

## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Committee of Council:

1. Approve the capital plan presented on December 5<sup>th</sup>, as updated, for inclusion in the 2024-2028 Financial Plan bylaw;
2. Approve the operating budget as presented on December 12<sup>th</sup> for inclusion in the 2024-2028 Financial Plan Bylaw; and
3. Direct staff to prepare the 2024-2028 Financial Plan Bylaw, the Annual Tax Rates Bylaw and Solid Waste Amendment Bylaw for Council approval.

### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL/COMMITTEE ACTION**

December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – Committee of Council

*That Committee of Council authorize staff to issue the 2024 draft operating budget for public consultation.*

December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – Committee of Council

*That Committee of Council include the 2024-2025 Capital Plan in the 2024-2028 Financial Plan Bylaw for public consultation.*

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report describes the community's response to the 2024 Budget at a Glance brochure and survey, which was mailed to every home and business to obtain feedback on the draft budget. The general themes of the 1524 responses continue to show respondents are strongly satisfied with the value they get from their tax dollars. Based on the comments received through the survey, staff do not recommend changes to the 2024 draft capital plan or operating budget presented to the Committee on December 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> respectively. Pursuant to the public input review, staff will begin preparation of the 2024-2028 Financial Plan Bylaw.

### **BACKGROUND**

Robust and prudent financial planning is a key priority for both City council and staff. The process for this year and its outcomes will meet the requirements of section 165 of the *Community Charter* requiring that the City annually adopt a Five-Year Financial Plan which sets out the planned services and initiatives and their corresponding funding.

In January, the City mailed the 2024 Budget at a Glance brochure to every home and business to obtain feedback on the draft operating budget.

# 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

The budget public consultation period ended on January 31st, with the City receiving 1,524 responses. Residents were asked for their input on several issues, including:

- Satisfaction with service levels
- Service enhancements
- Service reductions
- Satisfaction with communication relating to the budget
- Information that describes themselves

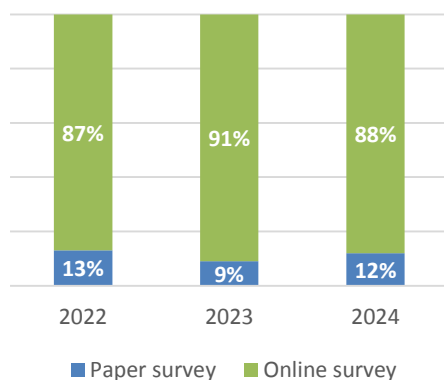
Not everyone who responded answered each question or provided comments. However, all responses received have been provided to each department for further analysis and review.

## DISCUSSION

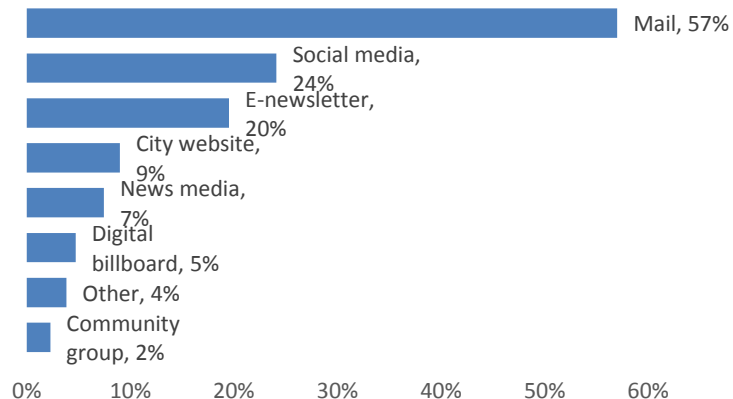
### How Many Responses?

The City received another record number of responses this year of 1,524. Most respondents continue to complete the survey electronically (88%), continuing a trend seen over the past number of years. While a growing number of respondents have learned about the survey through social media and other sources, the City's practice of mailing the Budget at a Glance brochure to each home continues to still be the largest single channel by which respondents learned about the survey (57%).

% of Responses by type



How Respondents learned of the Survey



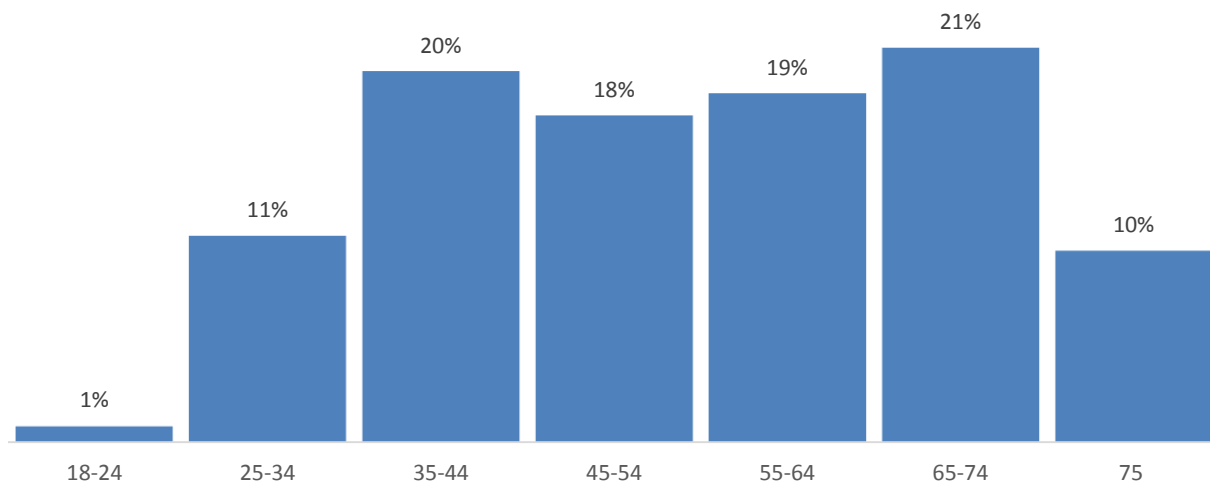
### Who Are the Respondents of The Survey?

## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

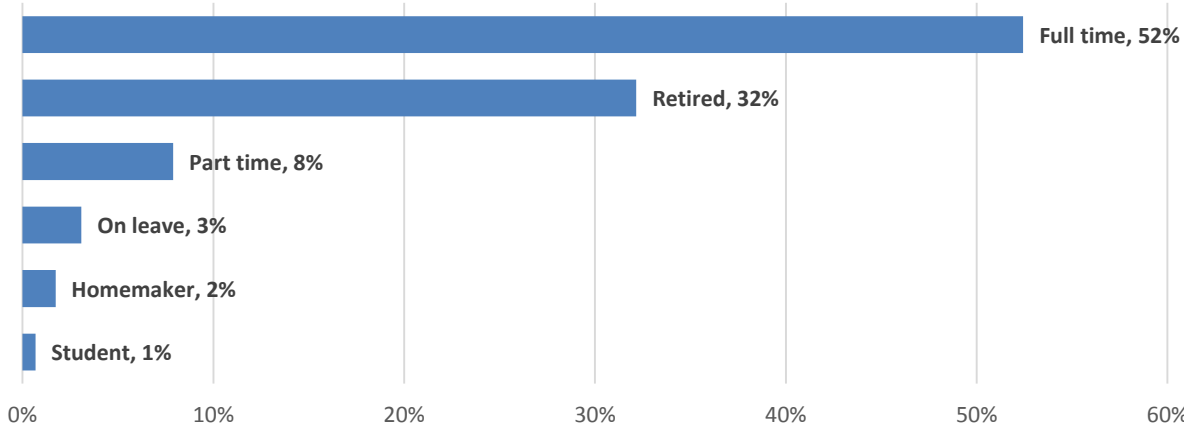
Several metrics were asked to help better identify respondent's demographics. This data assists City staff in continuously evolving trends and design communication strategies to better reach our residents. These responses also help provide context to the survey results and how various demographics of our community feel about the City services we provide.

The results of this section demonstrated a fairly even distribution of respondents when it came to age. A little over half of respondents worked full-time while 32% were retired. 15% both lived and worked in Port Coquitlam and 8% were owners of a business in the community. Finally, a 56% of respondents lived in a single-family home with the remaining 44% in apartments or townhouses.

Which best describes your age?

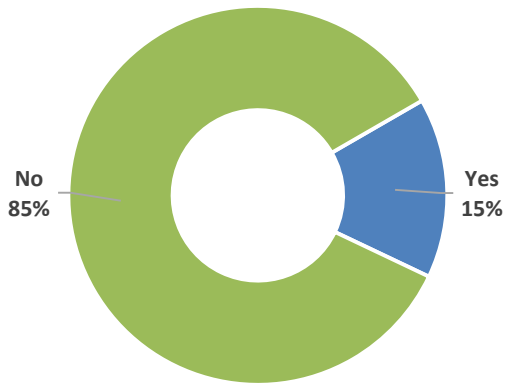


What is your employment status?

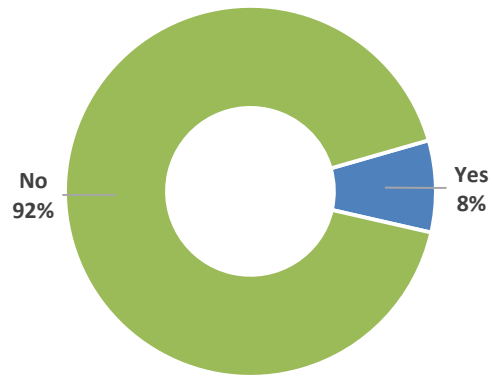


## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

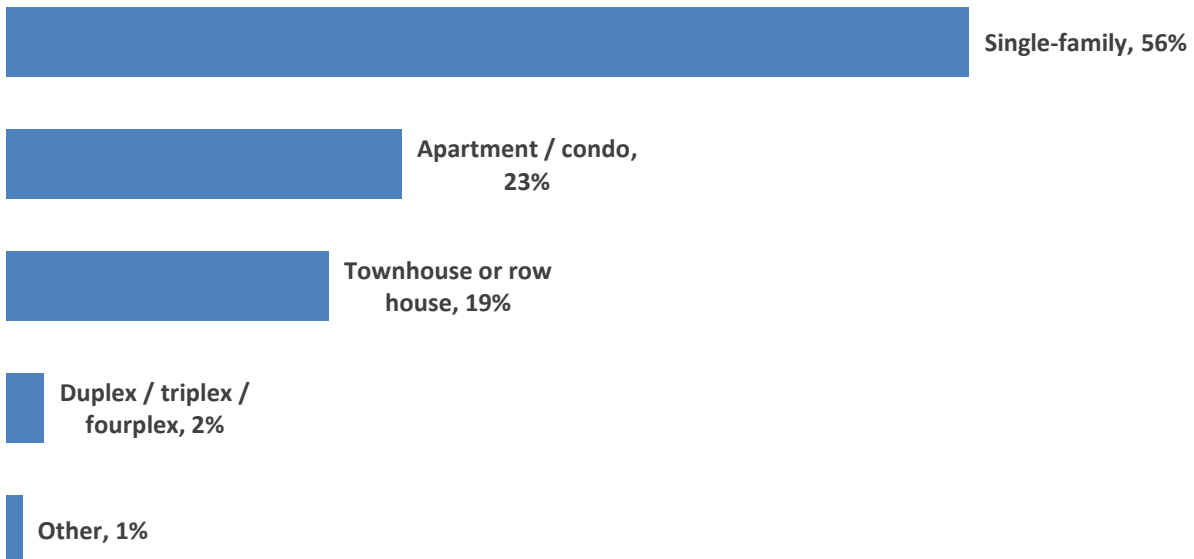
Are you employed in Port Coquitlam?



Do you operate a business in Port Coquitlam?



If you own residential property in Port Coquitlam, what type?

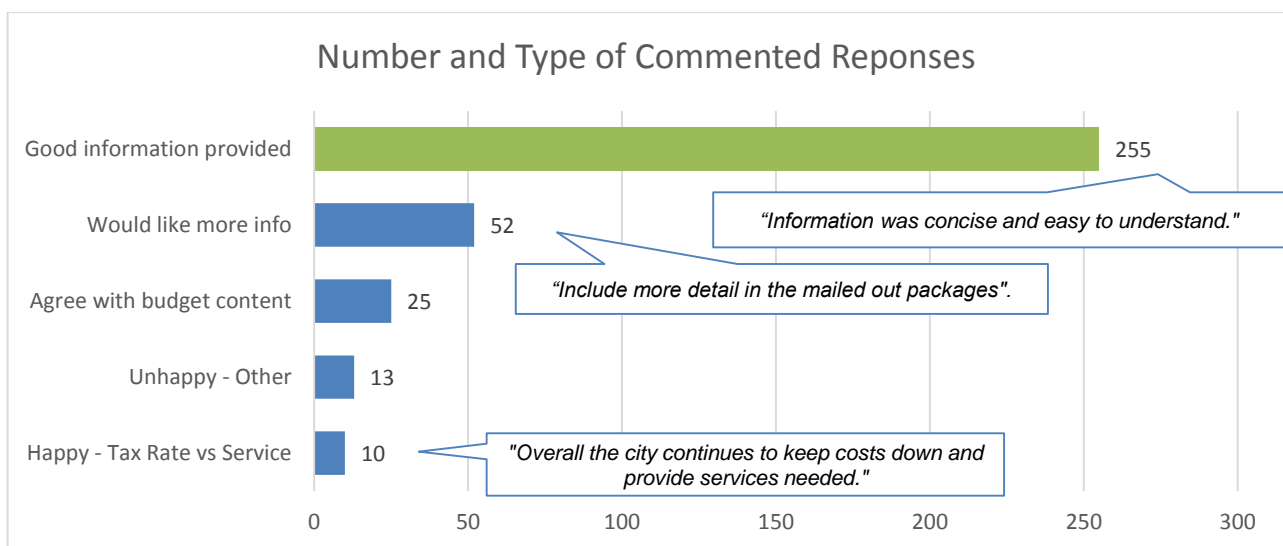
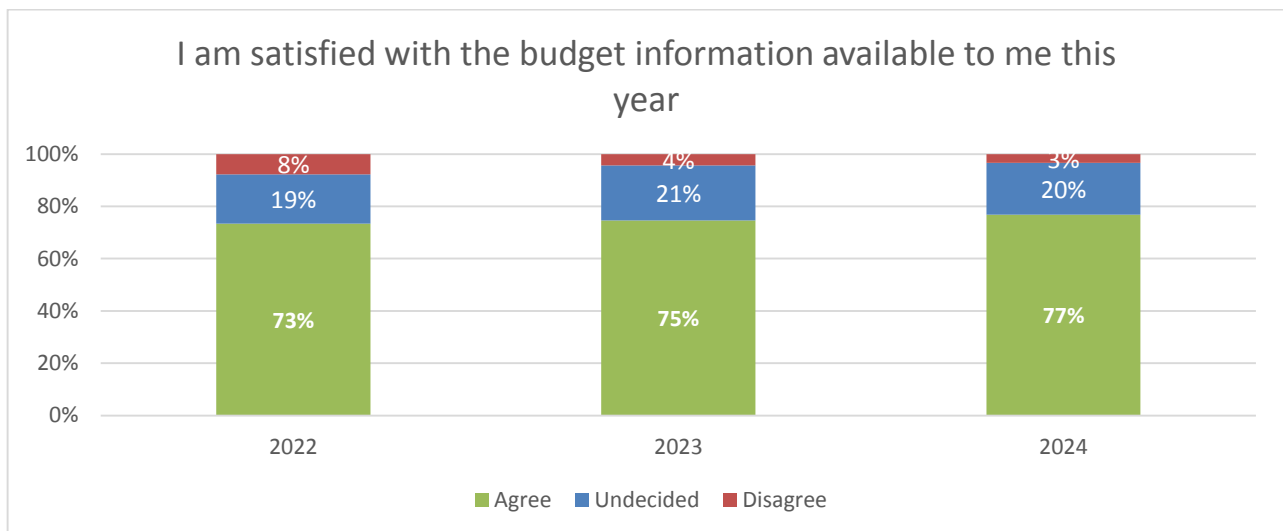


# 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

## SURVEY RESPONSES

### Are Respondents Satisfied with Budget Information?

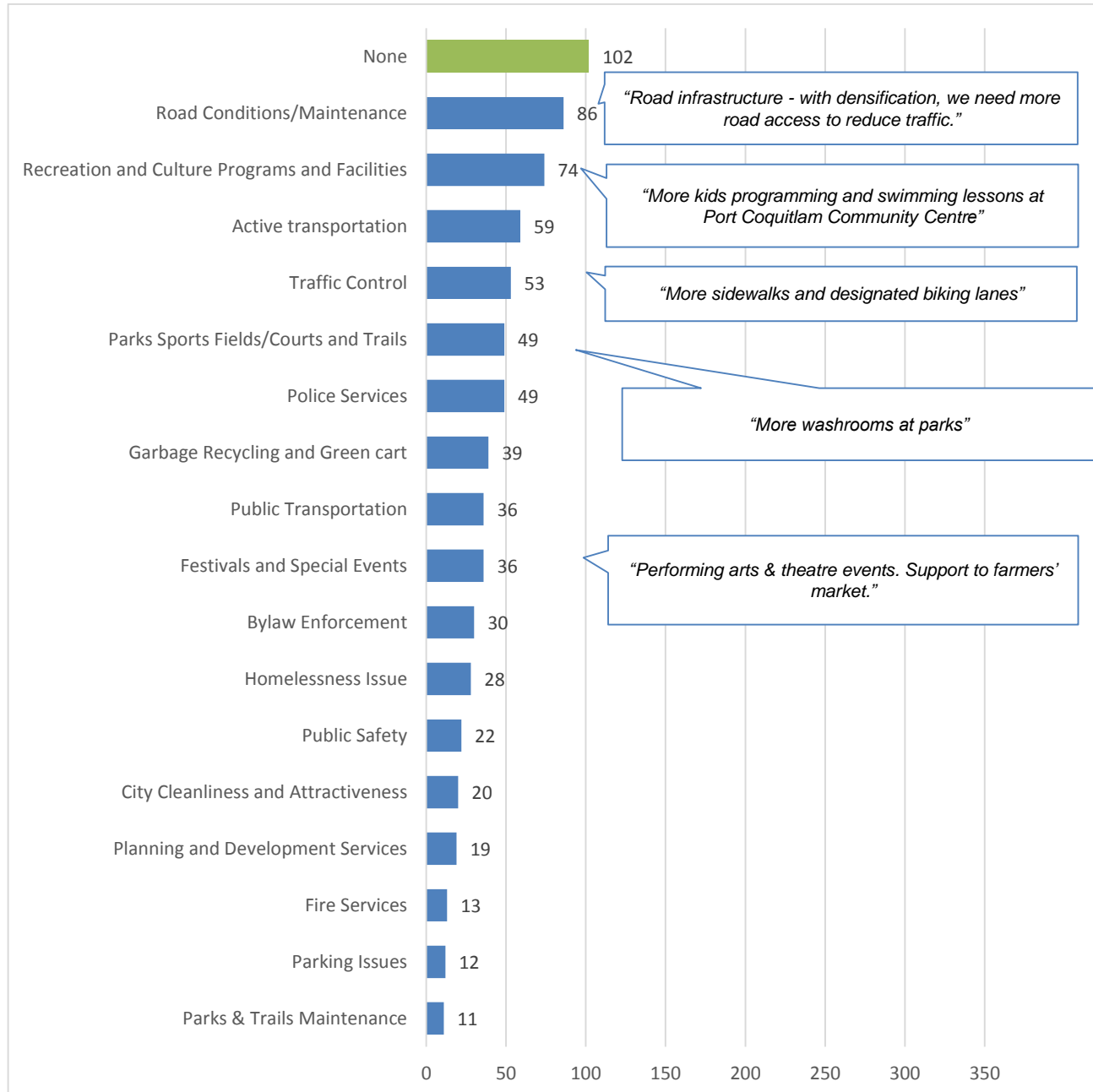
Overall, the community continues to be satisfied with the effort the City is making to provide budget information. 77% of respondents, an increase over 2023, indicate they are satisfied with the budget information available to them, and a historically low 3% marking their dissatisfaction. Those that were either uncertain or unhappy noted that more details in the mail out survey and greater information on capital projects would be beneficial. However, the City's effort to ensure that budget information is readily available, concise, and easy to understand remains a key driver behind responses of a positive majority.



## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

### What Service Would Respondents Pay to Improve?

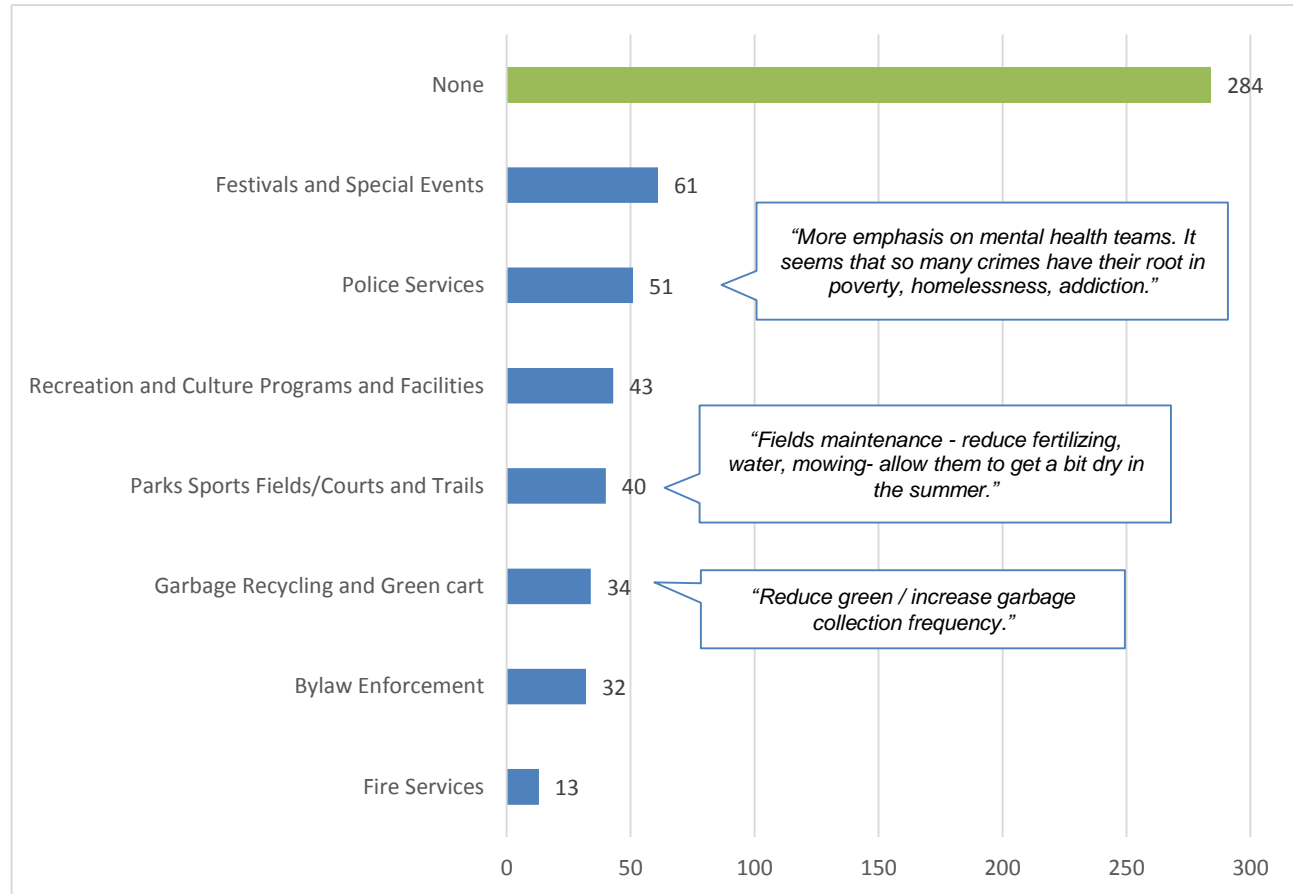
Residents were also asked about their interest in increasing or improving service, even if it may result in higher taxes. 738 respondents answered the question and the following table shows the common themes. While none was the highest response, it should be noted that Road Maintenance, Recreation Programs and Active Transportation were the highest noted categories for enhancement.



## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

### What Service Would Respondents Trade for Lower Taxes?

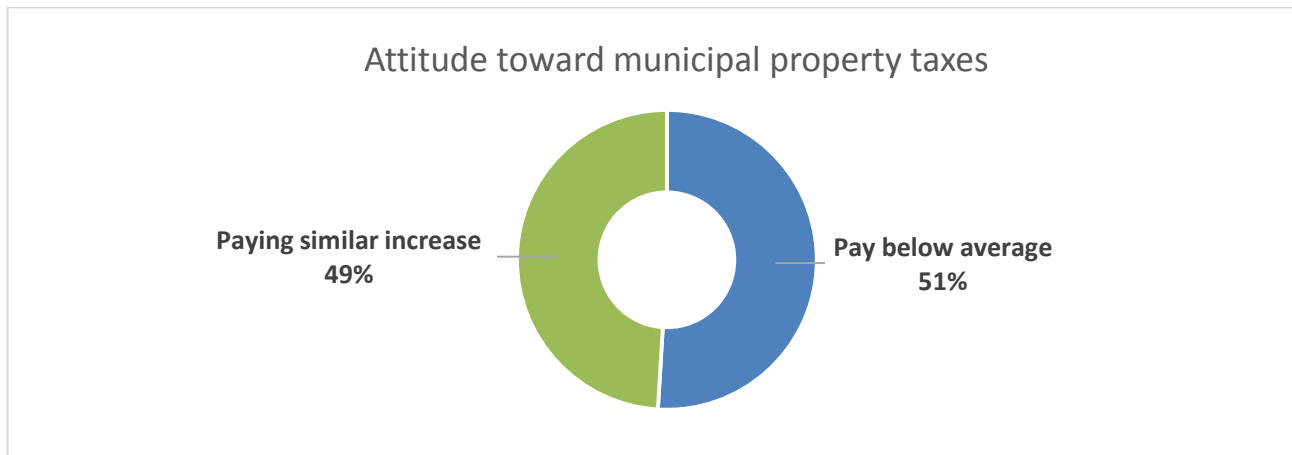
Residents were asked about their interest in decreasing one of the 8 services listed above if it would result in lower taxes/rates. Of 558 respondents, a significant portion (284) had indicated they were happy with the services being provided and did not want to see any cuts while others had commented on the following areas:



## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

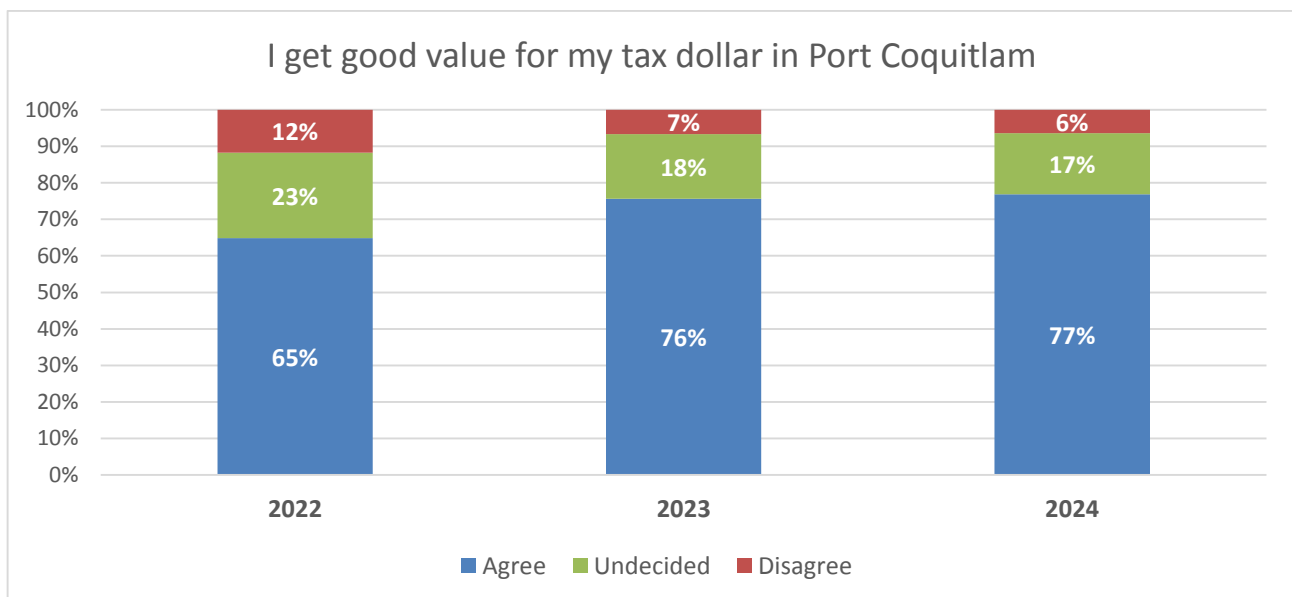
### What are the respondents' overall attitude toward municipal property taxes?

Residents were asked about their preference as it relates to Port Coquitlam property taxes as compared to neighbouring municipalities. Responses were mixed, with half in favour of increases below the average while the other half feeling more comfortable with paying a similar increase.



### Do respondents feel they get value for their tax dollars?

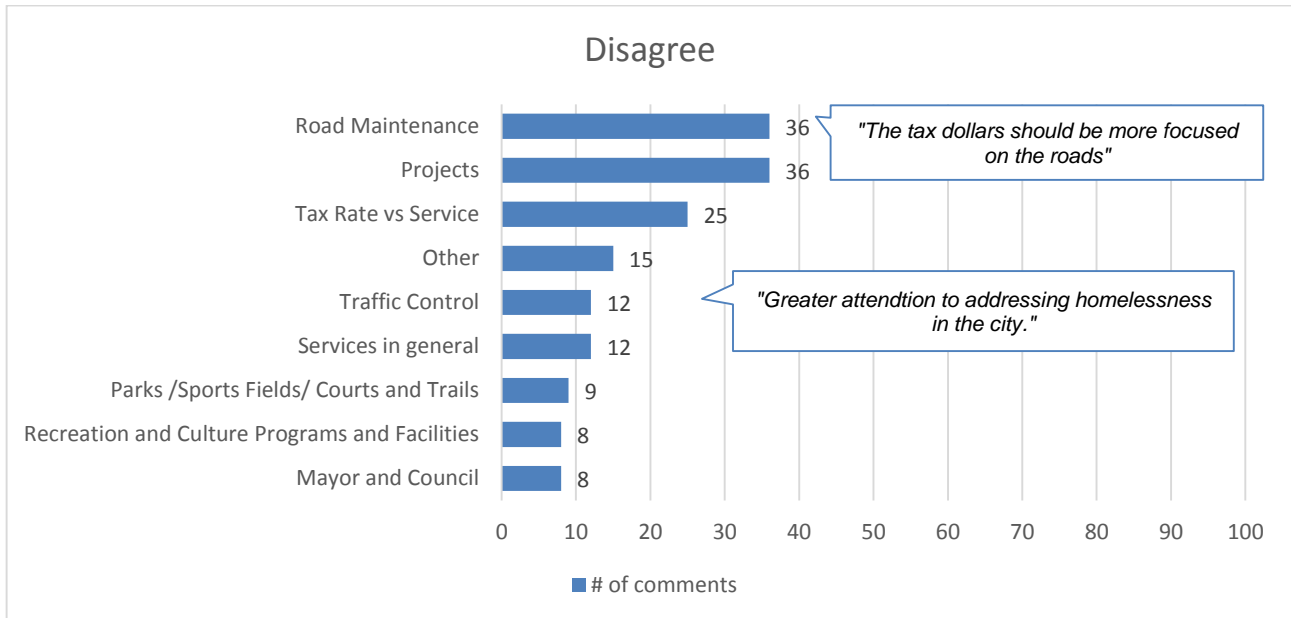
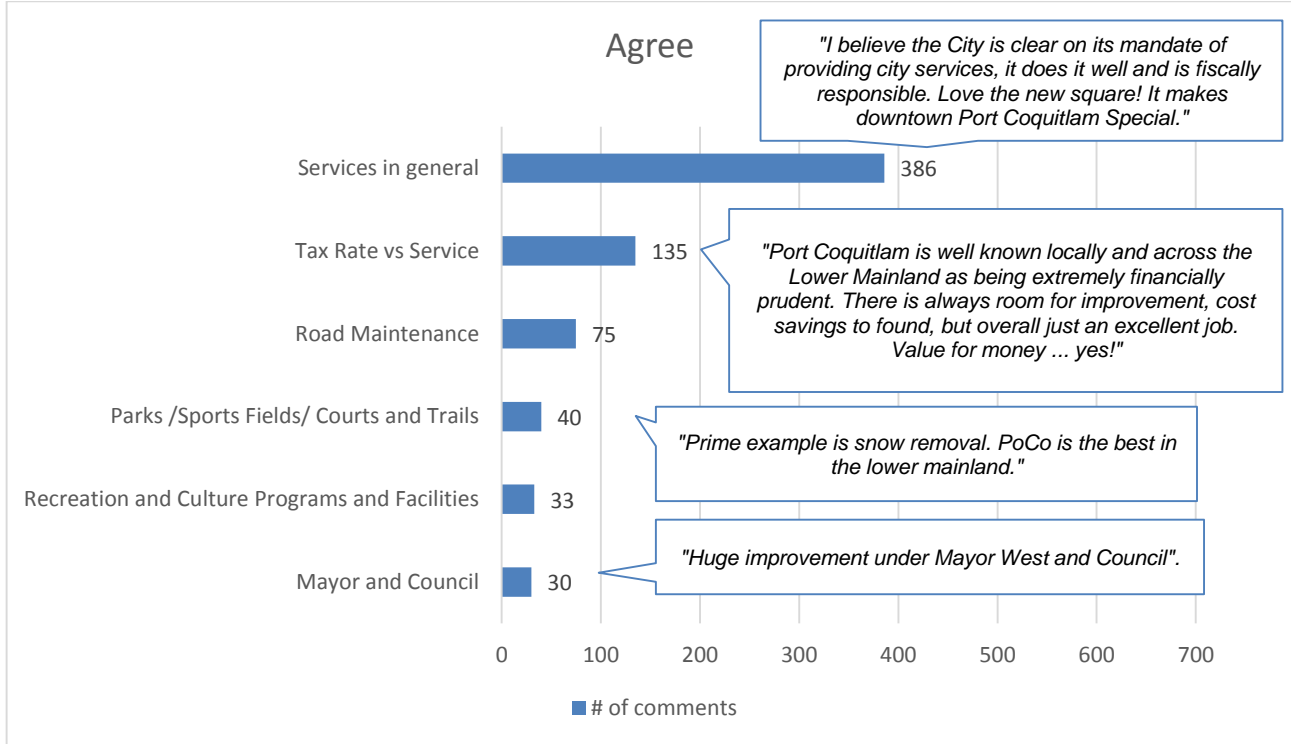
Port Coquitlam residents are overwhelmingly happy with the value they get from tax dollars. This is a key metric for staff and a notable priority for the Council. In 2024, 77% of the respondents agree, an increase over 2023, with a record low of only 6% that disagree.





## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

The following bar graphs consider some areas of note provided by those who answered “**Agree**” or “**Disagree**” regarding whether they get good value for their tax dollars.



## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

### What is the Overall Level of Satisfaction with City Services?

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction on fourteen City services (listed in the table below). Available rating options were given a score to help depict the year over year change:

- Needs Improvement Score = 1
- Meets Expectation Score = 2
- Exceeds Expectation Score = 3

The closer a service is to a score of 2 or above, the more the respondent was happy with the service. Respondents were also provided the opportunity to mark “did not use”. The weighted average of each category response was calculated as shown in the table below:

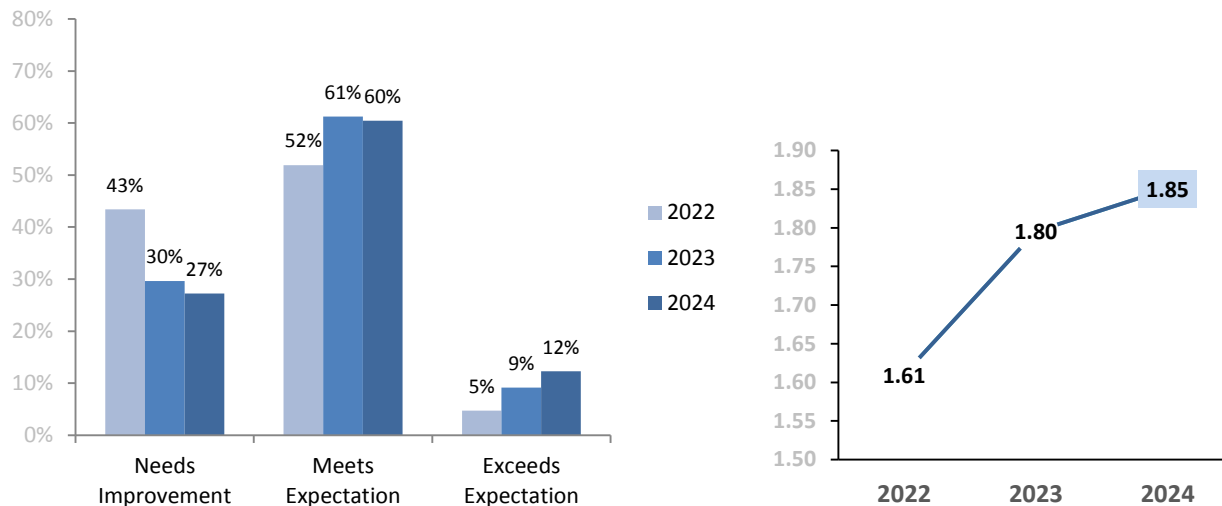
Area	2023 Score	2024 Score	Score Change	% Not Used
Road Conditions / Maintenance	1.80	1.85	▲	1%
Traffic Control	1.94	1.83	▼	0%
Active transportation (paths, cycling/pedestrian amenities and safety)	1.99	1.89	▼	10%
City Cleanliness and Attractiveness	2.03	2.12	▲	0%
Utilities (water, sewer, drainage)	2.05	2.08	▲	2%
Garbage, Recycling and Green Cart	2.19	2.18	-	9%
Fire Services	2.25	2.28	▲	30%
Police Services	2.00	1.98	▼	25%
Parks, Sports Fields/Courts and Trails	2.23	2.26	▲	4%
Recreation and Culture Programs and Facilities	2.25	2.13	▼	11%
Festivals and Special Events	2.10	2.21	▲	12%
Business Licensing/Services	2.03	2.02	-	67%
Bylaw Enforcement	1.85	1.86	▲	34%
Building, Planning and Development Services	1.80	1.81	▲	67%

- **Most Improved Services:**
  - Festivals and Special Events
  - City Cleanliness and Attractiveness
- **Areas of Greatest Need:**
  - Traffic Control
  - Recreation and Culture Programs and Facilities
  - Active Transportation

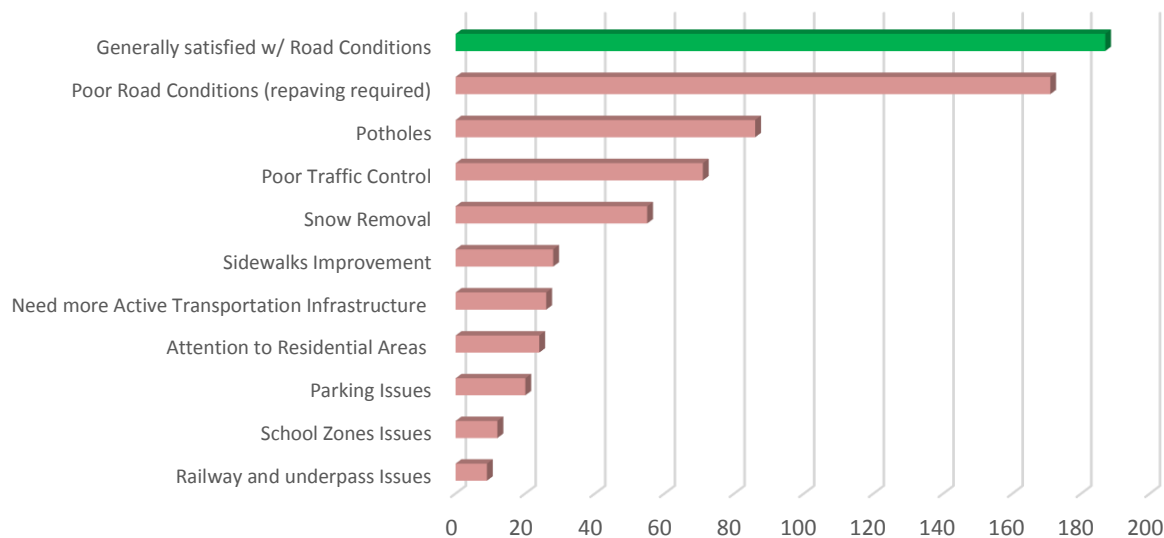
Respondents had the opportunity to provide comments to supplement their ratings. The following sections of this report provide an overview of the service score as well as common themes derived from the survey.

# 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

## Road Conditions / Maintenance



60% of respondents find the current road conditions and maintenance to meet their expectations, while an additional 12% express that it exceeds their expectations. This trend is positive and an indication of increasing satisfaction among respondents. This question received a significant number of comments, with 25% of respondents expressing the need for general road condition improvement, repaving and greater attention during the winter. Consistent with the prior year potholes continue to be one of the most frequently mentioned areas of improvement, however, the number of comments received in this regard decreased by 14%, a significant decrease from prior years.

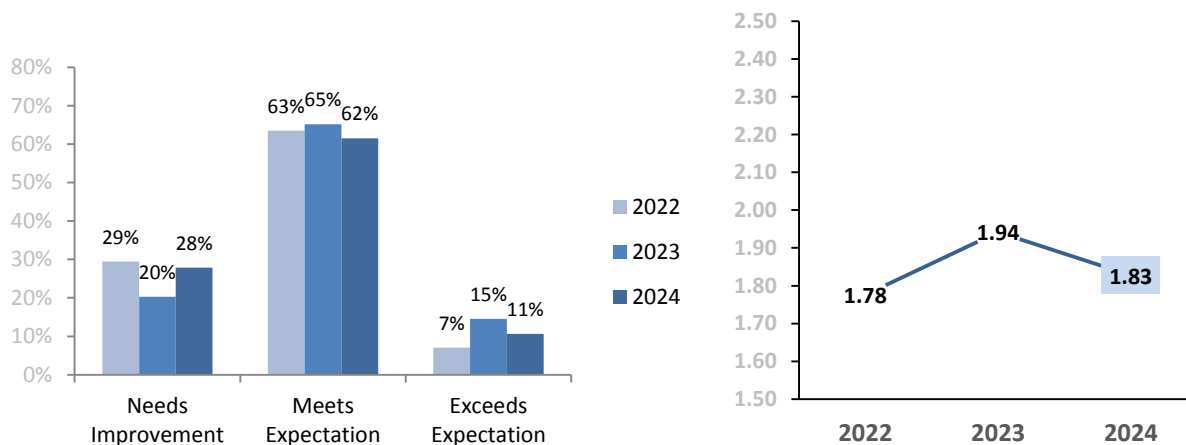


## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

The City has continued to focus on rehabilitation and improvements through its Neighbourhood Rehabilitation program in recent years. The 2024-2025 capital plan continues to improve road conditions in this area through the replacement of road, curb and drainage in the following areas:

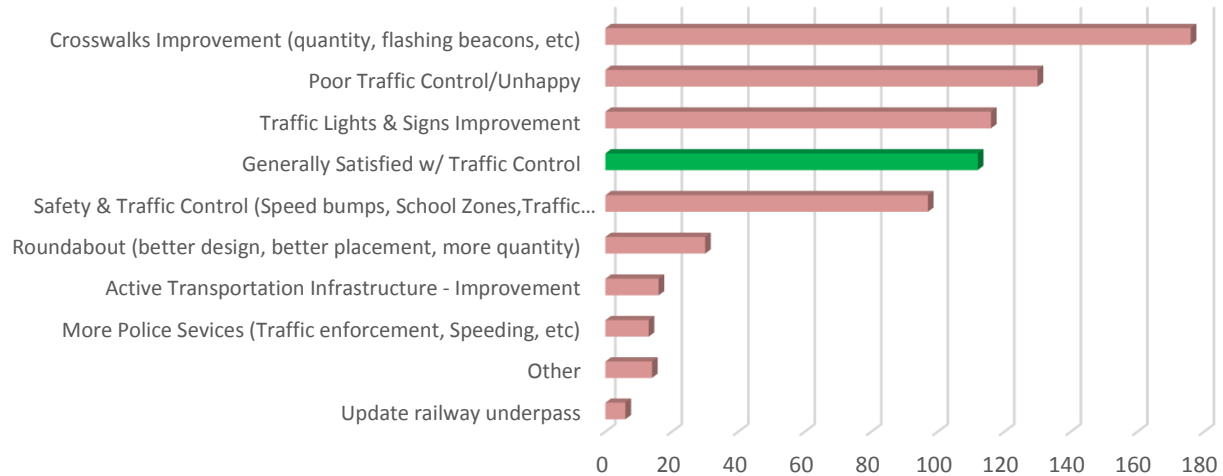
- Wellington Street: Myrtle Way to Mason Avenue
- Mason Avenue: Oxford Street to Wellington Street
- Riverside Drive: Skeena Street to Fremont Street
- Greenmount between Wellington and Coast Meridian Road
- Sefton Street north of Greenmount to the border

### Traffic Control (lights, signals, crosswalks, intersections)



While majority of respondents found that traffic control met expectations, the satisfaction score decreased by 6% compared to the previous year. Residents identified several key areas for enhancement, with a primary focus on the demand for more efficient traffic management. Specifically, residents highlighted the necessity for improvements in traffic lights, both in terms of their strategic placement and the provision of left-turning lanes. Additionally, there was a notable emphasis on the need for enhanced safety measures in the form of pedestrian hybrid beacons at crosswalks. Respondents also stressed the importance of traffic control enhancements aimed at bolstering safety in school zones and residential neighbourhoods.

## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

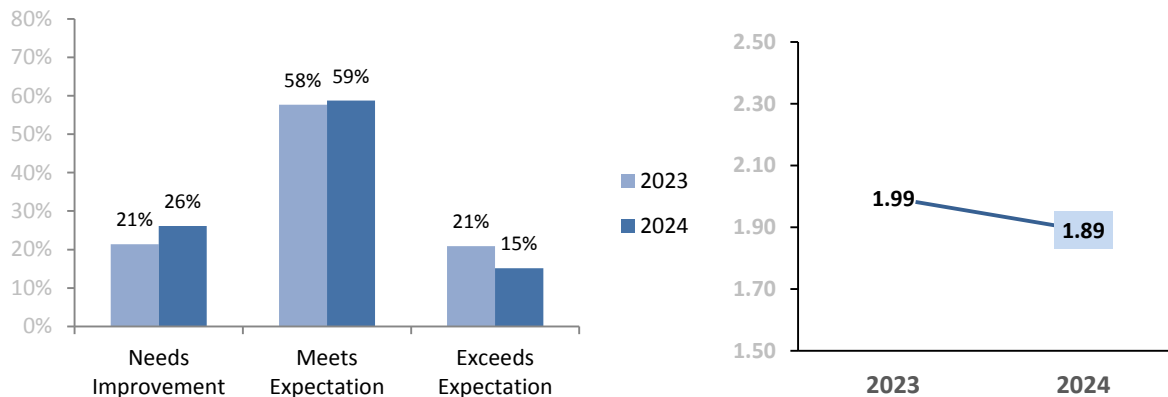


The City has received positive feedback from residents regarding road and pedestrian safety improvements in recent years. The 2024-2025 capital plan continues with a concerted focus in this area through the following:

- Three sidewalk projects with streetlighting, raised crosswalks, crosswalk markings and intersection control improvements with 2024 Sidewalk & Pedestrian Safety Improvement programs. There are also two pedestrian flashing beacons and three bus stop improvement projects with the same program in 2024.
- Seven raised crosswalks, four speed humps, and digital speed signage planned with the 2024 Traffic Calming Program.
- A new traffic signal at Riverside/Riverwood/Amazon is planned for construction in 2024.
- A new traffic signal at Nicola/Hawkins is planned for design in 2024 and construction in 2025.

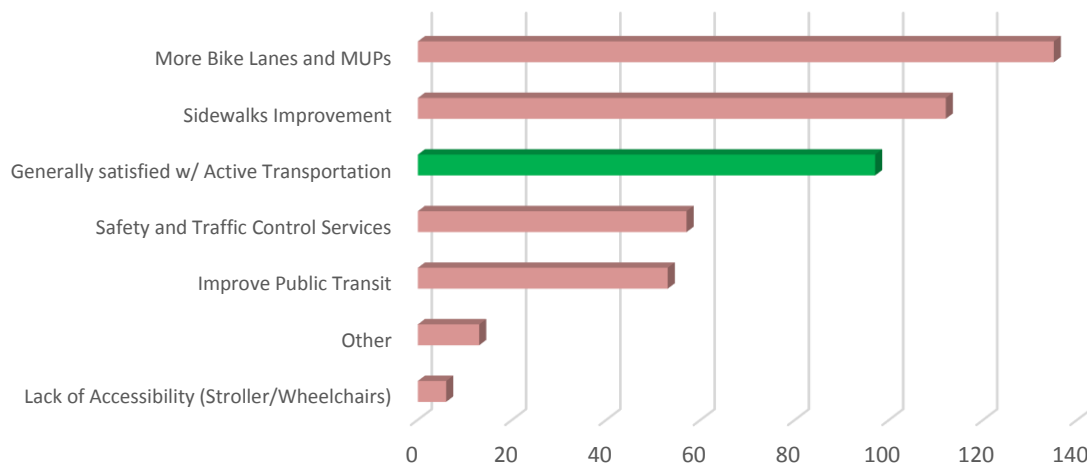
## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

### Active transportation (paths, cycling/pedestrian amenities and safety)



Respondent satisfaction with Active Transportation Services experiencing a 5% decline from the previous year. Notably, there is a strong call for improvements in active transportation infrastructure which include more bike lanes, MUPs and sidewalks to enabling residents to navigate between destinations safely.

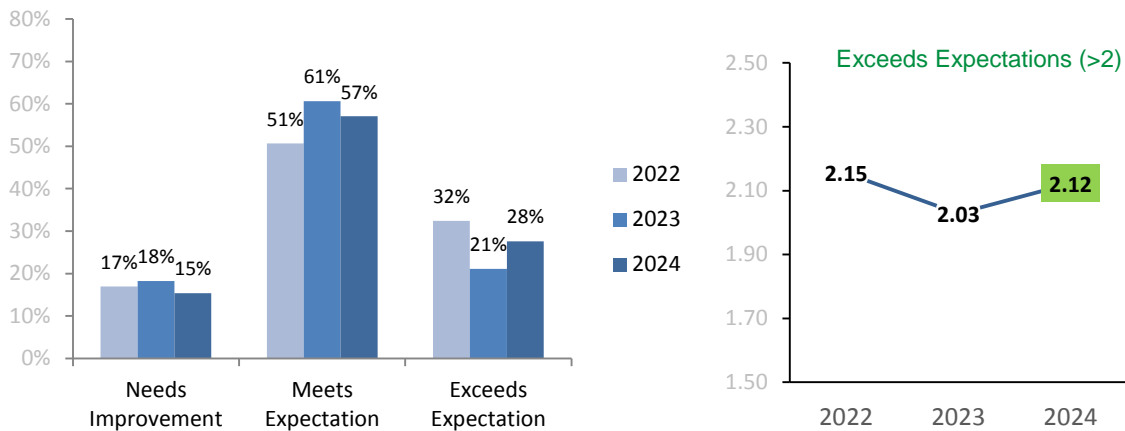
The growing use of bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters has raised concerns among residents around having infrastructure for both user and pedestrian safety.



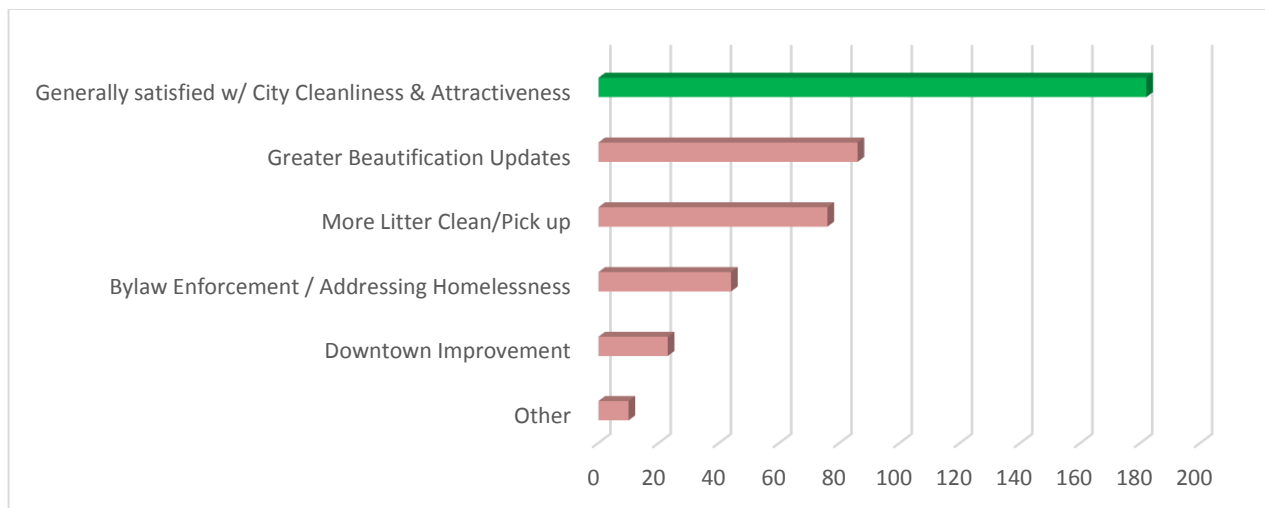
Current transportation projects in the 2024-2025 capital plan include multi-use paths, sidewalk additions, cycle tracks, new and upgraded trails, streetlighting and crosswalk enhancements. New active transportation projects are also being planned with an update to the Master Transportation Plan (<https://letstalkpoco.portcoquitlam.ca/master-transportation-plan>).

## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

### City Cleanliness and Attractiveness



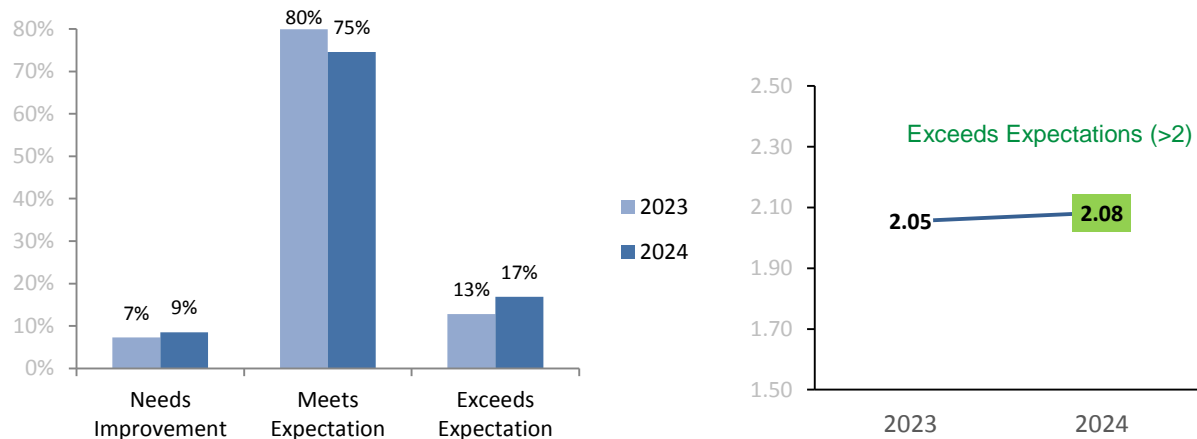
Satisfaction among respondents with the cleanliness and attractiveness of the city has improved by 5% compared to the preceding year. Consistent with the prior year, littering and cleanliness remain the most frequently mentioned areas of improvement. There were several comments related to the further need for beautification, downtown improvement, and addressing the increasing homeless population.



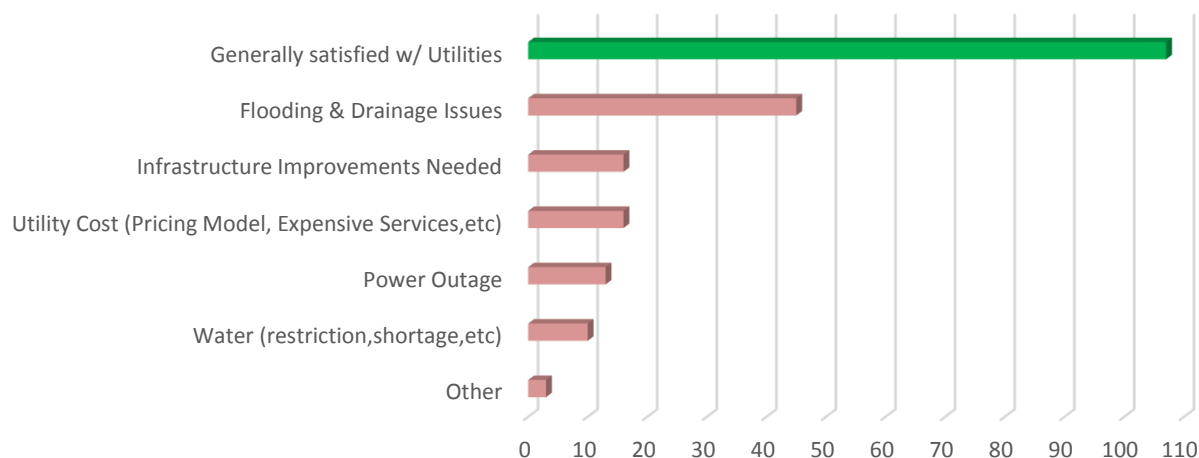
The City has prioritized the appearance and cleanliness of public spaces by planning a dedicated works crew focussing on dealing with problem areas and refuse. The recently added Roaming Crew was deployed in 2023 seeing a positive impact in reducing issues with litter and street cleanliness.

## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

### Utilities (water, sewer, drainage)



Utility services continue to meet or exceed expectations of over 90% of respondents with a score of 2.08. The majority of residents had positive comments, with the number of responses citing overall satisfaction increasing by 57%. The most commonly cited areas for improvement include flooding and drainage issues, infrastructure improvements and concerns about the cost of utilities.



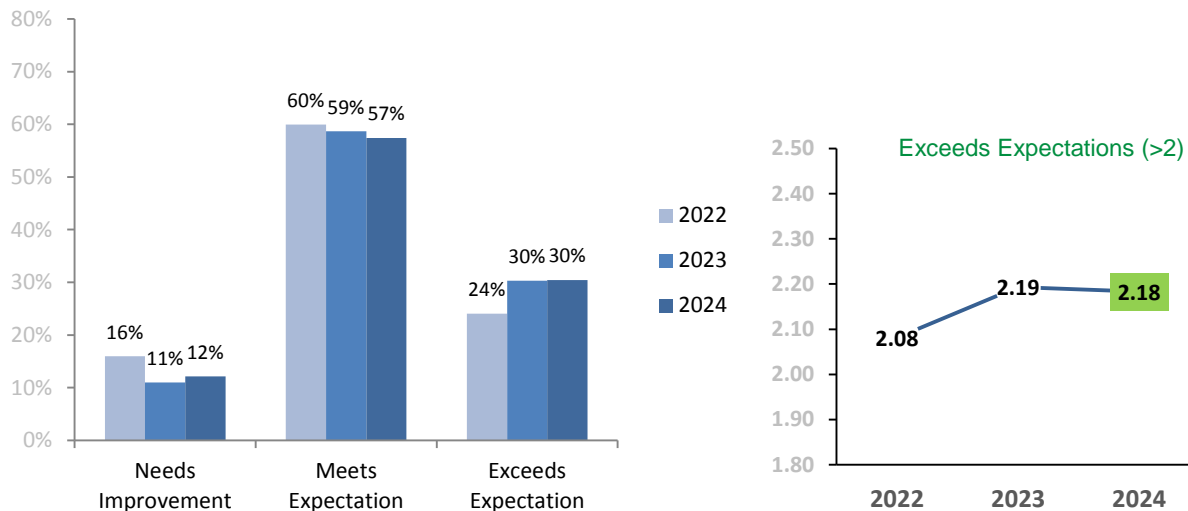
Flood mitigation and drainage continues to be a priority in the 2024-2025 capital plan with the following key projects expected to be underway in the near future:

- Maple Creek Drainage Pump Station Upgrade
- Cedar Drainage Pump Station Upgrade
- Loughheed Culvert Replacement
- Wilson Ave/Gates Park Drainage
- Fremont Drainage Channel

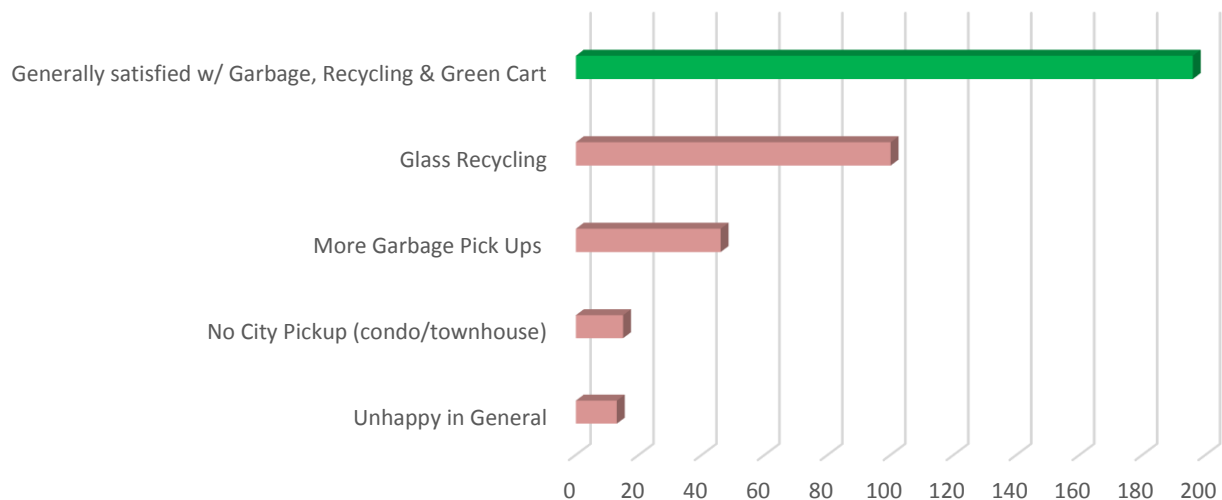


# 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

## Garbage, Recycling and Green Cart

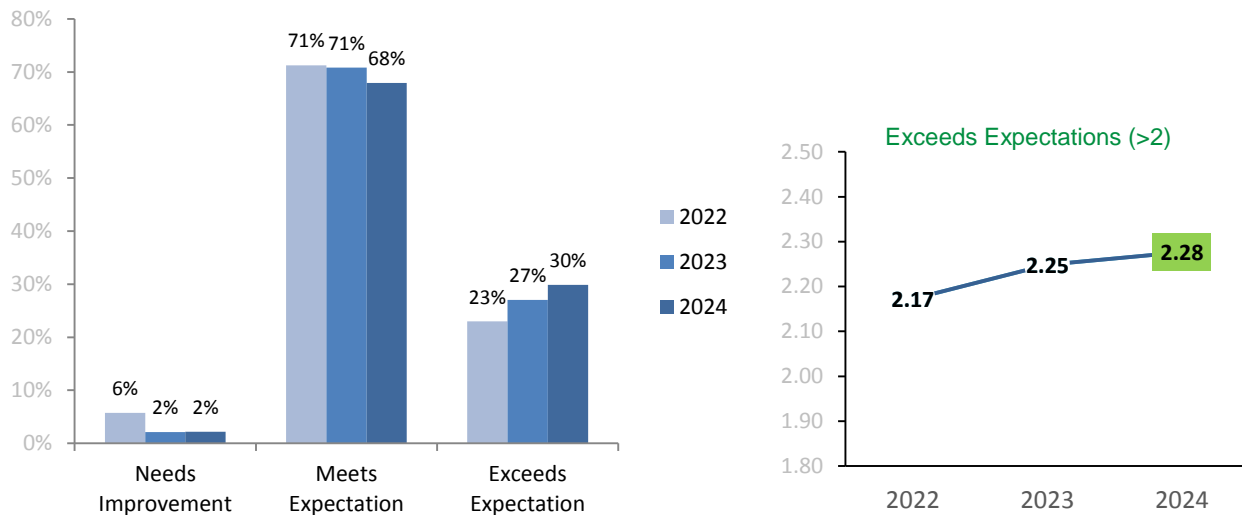


Respondent satisfaction with Garbage, Recycling, and Green Cart services was meeting and exceeding the expectations of over 80% of respondents. The service garnered numerous expressions of appreciation, particularly for its efficiency during holidays and the effectiveness of the large item pick-up program. Notably, there was a substantial uptick in comments for glass recycling compared to the previous year as residents are excited about this program.

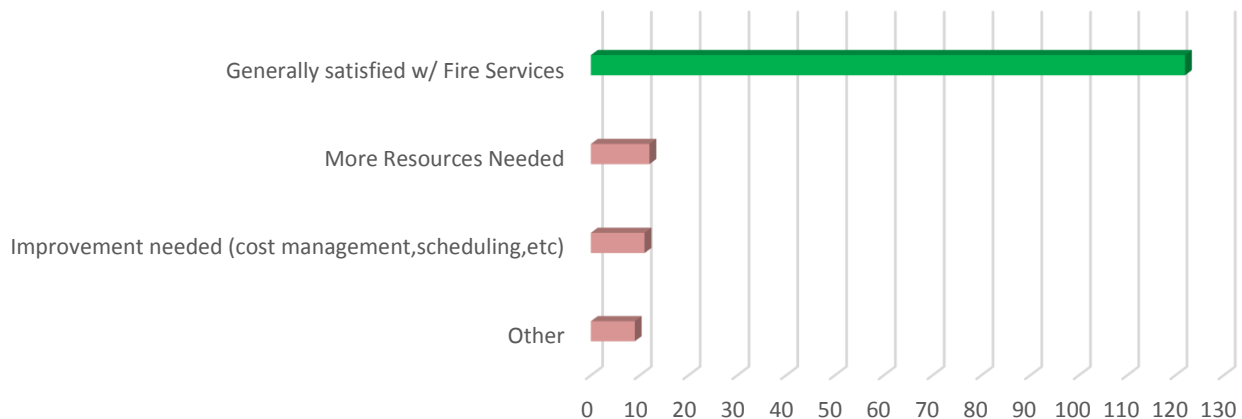


## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

### Fire Services



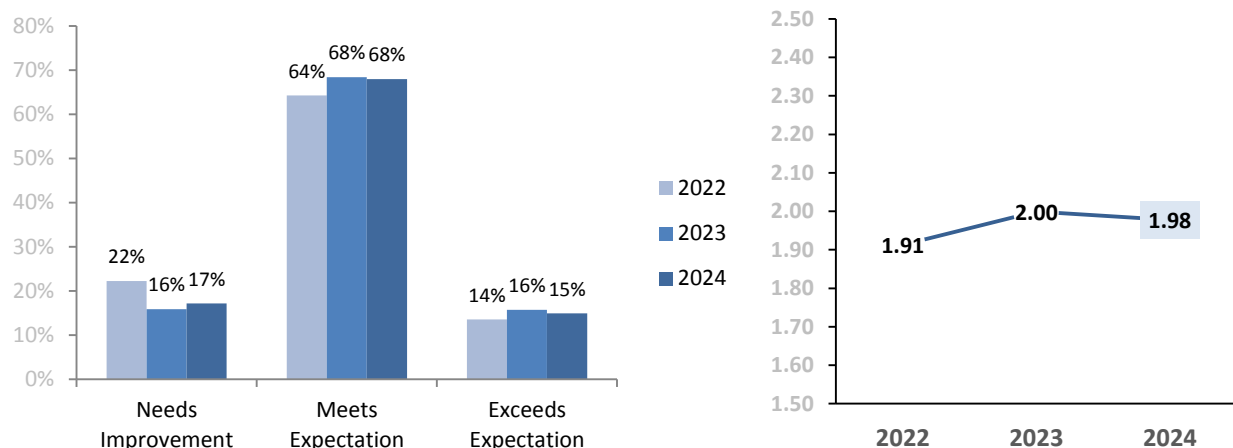
Fire Services claimed the top spot among the fourteen categories, showcasing outstanding respondent satisfaction that exceeded the benchmark of "Meeting Expectations." Even with 30% of respondents indicating they have not used this service; Fire Services remains the highest-rated among all City services. The majority of comments reflected positive sentiments, highlighting a general appreciation for the dedicated work of fire personnel and underscoring their responsiveness and excellent customer service.



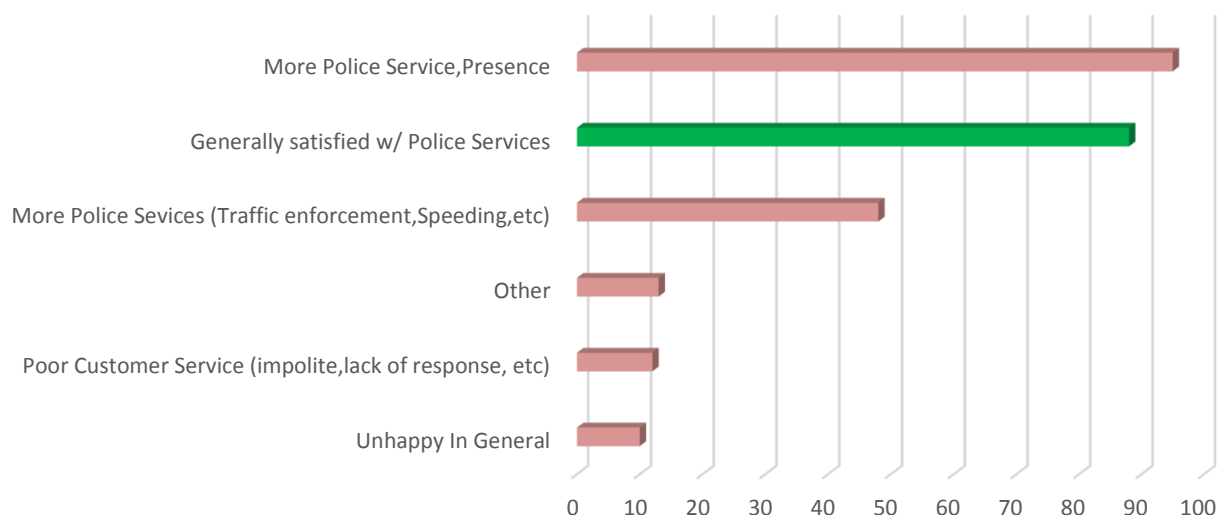
The City has further prioritized fire service levels by adding an additional member for 2024. This will help ensure service levels are maintained as the population and the city grows.

# 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

## Police Services



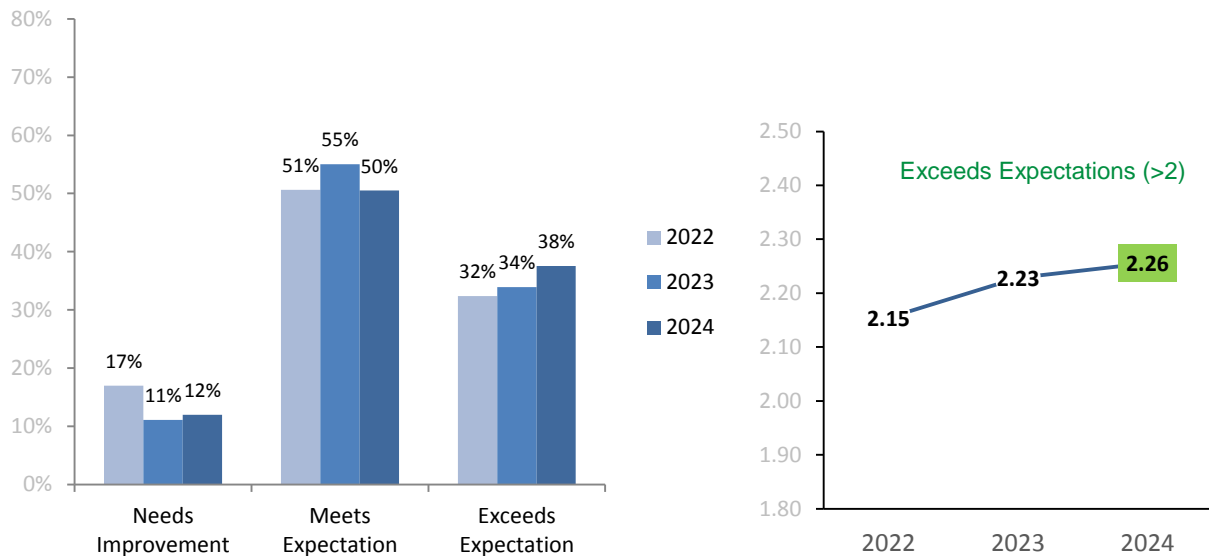
Respondent satisfaction with Police Services experienced a slight decline compared to the previous year with most comments towards a desire for heightened visual police presence in various areas of the City, notably in Downtown and school zones. The growing concern over the increased use of drugs and substances was also prominently mentioned.



The City has continued to prioritize public safety with the addition of RCMP members to the joint detachment in Coquitlam for 2023.

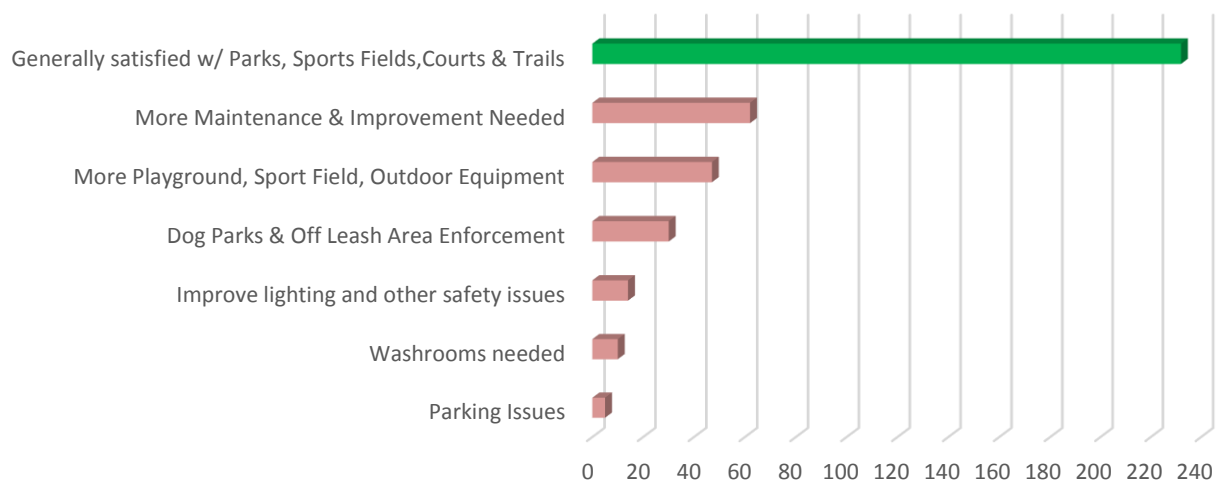
## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

### Parks, sports fields/courts and trails



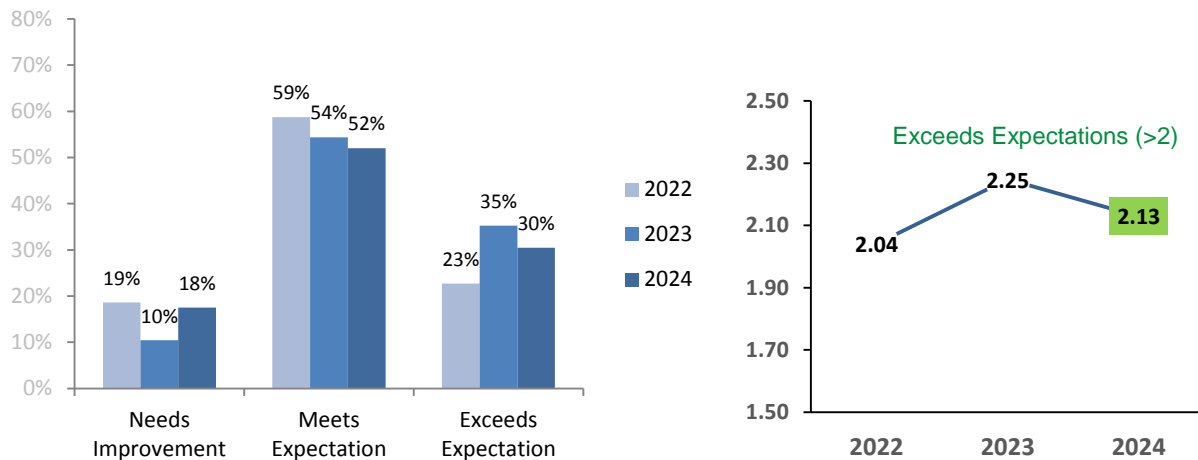
Consistent with the previous year, respondent satisfaction with Parks and Trails maintained its strong benchmark score with approximately 90% of respondents reported that their expectations were met or exceeded. Many positive comments highlighting the beauty of PoCo's Parks and Trails. Notably, there has been a consistent upward trend in satisfaction scores over the past four years.

However, those expressing dissatisfaction focused primarily on trail maintenance, expressing a desire for increased provision of playgrounds and sports fields, as well as improvements to the existing ones. Additional concerns were raised regarding the need for more public washrooms and enhanced lighting fixtures in both trails and parks.

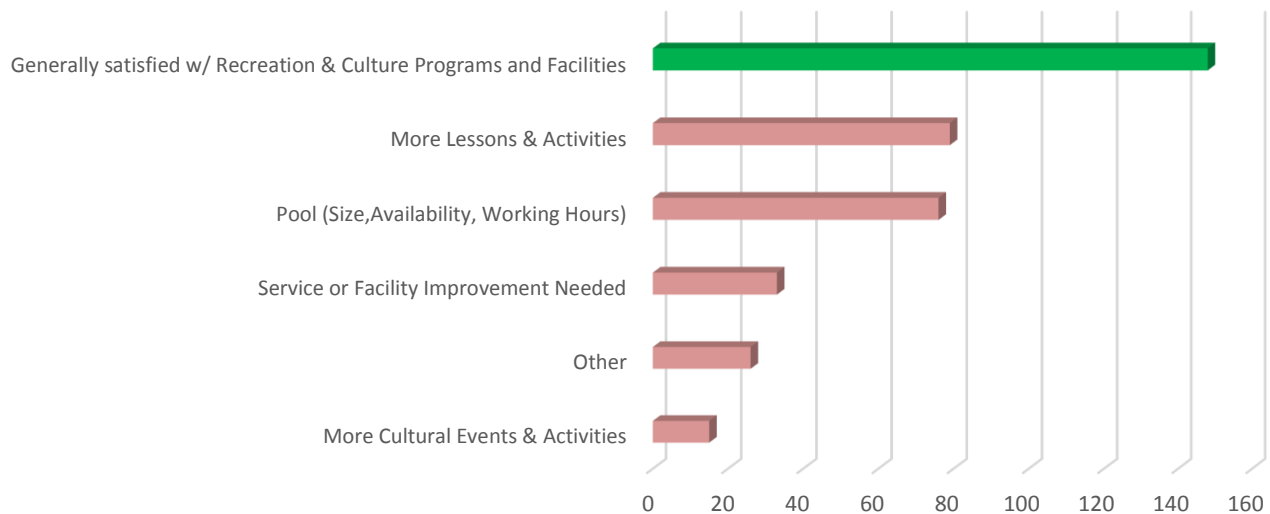


# 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

## Recreation and Culture Programs and Facilities



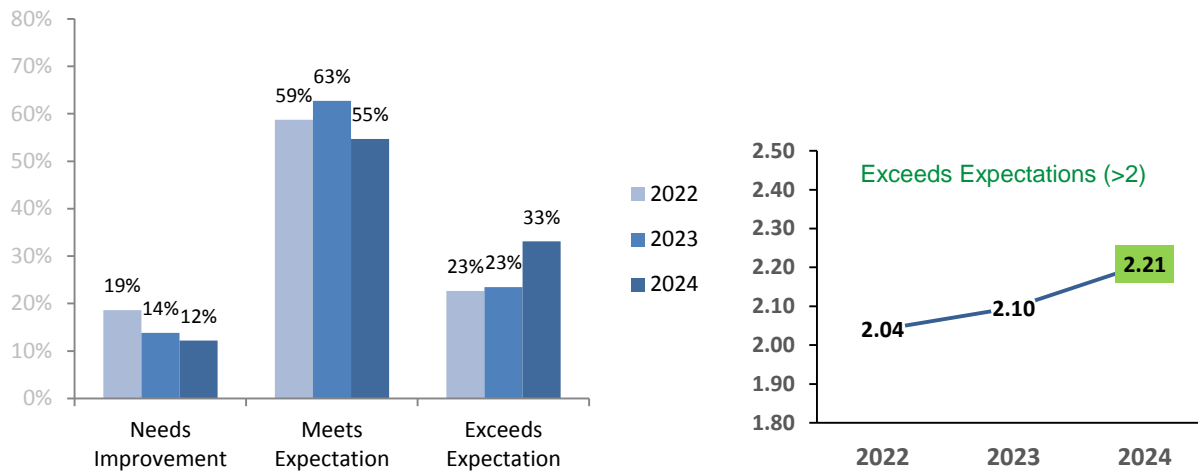
Respondent satisfaction with Recreation and Culture Programs, as well as Facilities, continues to remain in “exceeding expectations” however experienced a 5% decline. While the majority of responses were satisfied with the service offering, there were numerous recommendations for the recreation facilities, particularly the new community center (PCCC). There were also expressed desires for additional lessons and activities catering to all age groups, extended operating hours, and a more user-friendly experience. A prevalent concern highlighted in feedback pertained to the swimming pools across the city, with a recurring complaint being the shortage of swimming lessons.



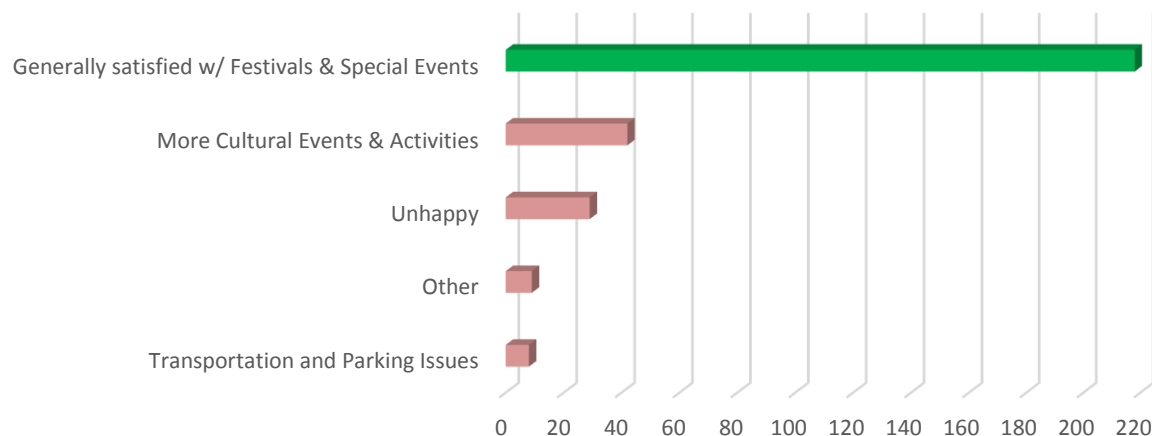
The city continues to prioritize access to aquatic lesson with the implementation of rolling registration, providing more lesson turnover opportunities, and continued recruitment for Aquatic Leaders. To further increase program and facility access, in 2024, operating hours will be extended to meet community demand and resident priority registration will be extended to instructor led drop-in programs.

# 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

## Festivals and Special Events

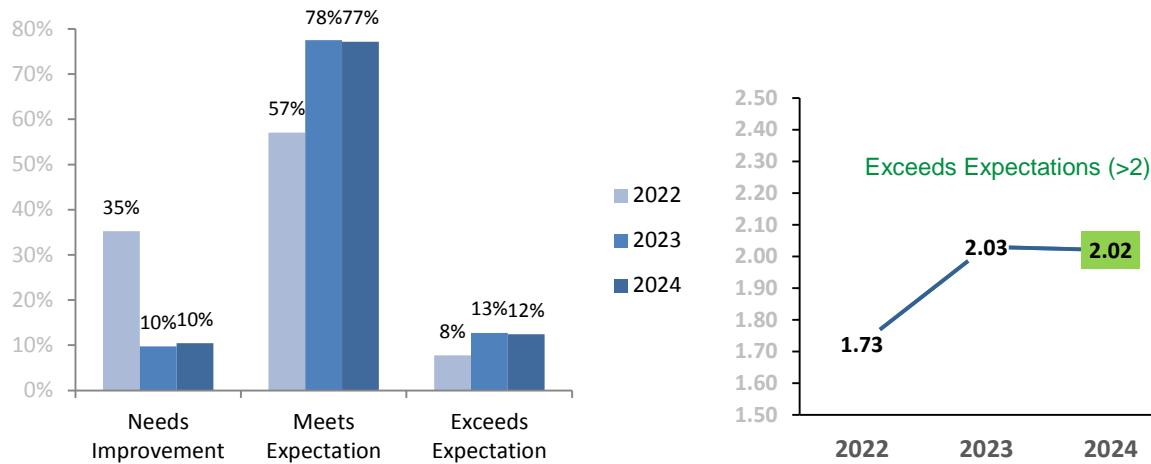


Festivals and Special Events overall exceeded respondent expectations marked by a 5% increase in respondent satisfaction compared to the preceding year. Notably, almost 90% of respondents reported that their expectations were either met or exceeded, indicating a significant achievement in delivering enjoyable and fulfilling experiences. While the overwhelming majority of responses indicated satisfaction, there were requests for additional events, improved public transportation planning, and a greater emphasis on multiculturalism.

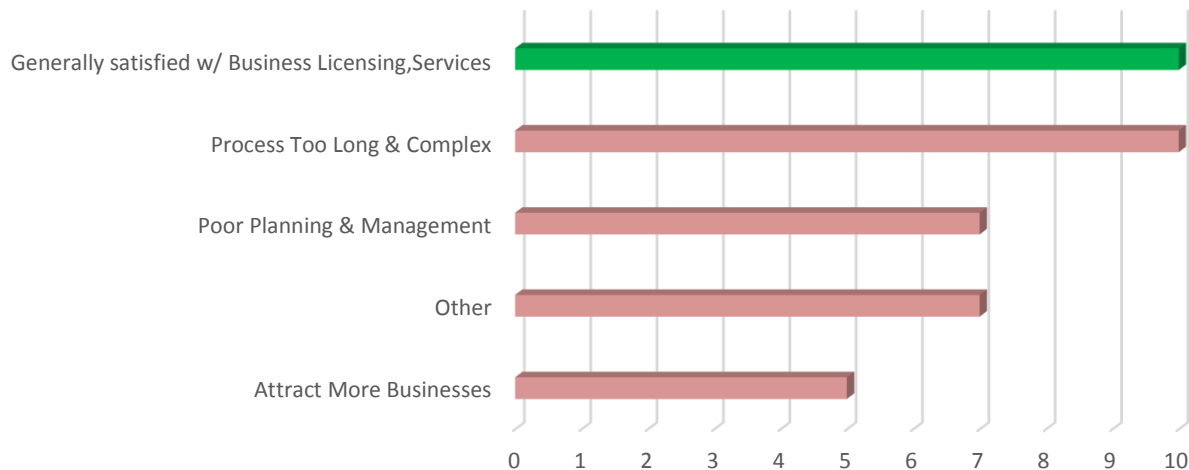


# 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

## Business Licensing & Services

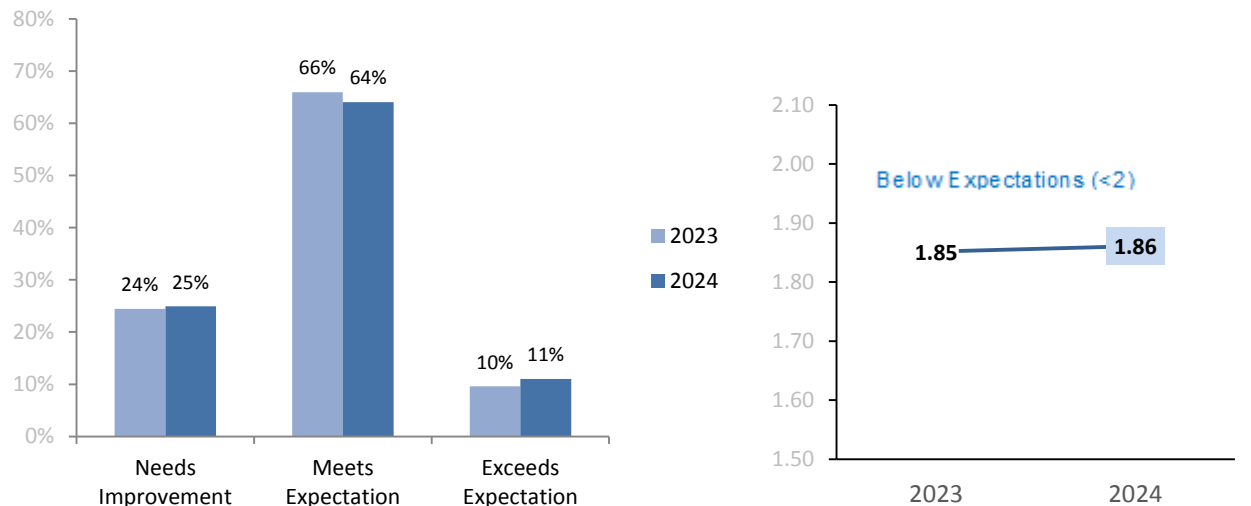


Respondent satisfaction with Business Licensing & Services remained consistent with the previous year. However, respondents expressed concerns regarding unclear and insufficient information on the website, as well as the perceived complexity and lengthiness of the processes involved.

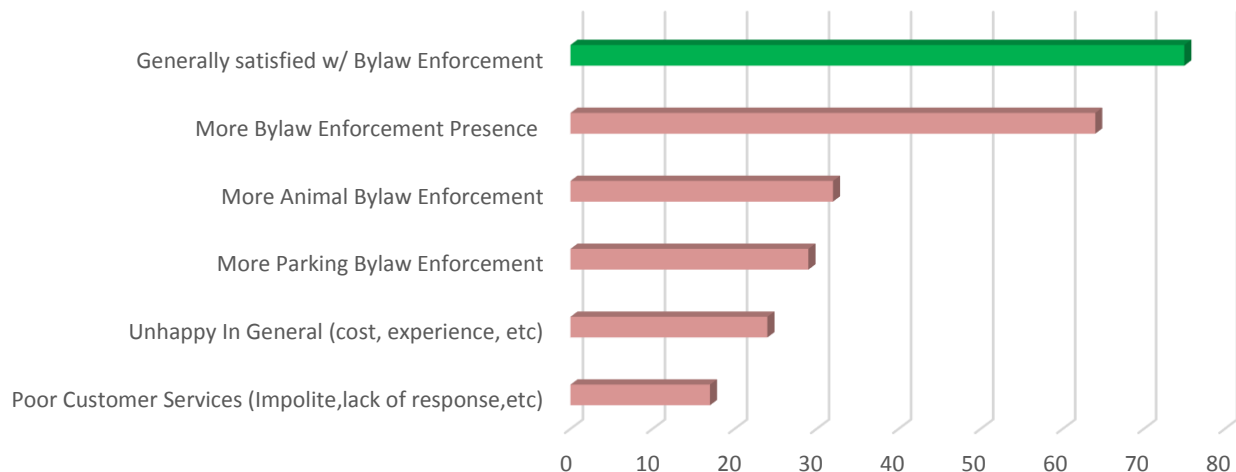


# 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

## Bylaw Enforcement



In general, 75% of respondents indicated that bylaw enforcement either met or exceeded their expectations. Despite over 30% of survey participants not having utilized this service, numerous comments highlighted a desire for increased visibility of bylaw officers, particularly in the enforcement of animal and parking bylaws.

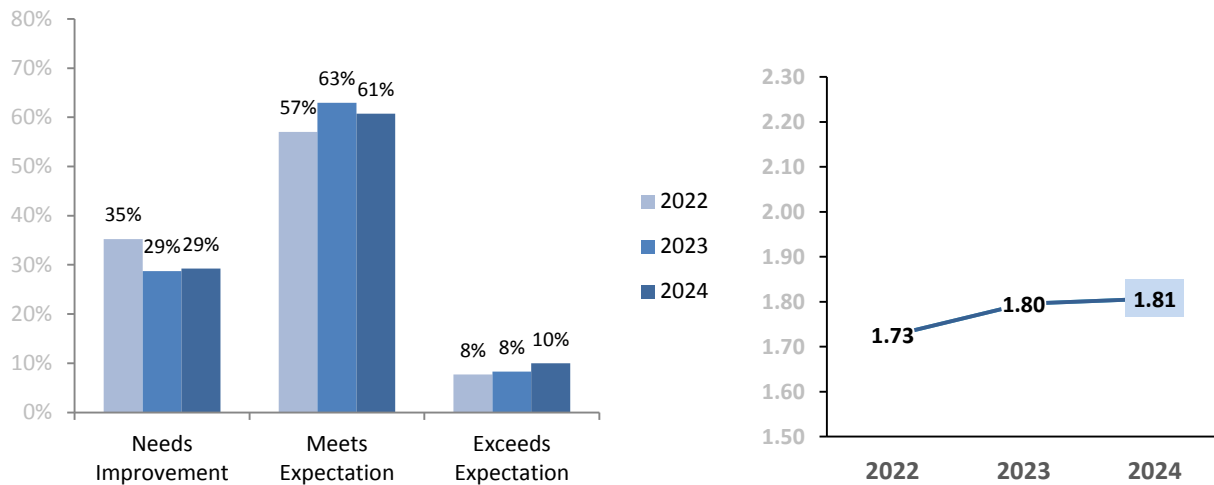


The City increased bylaw services in the community with the addition of two positions approved for 2024. This will help operations and enhance officer presence/visibility; allowing for an enhanced focused on community safety.



# 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

## Building Permit, Planning and Development Services



The score and ranking of Building Permit, Planning, and Development Services remained consistent with the previous year, with approximately 70% of respondents indicating that they hadn't utilized these services. Similar to the prior year, concerns about permit processing timelines and complexity were consistently highlighted as areas requiring improvement. Additionally, there were frequent comments requesting increased focus on affordable housing initiatives and greater community involvement in the decision-making process.



A key priority for the City's 2024 operating budget is to increase support for housing initiatives through the addition of staff resources within Development Services. These resources will be specifically aimed at reducing processing times for both developments, building and plumbing permit approvals.

## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

### Additional Questions

Furthering the depth of our engagement, the City piloted an online poll to ask residents how they felt about specific upcoming enhancement or project. Participants were given the opportunity to provide a rating between 1 (not excited) and 5 (most excited).

53 residents participated in the poll. The results of which showed that participants were most excited about the improvement to waste services, notably glass pick up. However, there was also a positive sentiment towards the new 6.5km loop in the Mary Hill.

Results:

Question	Average Rating
Improvement of waste services, including glass collection pick-up in 2025	4.0
New challenging 6.5km loop trail in Mary Hill area	3.5
Enhancement of Special Events	3.3
Start of construction of Gates Park Soccer Hub	3.3
Upgrades to Routley Wading Pool	2.9

## Summary of Input

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data from the survey reveals the following themes:


- The City continues to receive a record high number resident engagement in 2024 (1524 respondents)
- Online presence is a continued factor as the majority of respondents made their input online (86%), with a growing number learned of the survey through social media and other online methods
- A record 77% of respondents continue to believe they are getting good value for their tax dollars.
- 77% of respondents are pleased with the level and type of budget information provided to them
- Fire services and Parks and Trails continues to be the top-rated services exceeding expectations
- 738 (48%) respondents expressed a willingness to support higher taxes in exchange for additional services, particularly improvements in road conditions, enhanced recreation facilities and programs, and the advancement of active transportation infrastructure.

## Conclusion

The public input is presented to the Committee for consideration in finalizing the 2024-2028 Financial Plan Bylaw and to help guide the work of the Committee in establishing service levels, infrastructure policies and capital program priorities. Specific comments have been provided to the impacted departments for further action. The public input will also be considered as part of the 2025 financial planning process. Should Committee choose to make amendments to the 2024 draft budget in response to public feedback, these amendments may require further analysis to determine the impact on budgets and/or workplans.

## 2024 Budget Public Input Consultation

### **OPTIONS** (✓ = Staff Recommendation)

	#	Description
	1	Approve the 2024-2025 capital plan, 2024 operating budget and direct staff to prepare the applicable bylaws for approval.
	2	Council receive the Public Input Report for information and provide feedback.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – 2024 Budget Survey Response and Summary

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