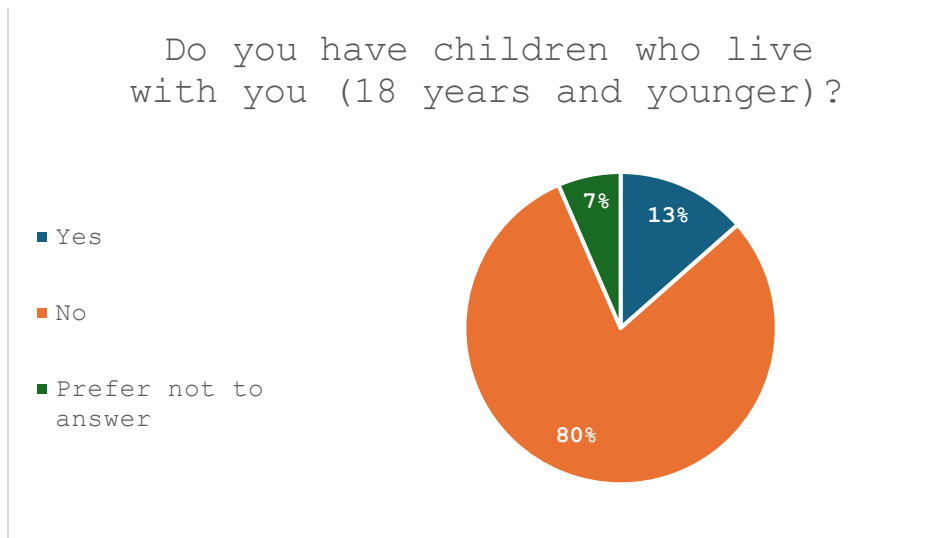


Table 7.5 reveals that 80% of respondents do not have children under 18 living with them.

Table 7.6

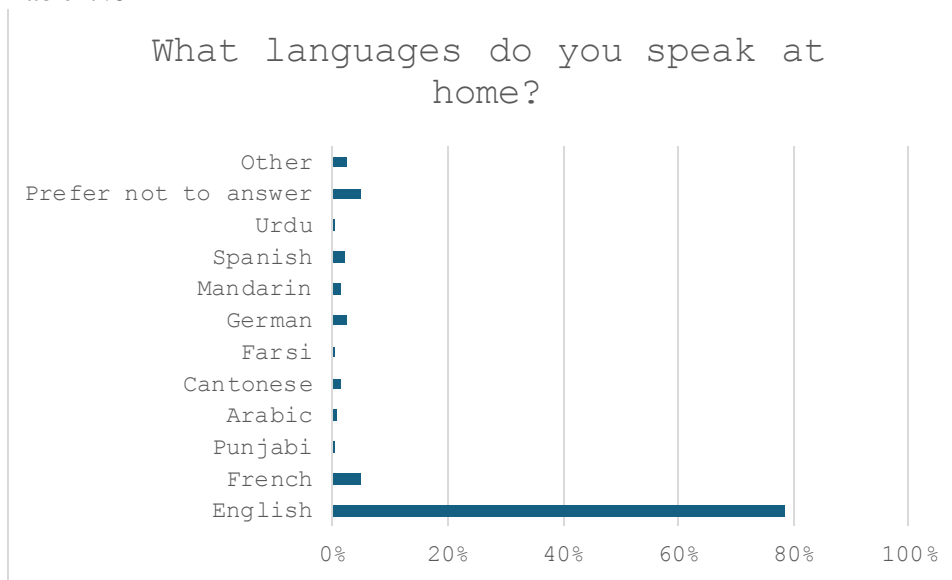


Table 7.6 indicates that the vast majority of Survey respondents speak English at home.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of the 2025 budget survey provide a snapshot of the community's priorities, satisfaction levels, and areas of concern regarding the City of White Rock's services and infrastructure. While the survey's response rate was modest with 215 respondents (0.98% of the City's population according to 2021 census data), the feedback highlights the importance residents place on maintaining and enhancing critical infrastructure, particularly in engineering, public safety, and emergency services. At the same time, there is clear dissatisfaction with certain areas, such as transportation infrastructure and city planning services, indicating the need for focused improvements in these sectors.

Staff recommend that Council receive this corporate report.

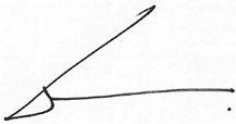
Respectfully submitted,



Candice Gartry, CPA, CGA  
Director, Financial Services

## **Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer**

This corporate report is provided as an interim update for information purposes.



Guillermo Ferrero  
Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A: Budget 2025 Survey Comments