

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: November 27, 2023

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Candice Gartry, Director, Financial Services

SUBJECT: Budget 2024 Survey Update

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive the corporate report dated November 27, 2023, from the Director of Financial Services, titled "Budget 2024 Survey Update" for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City carried out a budget survey between October 16, 2023 and Monday, November 13, receiving 163 responses in total. The findings outlined below reflect the views of 0.78% of the City's population, indicating that they do not hold statistical significance.

Around the halfway mark of the City's 2024 Budget Survey, initial findings from the 163 participants indicate that most reside in White Rock, are homeowners, do not have children under 18 living with them, and are aged 60 or above. Predominantly, these respondents speak English at home and do not belong to any of the marginalized groups listed in Table 7.5.

Survey results indicate that respondents see room for growth and opportunities for improvement in Engineering and Transportation infrastructure, highlighting these areas as priorities for additional investment. Meanwhile, Emergency Services and Parks, Plazas, and Open Spaces are also recognized for their potential enhancements, sharing a joint third place in terms of investment interest. Notably, Parks, Plazas, and Open Spaces lead as the top area of satisfaction among respondents, followed closely by Emergency Services, and then Recreation and Culture facilities, showcasing the community's appreciation and positive reception in these sectors.

In response to emerging and significant community priorities, respondents most highly ranked Extreme Weather Resilience, Homelessness, Housing Supply and Affordability, and Sustainable Transportation as key initiatives. It's noteworthy that Equity and Inclusion received the lowest rating, although it's important to recognize that efforts to address Homelessness could also be perceived as contributing to aspects of "Equity and Inclusion."

For those respondents who selected that they would like to see existing City services expanded or maintained, the majority of participants selected that they would like to see this funded via a combination of increased utility fees, user fees, and property taxes.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

On October 16, 2023, the City of White Rock’s (the “City”) budget survey for the 2024 budget year (the “Survey”) went live on the City’s “Talk White Rock” online platform. The Survey was advertised via the City’s social media channels as well as by two advertisements placed in the Peach Arch Newspaper. The Survey closed for comments on Monday, November 13, 2023. This report provides the results of the Survey.

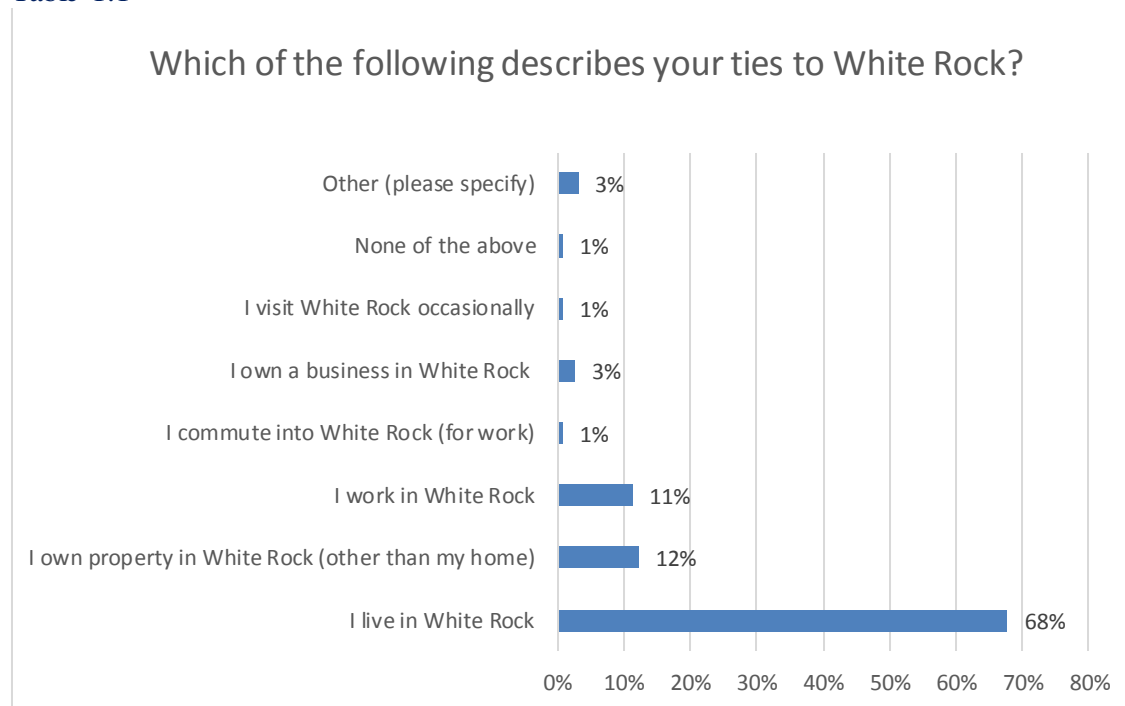
The Survey site has had 303 visitors with 163 respondents.

Important note: With 163 Survey responses the results discussed below only represent 0.8% of the population of the City, thus are not statistically significant.

Section 1 – General Questions

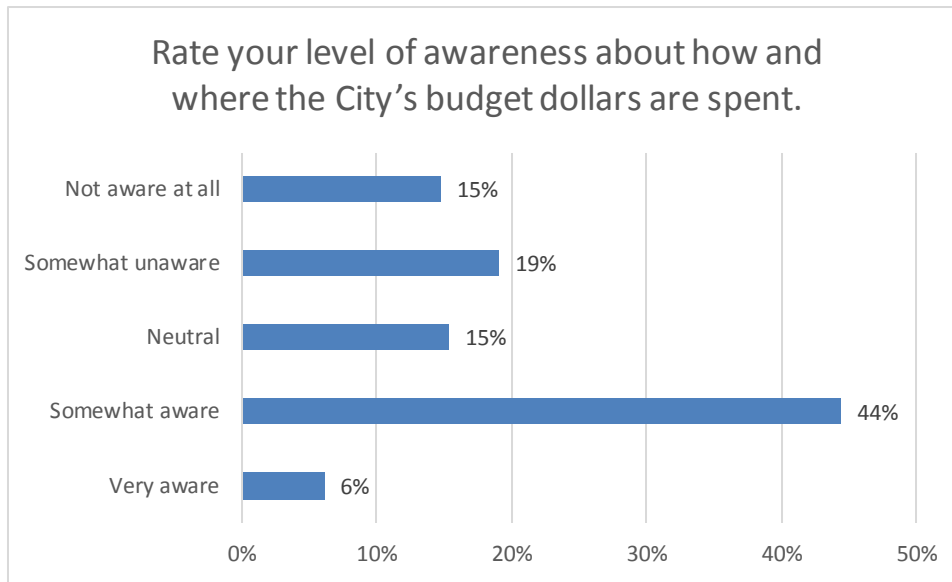
The first section of the Survey had two questions. This first question allowed participants to select more than one answer, (to belong to more than one category). Predominantly, the respondents selected that they live in White Rock (68%) (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1



The second question stated that the City is working to provide more information to community members on the City’s budget process and seeks to gather community and resident feedback to help inform and guide its next budget. It then asked participants to rate their level of awareness of how the City’s budget dollars are spent (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2



Fifty percent (50%) of respondents selected that they are either ‘*Very aware*’ or ‘*Somewhat aware*’ about how the City’s budget dollars are spent. 34% of respondents selected that they are either ‘*Not aware at all* or ‘*Somewhat unaware*’.

Section 2 – Satisfaction and Importance Questions

The second section asked participants to rate their level of satisfaction in 5 areas:

Table 2.1

How satisfied are you with the following City services or amenities:					
	Engineering infrastructure (e.g., water, sanitary, drainage, climate adaptation, waste and recycling)	Recreation and culture facilities (arena, seniors centre, arts space)	Emergency services	Parks, plazas and open space	Transportation infrastructure (e.g., road, sidewalk, path maintenance, road improvement)
Very satisfied	12	15	31	19	2
Satisfied	67	80	66	84	42
Neutral	31	40	37	28	31
Dissatisfied	36	16	8	21	54
Very dissatisfied	14	3	4	8	31
Don't know	2	8	16	2	2

42% of the participants selected that they are *'Satisfied'* with the five City services or amenities, and this increases to 52% if the responses for *'Very satisfied'* are included. 24% of participants selected that they were either *'Dissatisfied'* or *'Very dissatisfied'* with those same services.

Of the 163 respondents, the top three areas of satisfaction are Parks, plazas and open space(s), then Emergency services, followed by Recreation and culture facilities. The two areas with the highest level of dissatisfaction are Transportation infrastructure and Engineering infrastructure based on the responses in Table 2.1 above, and more strongly dissatisfied toward transportation infrastructure, i.e., road, sidewalk, path maintenance and road improvement.

Next, the Survey asked how participants would prioritize these same five (5) areas:

Table 2.2

How important are the following City services, amenities and infrastrucutre projects:					
	Engineering infrastructure (e.g., water, sanitary, drainage, climate adaptation, waste and recycling)	Recreation and culture facilities (arena, seniors centre, arts space)	Emergency services	Parks, plazas and open space	Transportation infrastructure (e.g., road, sidewalk, path maintenance, road improvement)
Top priority	38	11	23	7	19
High priority	27	13	19	17	22
Medium priority	16	18	24	19	21
Low priority	7	19	17	32	23
Not a priority	10	37	15	23	13

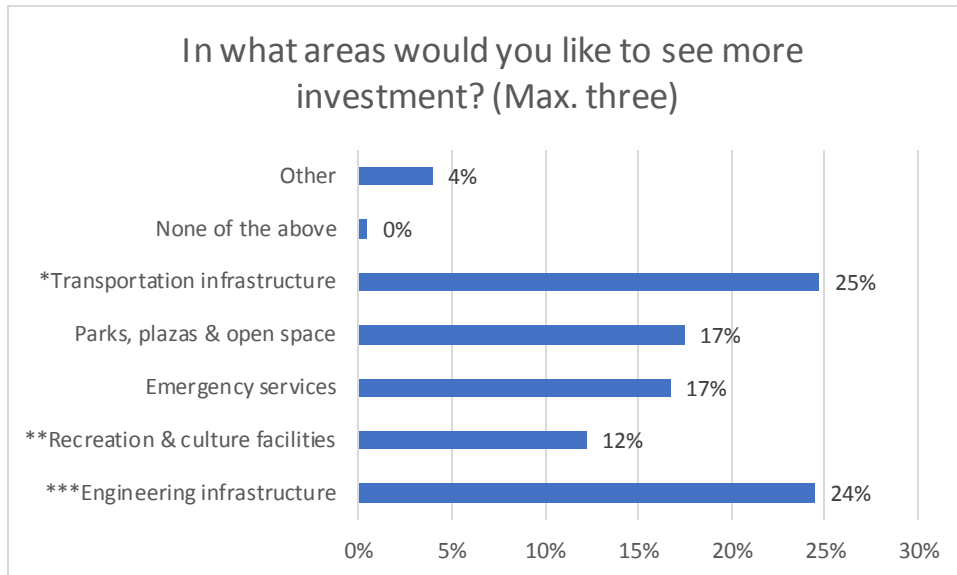
When asked to prioritize the areas listed in Table 2.2, respondents selected Engineering infrastructure as their *'Top priority'* and *'High priority'* areas. The next two areas of most importance as per the Survey results are Emergency services and Transportation infrastructure. Recreation and culture facilities and Parks, plazas and open space(s) were selected as the lowest priority areas.

Section 3 – Additional Investment Areas

Section 3 of the Survey asked participants to select which areas they would like more investment in, given the competing funding dollars (participants could select a maximum of three areas of

those listed in Table 3.1 below).

Table 3.1



* Transportation infrastructure includes road improvements and sustainable transportation

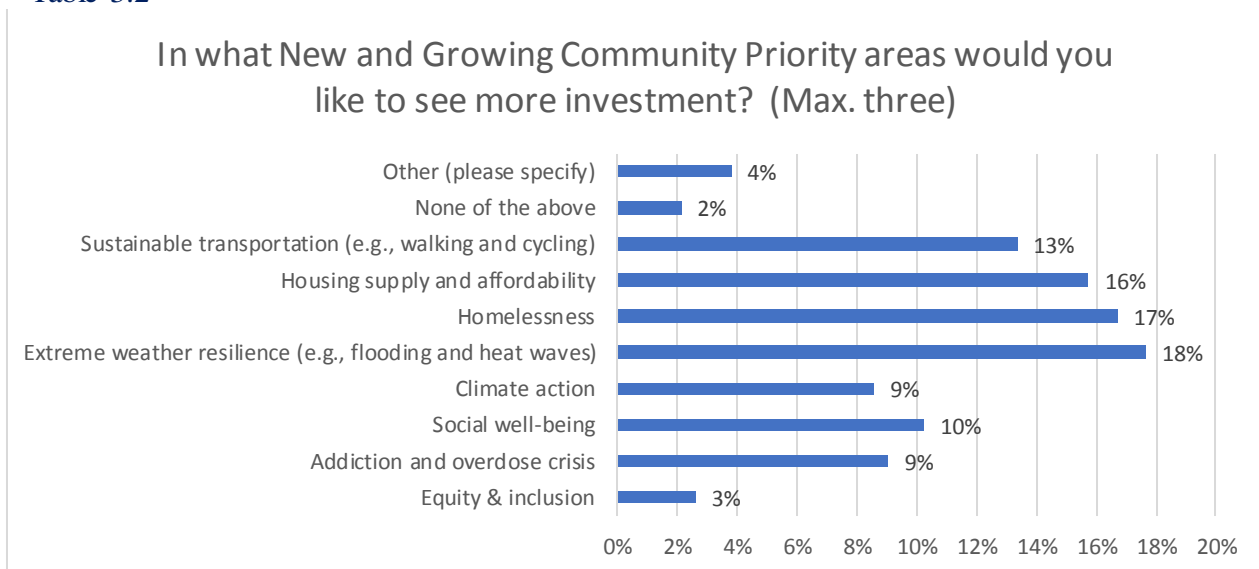
** Recreation & culture facilities include arenas, seniors centre and arts space.

*** Engineering infrastructure includes water, sanitary, drainage, climate adaptation, waste and recycling.

Table 3.1 shows that Transportation infrastructure, followed closely by Engineering infrastructure were the top two areas where participants would like to see more investment. Emergency services ties with Parks, plazas & open spaces for the third highest area.

The Survey also asked participants in which areas of 'New and Growing Community Priority' areas they would like to see more investment (participants could select a maximum of three areas of those listed in the Table 3.2 below).

Table 3.2



Of the 163 respondents, four areas stand out as areas where respondents would like to see more investment: Extreme weather resilience being the top area (18% of vote) followed by Homelessness (17%), Housing supply and affordability (16%), and Sustainable transportation (13%). The lowest rated areas were Other and Equity & inclusion.

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

In Section 4 of the Survey, participants were asked whether they felt that the City should *Expand, Maintain* or *Reduce* programs and services, followed by how expansions or maintenance of these areas should be funded.

Table 4.1

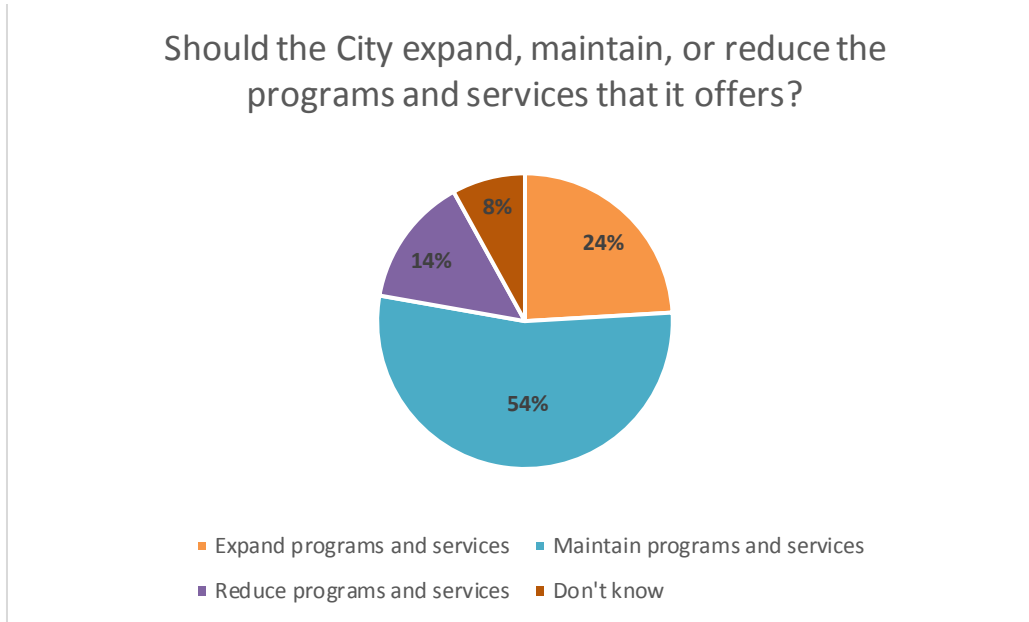
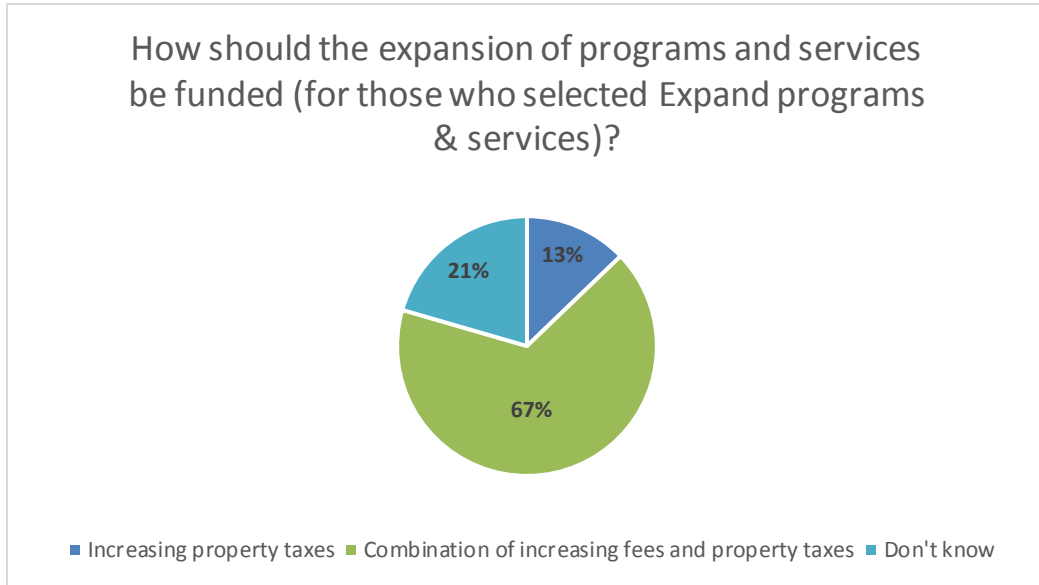


Table 4.1 above, shows the majority of respondents (54%) selected *‘Maintain programs and services’*. 24% of participants selected *‘Expand programs and services’* followed by 14% selecting *‘Reduce programs and services’* and 8% selecting *‘Don’t know’*.

For those who selected *‘Expand’* City programs and services, they were further asked how the

expansion of services should be funded:

Table 4.2



The majority of respondents selected funding using a combination of increasing utility fees, user fees and property taxes (67%) as the preferred way to fund an expansion of City programs and services.

For those who selected “Maintain” City programs and services they, too, were further asked how this should be funded given that the City must maintain a balanced budget.

Table 4.3

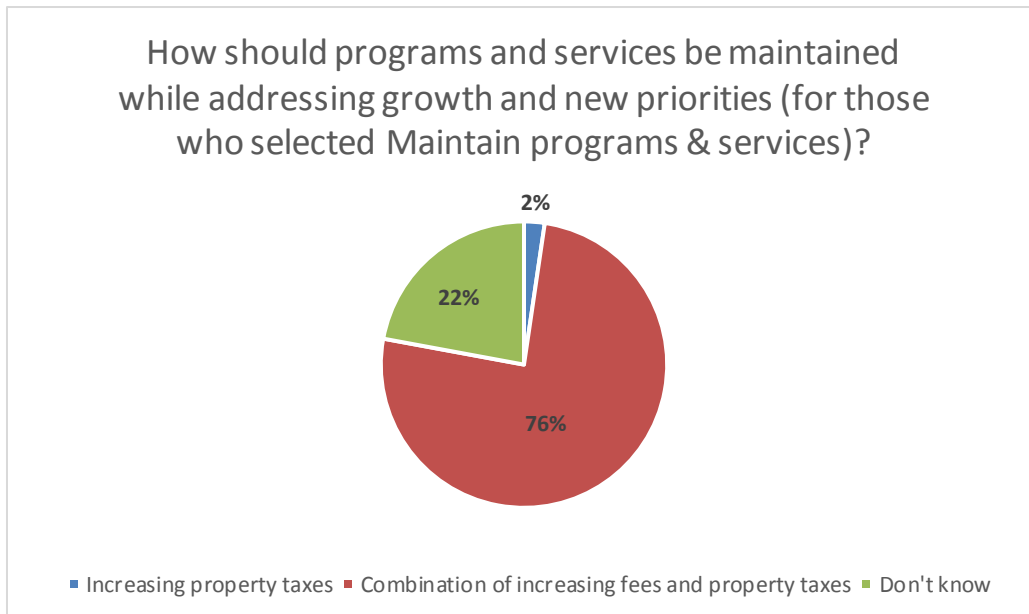


Table 4.3, indicates respondents again selected a combination of increasing utility fees, user fees and property taxes as the preferred way to fund the maintenance of existing programs and services given competing budget priorities (76%).

Section 5 – Capital (asset improvement) funding priorities

In section 5, the Survey asked participants to prioritize capital (asset improvement) projects.

(Please note that the total response numbers are less than the prior questions due to an issue with the Survey – only the last half of the responses to this question were accurately captured.)

Table 5.1

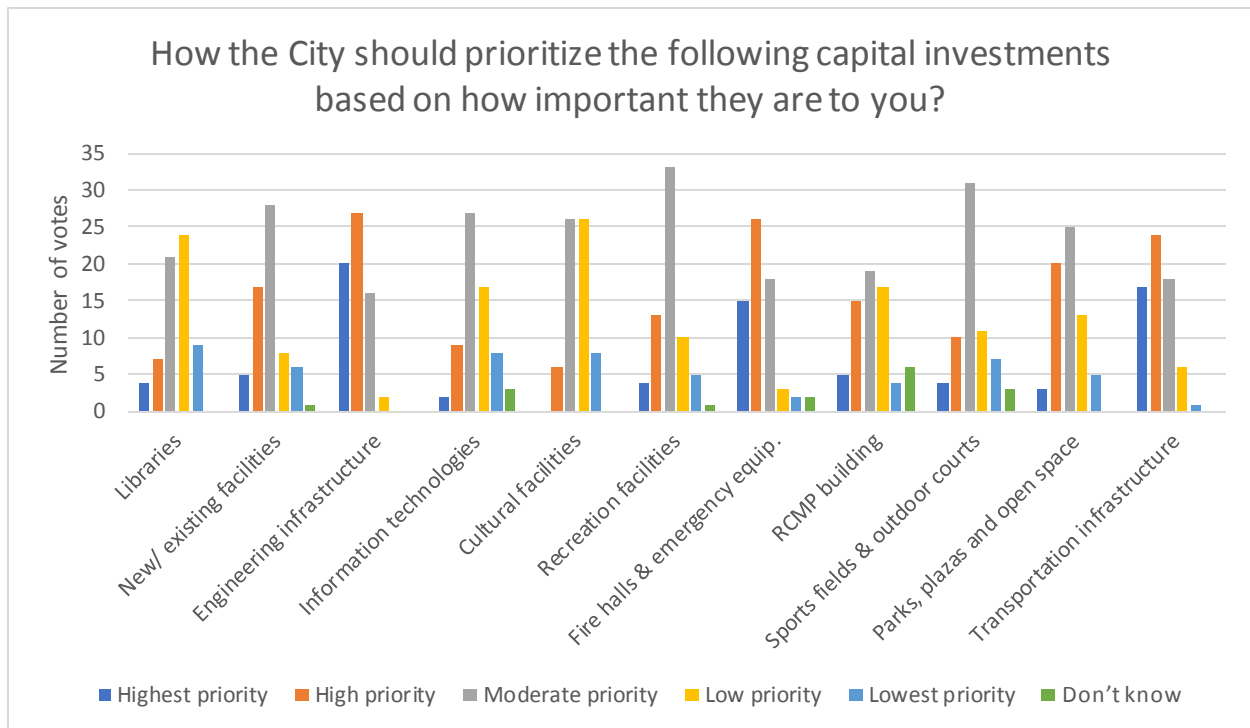


Table 5.1 shows that the highest priority areas are Engineering infrastructure, followed by Transportation infrastructure and then Fire halls and emergency equipment. The number of votes for High priority (as opposed to Highest) closely mirrors those of the Highest priority. (Individual tables for each capital investment area have been included in the Appendix.)

Section 6 – Future Budgets

The two tables in Section six ask questions about future budgets.

Table 6.1

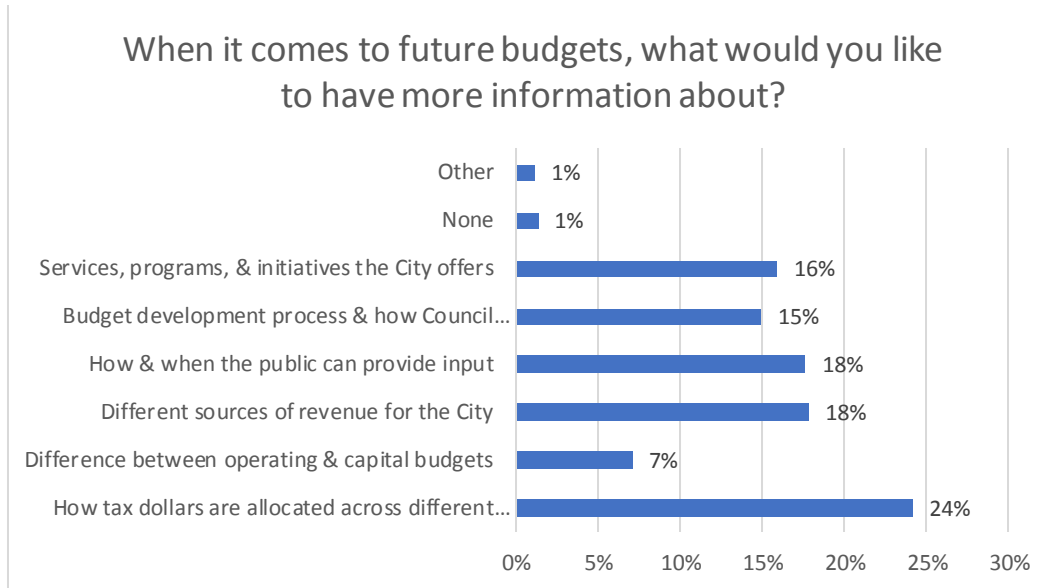


Table 6.1 above, shows a larger proportion of respondents would like to see more information 'How tax dollars are allocated across different departments and services.' The other four areas of more significant interest, in descending order, appear to be 'Different sources of revenue' for the City tied with 'How and when the public can provide input,' followed by the 'Services, programs and initiative that the City offers' and then 'budget development process and how Council decisions are made'.

Table 6.2

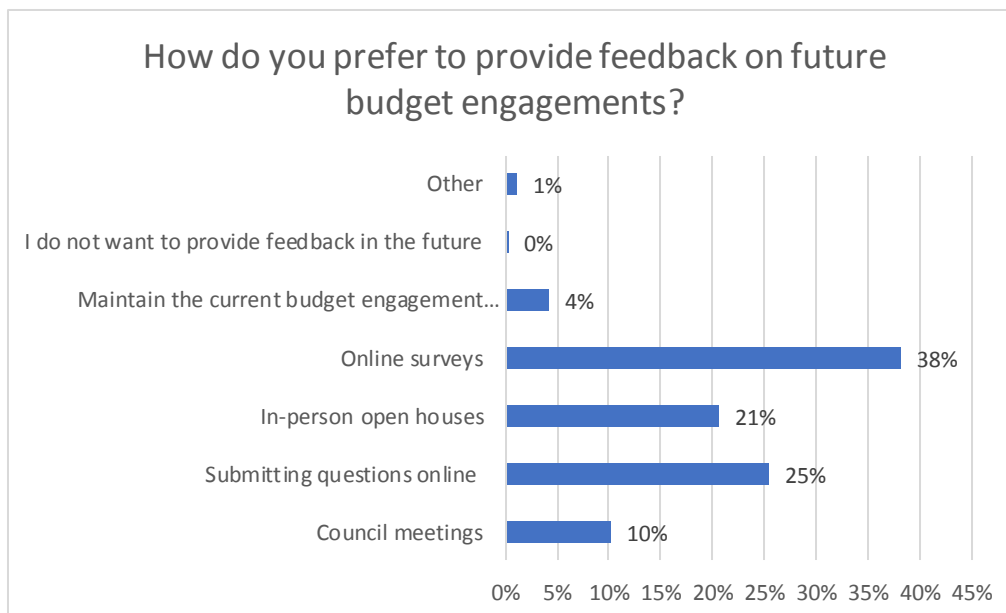


Table 6.2 shows that the majority of respondents prefer to give feedback on future budgets via online surveys (38%). To a lesser extent, submitting questions online (25%) and in-person open houses (21%) are of interest.

Section 7 – Demographics

The last section of questions focuses on the demographics of the Survey participants.

Table 7.1

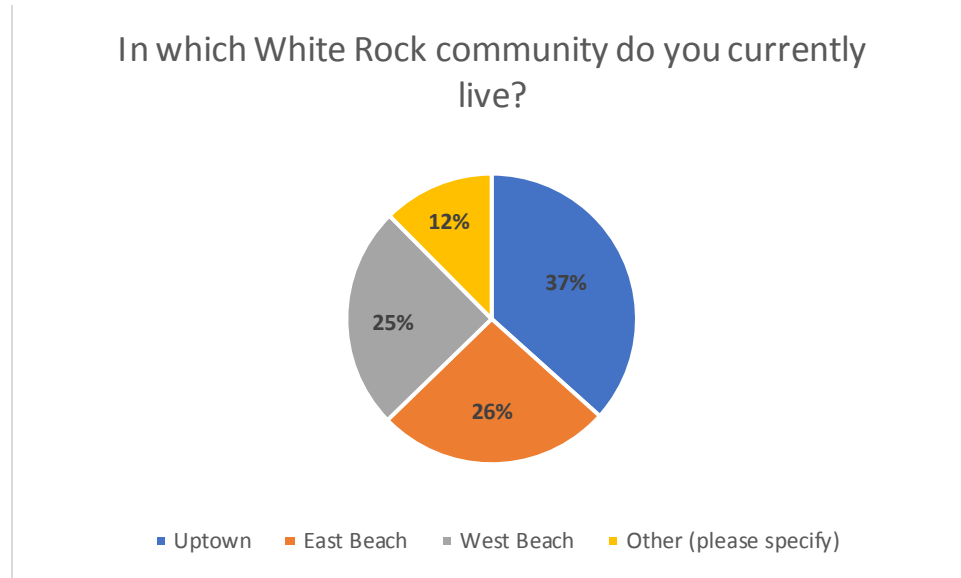


Table 7.2

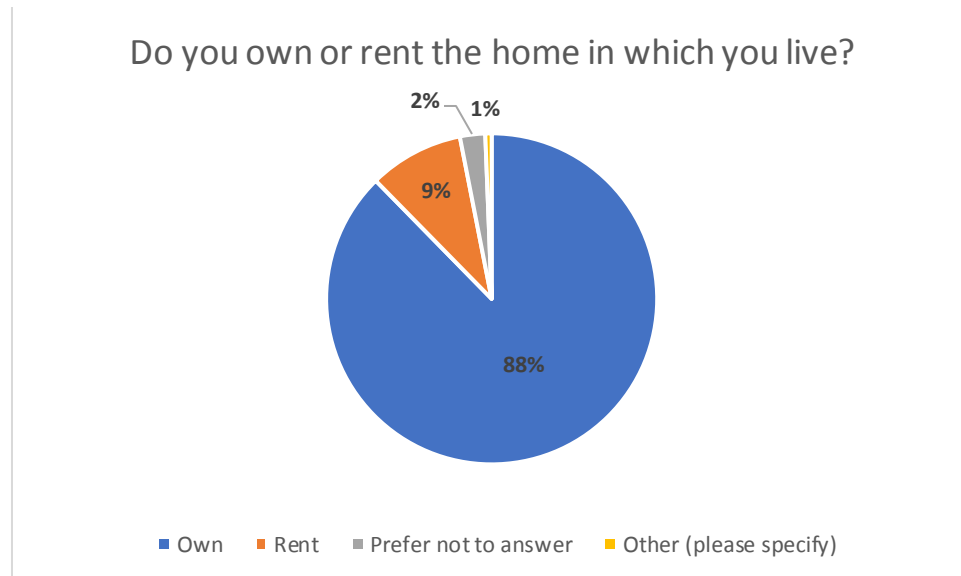
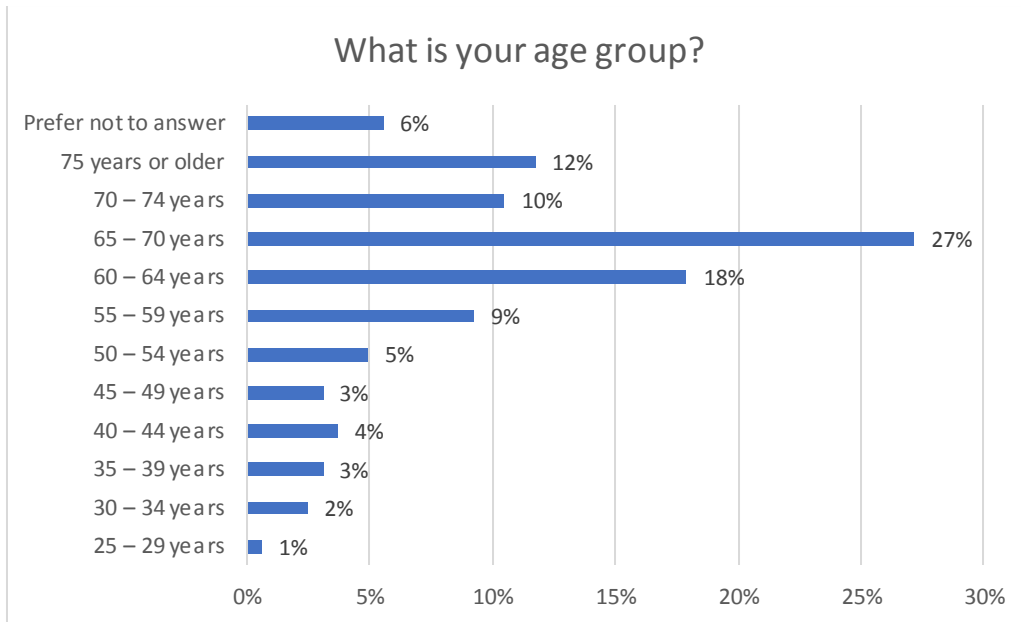


Table 7.3



Tables 7.2 and 7.3 (above) show that the majority of respondents (88%) own the home in which they live and 67% of respondents are 60 years of age or older.

Table 7.4

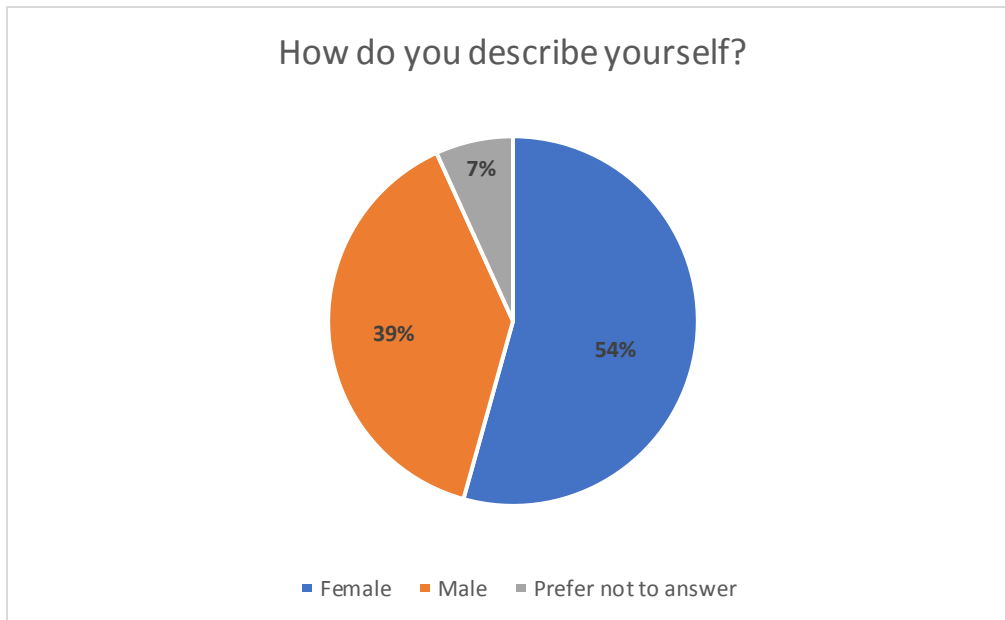


Table 7.5

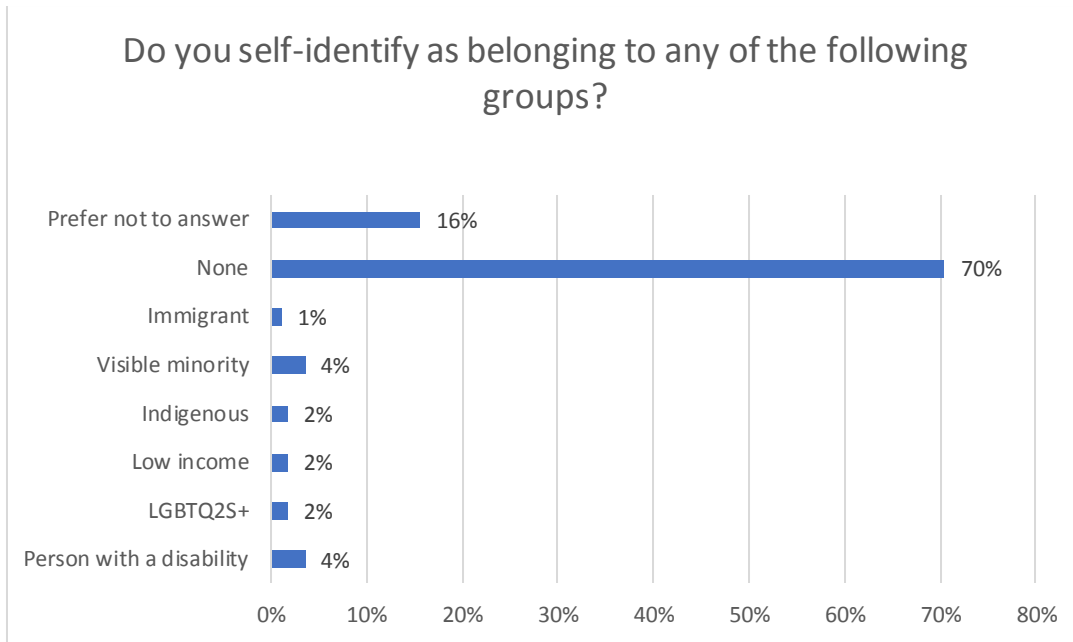


Table 7.6

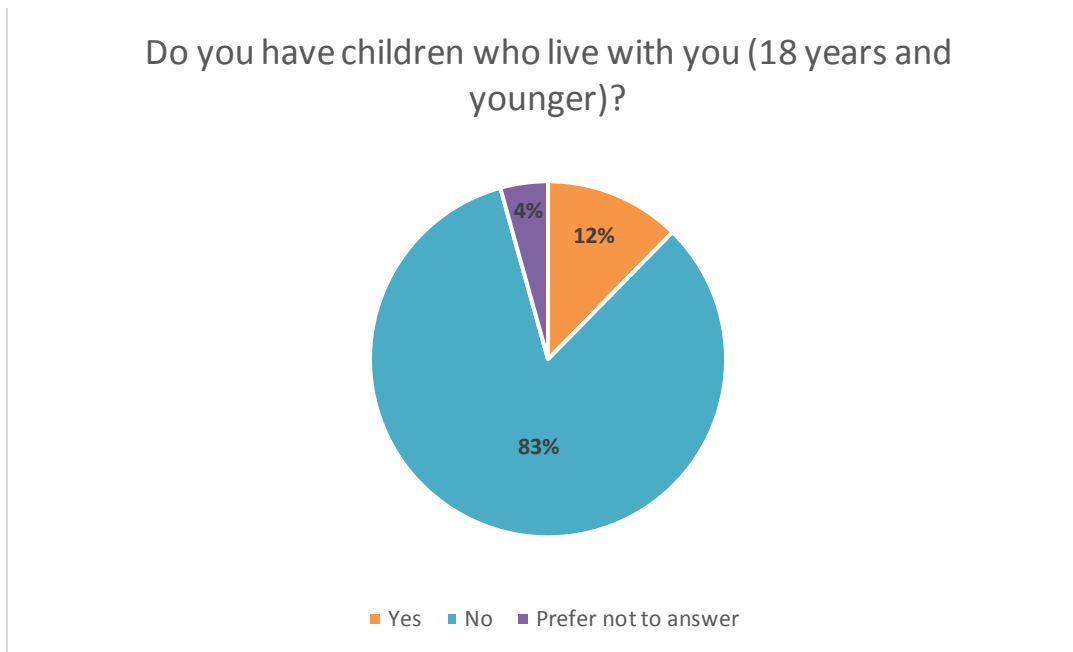
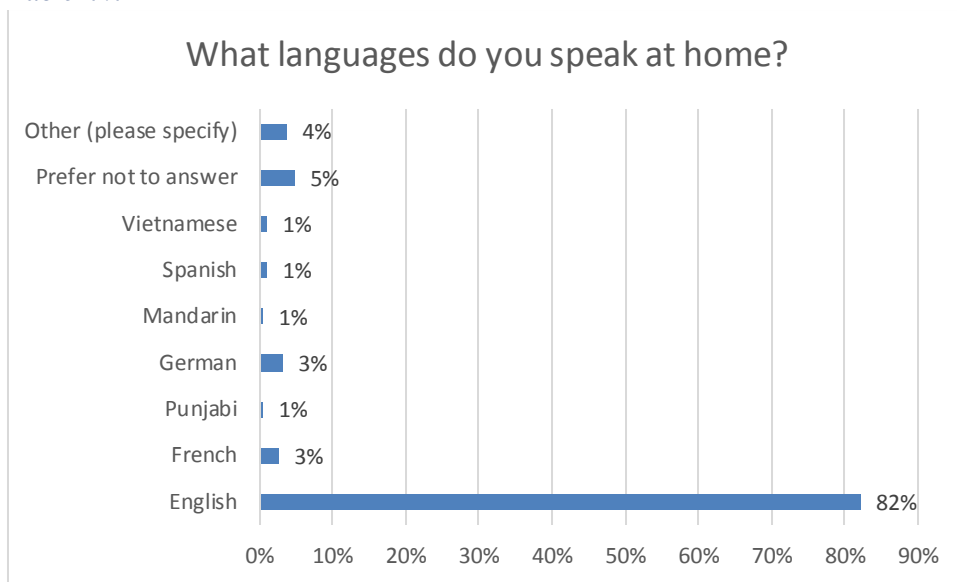


Table 7.7



Tables 7.5 shows that the majority of respondents do not self-identify as being an immigrant, a visible minority, indigenous, low income, LGBTQ2S+ or a person with a disability. Table 7.6 shows that the majority of participants (83%) do not have children 18 years or younger living with them. Lastly, Table 7.7 shows that the vast majority of Survey respondents speak English at home.

CONCLUSION

This corporate report presents a summary of the Budget 2024 Survey results. The City of White Rock launched the survey for its 2024 budget on October 16, 2023, accessible through the City's "Talk White Rock" online platform. To promote participation, the survey was advertised on the City's social media and through two advertisements in the Peach Arch Newspaper. The survey period concluded on Monday, November 13, 2023, and this report details the outcomes.

The survey website attracted 303 visitors, resulting in 163 respondents. It is important to note that with 163 survey responses, the data represents only 0.8% of the City's population, indicating that the results are .

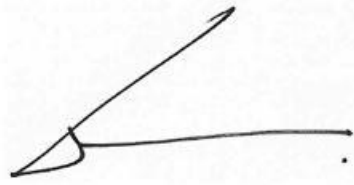
Staff recommend that Council receive this corporate report.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice Gartry
Director, Financial Services

Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of connected loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Guillermo Ferrero
Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A: Budget Survey Results Capital Priorities
Appendix B: Budget Survey Comments