

2025 Budget Public Consultation Results

RECOMMENDATION:

That Committee of Council:

- 1. Approve the capital plan presented on December 5, 2024, as updated, for inclusion in the 2025-2029 Financial Plan bylaw;*
- 2. Approve the operating budget as presented on December 17, 2024 for inclusion in the 2025-2029 Financial Plan Bylaw; and*
- 3. Direct staff to prepare the 2025-2029 Financial Plan Bylaw, the Annual Tax Rates Bylaw and Solid Waste Amendment Bylaw for Council adoption.*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL/COMMITTEE ACTION

December 17th, 2024 – Committee of Council

That Committee of Council authorize staff to issue the 2025 draft operating budget for public consultation.

December 5th, 2024 – Committee of Council

That Committee of Council include the 2025-2026 Capital Plan in the 2025-2029 Financial Plan Bylaw for public consultation.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report describes the community's response to the 2025 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 943 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 draft capital plan or operating budget as previously presented to Committee. Pursuant to the public input review, staff will begin preparation of the 2025-2029 Financial Plan Bylaw.

BACKGROUND

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 2025 Budget at a Glance brochure to every home and business to obtain feedback on the draft operating budget.

The budget public consultation period ended on January 26, with the City receiving 943 responses. Residents were asked for their input on several issues, including:



Report To: Committee of Council
Department: Finance
Approved by: J. Lovell
Meeting Date: March 11, 2025

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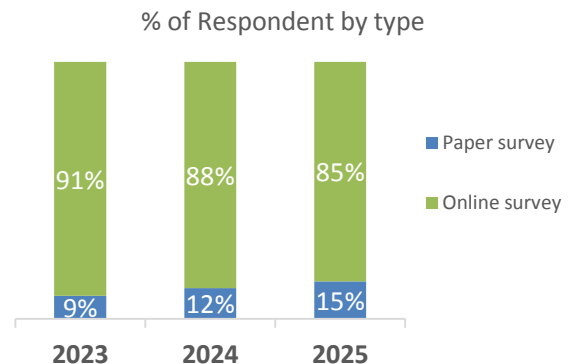
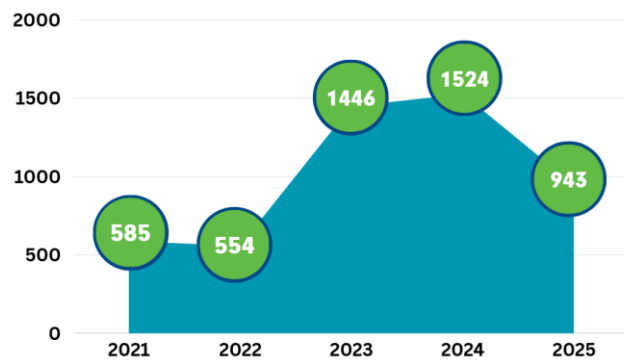
- Satisfaction with service levels
- Service enhancements
- Service reductions
- Satisfaction with communication relating to the budget
- Information that describes themselves

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 943 responses this year. Most respondents continue to complete the survey electronically (85%). 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 (49%).

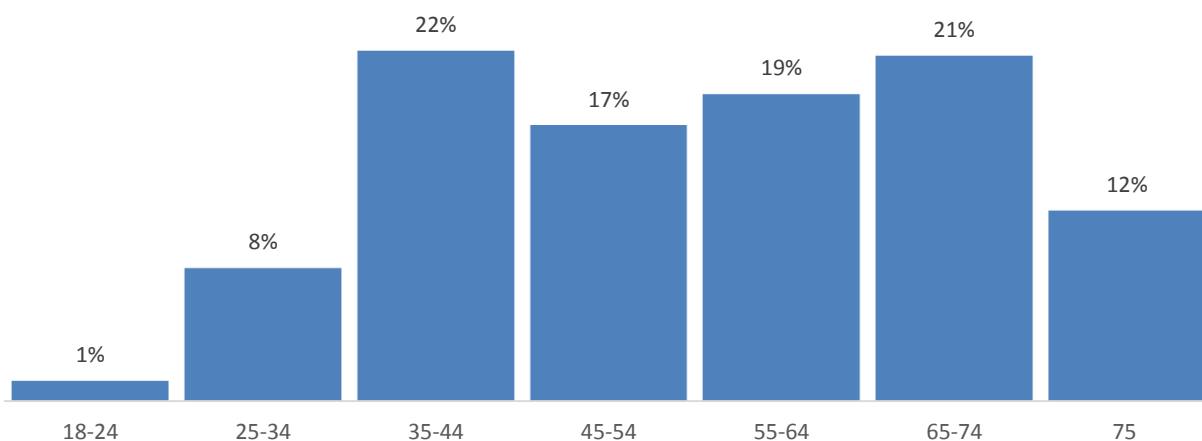


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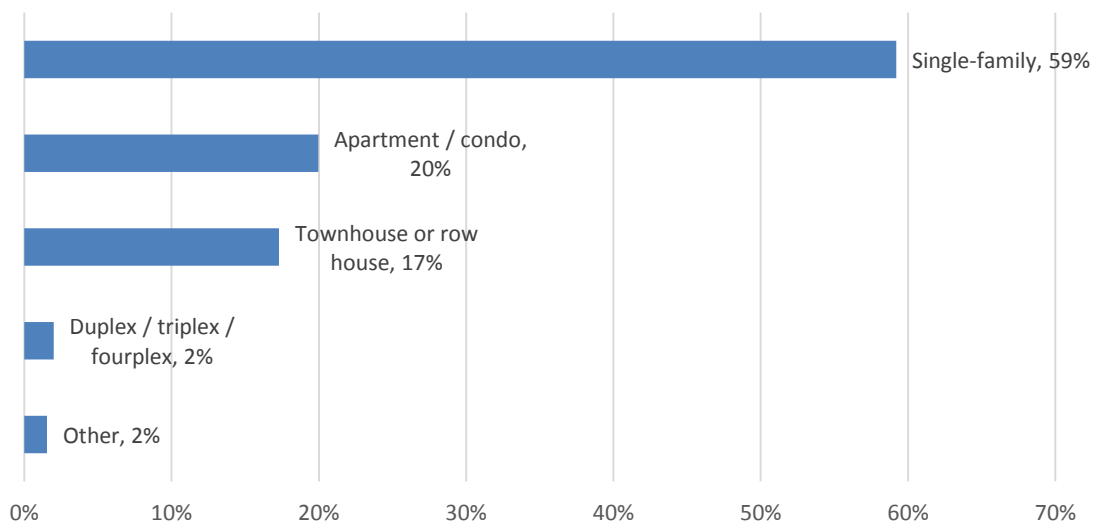
Who Are the Respondents of The Survey?

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 and dwelling type.

Which best describes your age?



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



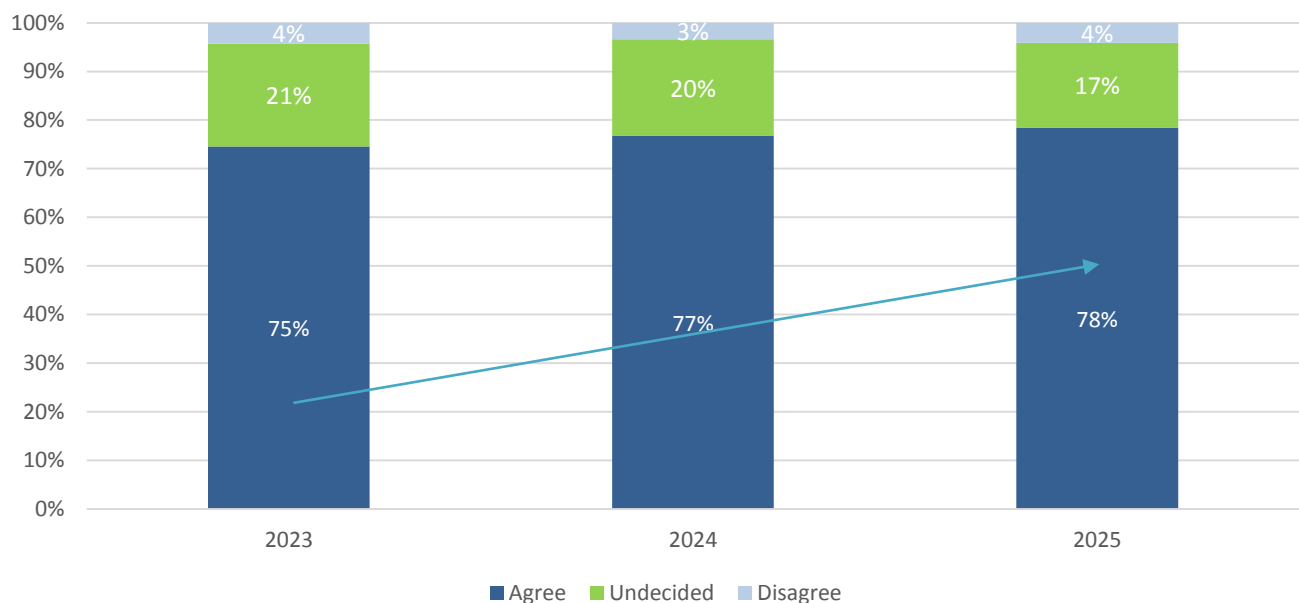
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SURVEY RESPONSES

Are Respondents Satisfied with Budget Information?

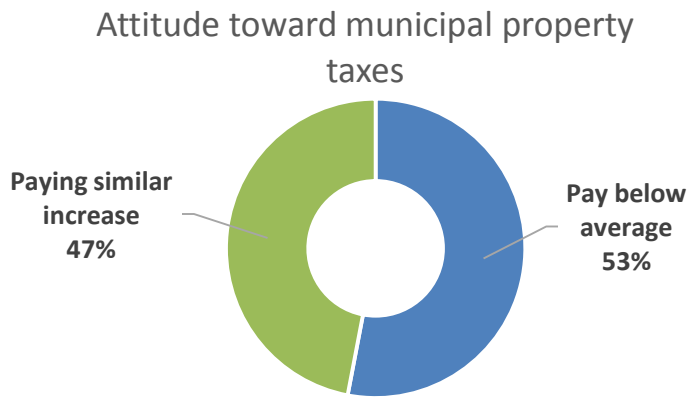
Overall, the community continues to be satisfied with the effort the City is making to provide budget information. 78% of respondents, an increase over 2024, indicate they are satisfied with the budget information available to them. Those that were either uncertain or unhappy noted that more details 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.

I am satisfied with the budget information available to me this year



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

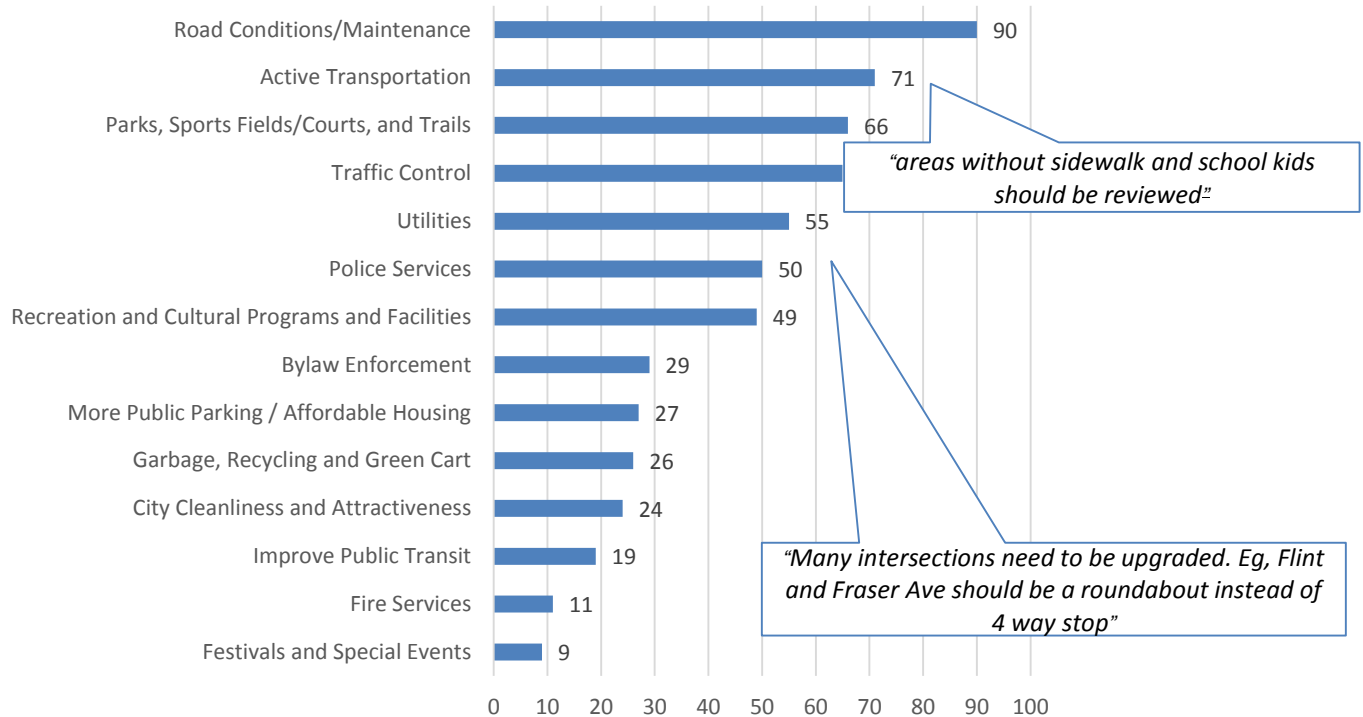
Residents were asked about their preference as it relates to Port Coquitlam property taxes as compared to neighbouring municipalities. Responses were mixed, with over half in favour of increases below the average while the other half feeling more comfortable with paying a similar increase to neighbouring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



What Service Would Respondents Pay to Improve?

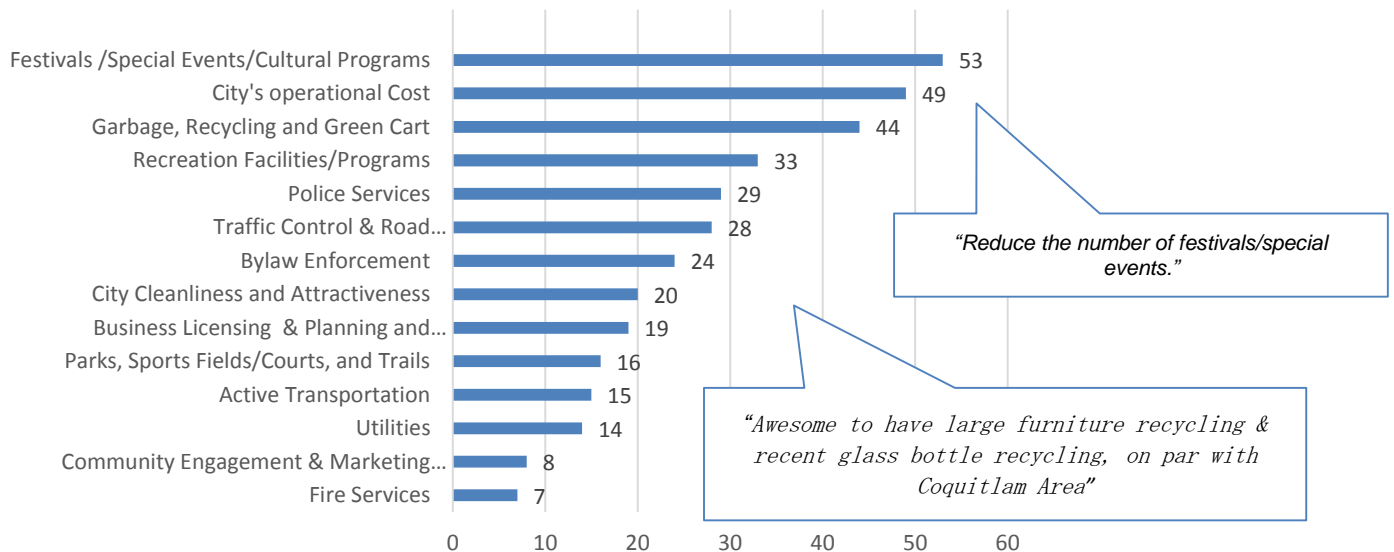
Residents were also asked about their interest in increasing or improving service, even if it may result in higher taxes. 756 respondents answered the question and the following table shows the common themes. While none was the highest response, it should be noted that Road Maintenance, Active Transportation were the highest noted categories for enhancement.

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What Service Would Respondents Trade for Lower Taxes?

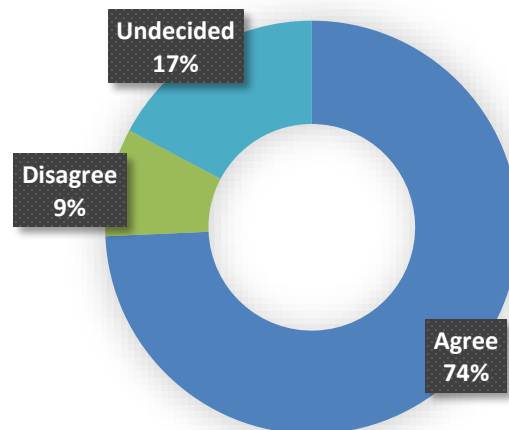
Residents were asked about their interest in decreasing one of the City services if it would result in lower taxes/rates. Of 563 respondents, a significant portion (203) had indicated they were happy with the services being provided and did not want to see any cuts while others had commented on the following areas:



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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:



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 satisfied 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	2024 Score	2025 Score	Score Change
Garbage, Recycling and Green Cart	2.18	2.28	▲
Festivals and Special Events	2.21	2.28	▲
Active transportation	1.89	1.95	▲
Fire Services	2.28	2.33	▲
Parks, Sports Fields/Courts and Trails	2.26	2.30	▲
Building Permit, Planning and Development Services	1.81	1.83	▲

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Traffic Control	1.83	1.85	▲
Business Licensing/Services	2.02	2.04	▲
Recreation and Culture Programs and Facilities	2.17	2.19	▲
City Cleanliness and Attractiveness	2.12	2.13	▲
Road Conditions / Maintenance	1.85	1.85	-
Bylaw Enforcement	1.86	1.86	-
Police Services	1.98	1.95	▼
Utilities (water, sewer, drainage)	2.08	2.00	▼

➤ **Most Improved Services:**

- Garbage, Recycling and Green Cart
- Festivals and Special Events
- Active Transportation

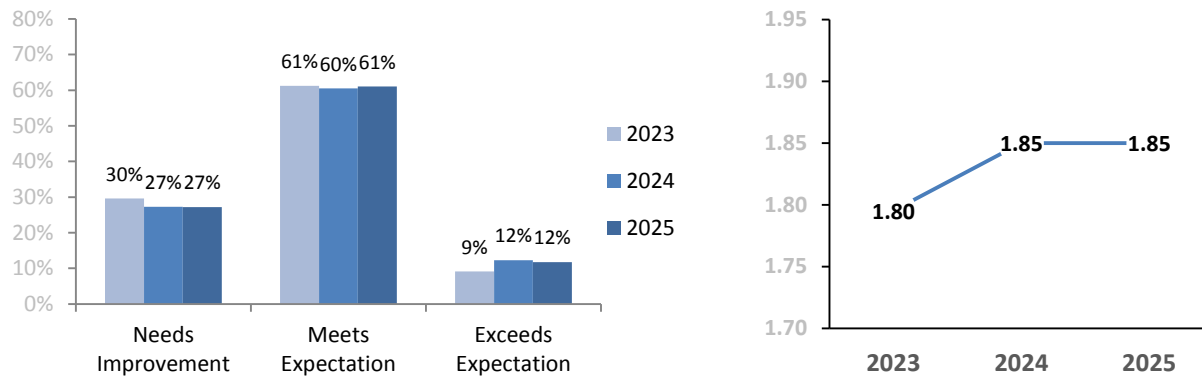
➤ **Areas of Greatest Need:**

- Utilities
- Police Services

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.

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Road Conditions / Maintenance



The recent public survey indicates that many residents are generally satisfied with the city's road conditions, with 61% stating they meet their expectations and 12% feeling they exceed them. Many respondents appreciate the city's responsiveness to pothole repairs and snow removal, though specific areas such as Prairie Avenue, Kingsway Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, and Shaughnessy Street have been highlighted as needing further attention. Snow and ice management efforts are widely recognized, with some residents praising their efficiency while others suggest targeted improvements.

Concerns about pedestrian safety are also prevalent, particularly regarding sidewalks that abruptly end or are missing, as well as the need for better safety signs and crossings.

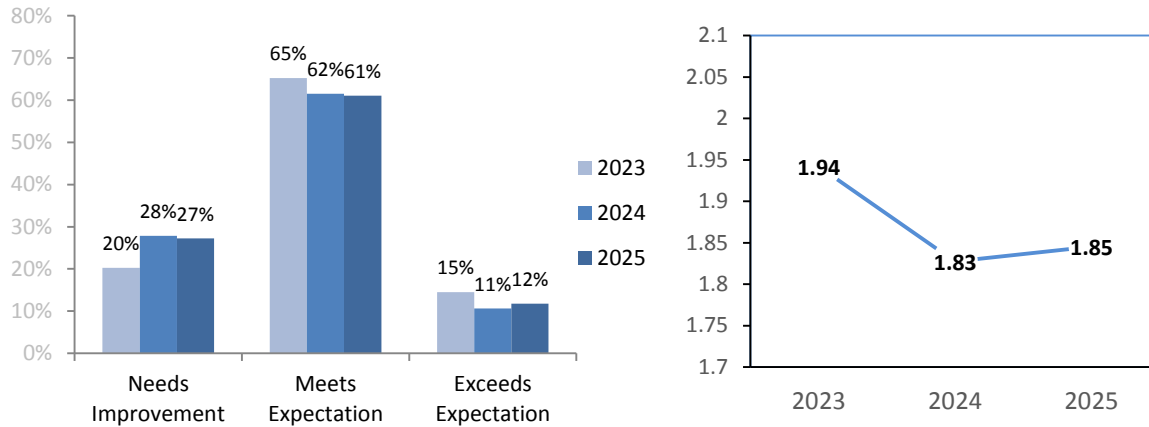
Traffic congestion remains a key issue, especially on major routes like Shaughnessy Street and the Mary Hill Bypass, with residents calling for additional lanes and improved traffic flow. A notable 36% of respondents express the need for general road improvements, particularly repaving and increased winter maintenance, while 28% highlight the necessity for broader infrastructure upgrades, such as the Shaughnessy underpass and Coquitlam River Bridge enhancements. Feedback is a mix of positive and constructive, reflecting both appreciation for existing efforts and a strong desire for further improvements.

The City continues to invest in its infrastructure both through increasing its contribution reserves and planning key capital projects through its Neighbourhood Rehabilitation program. The 2025-2026 capital plan includes the replacement of road, curb and drainage such as:

- Shaughnessy Underpass Upgrades
- Kingsway Avenue Improvements
- Hamilton Street
- Mars Street

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Traffic Control (lights, signals, crosswalks, intersections)



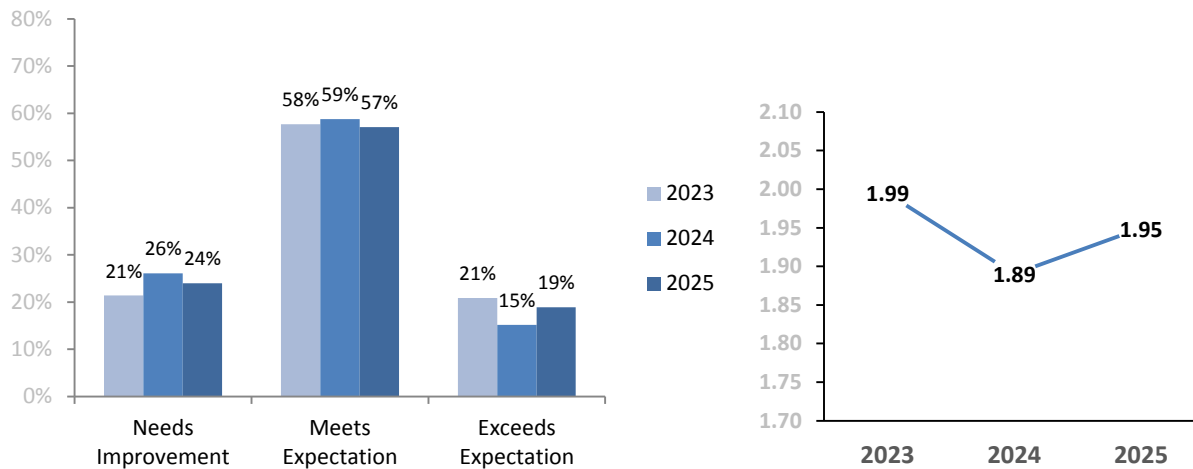
Traffic congestion, especially during peak hours, continues to be a major concern. Many respondents suggest optimizing traffic flow through better signal timing, additional lanes, and other infrastructure improvements. Pedestrian safety is another prominent issue, with calls for more well-marked crosswalks, extended sidewalks, and pedestrian signals to improve walkability. Poor lighting in certain areas raises further concerns about visibility at night, making it difficult for both drivers and pedestrians to navigate safely. Despite these concerns, the majority of respondents feel that traffic control has either met or exceeded expectations compared to the previous year, though there is a clear demand for further enhancements to create a safer and more efficient transportation network.

The City's capital plan continues to address many of the citizen's comments through projects such as:

- \$200k for Streetlight Expansion
- \$150k for Sidewalks & Pedestrian Safety
- \$50k for Transit Shelters

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Active Transportation (paths, cycling/pedestrian amenities and safety)

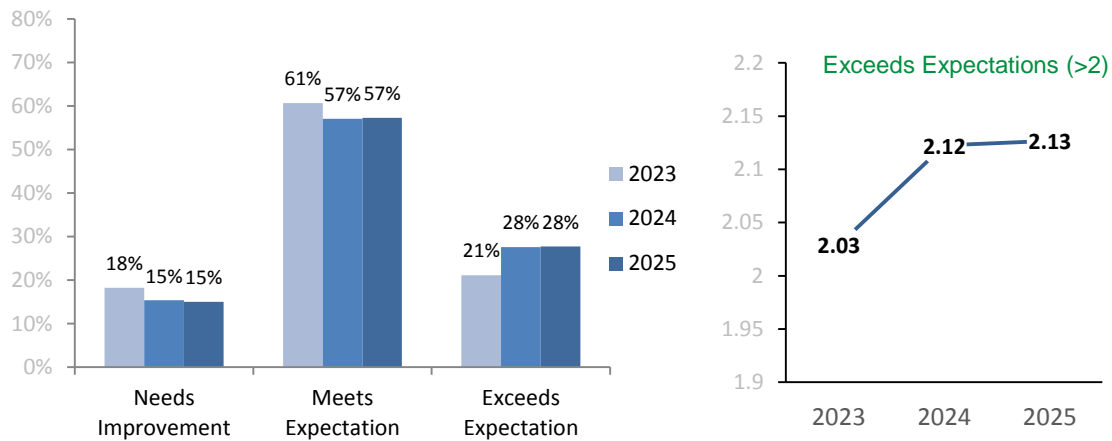


Active Transportation as a category has improved significantly in the past year. Residents were generally satisfied with the City's investment in active transportation infrastructure. Areas of improvement included poorly designed or inadequately maintained multi-use paths that create conflicts between cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles, making these spaces unsafe for all users. Some residents also feel the increasing use of bikes, e-bikes, and e-scooters has brought these concerns to the forefront, highlighting the need for infrastructure that prioritizes the safety of both cyclists and pedestrians.

Current transportation projects in the 2025-2026 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>).

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City Cleanliness and Attractiveness



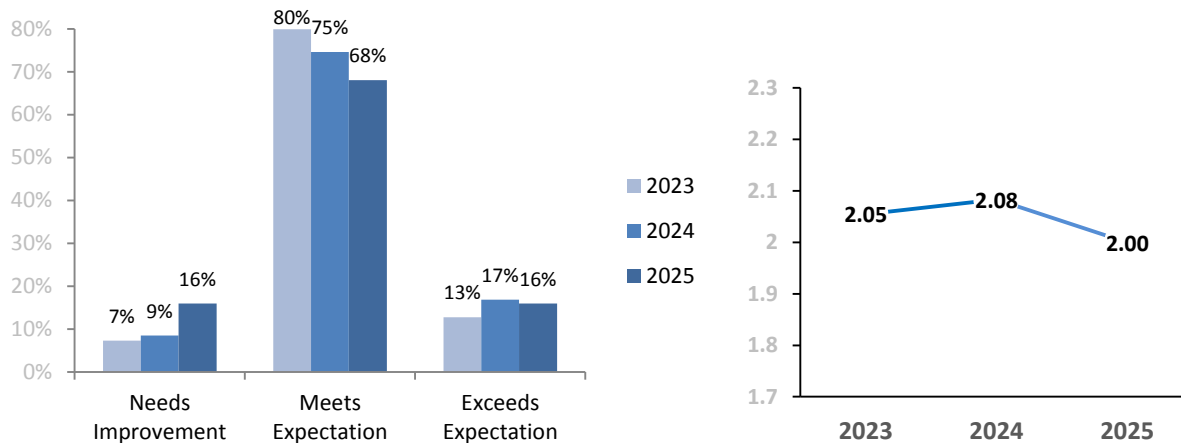
City cleanliness and attractiveness continues to be one of the highest rated questions from the survey. Residents appreciated the improved garbage pickup along the river this year compared to the previous years and have taken note of the improvements to the downtown. Feedback is generally positive (85% of respondents met or exceeded expectations).

Areas where the City could improve included residents that express frustration with the amount of litter and dog waste in public spaces, and there are calls for more attention to be given to areas near schools, parks, and trails. There is a clear desire for more consistent and proactive measures to address litter and maintain the aesthetic quality of public spaces 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 roaming crew deployed in 2023 is seeing a positive impact in reducing issues with litter and street cleanliness.

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Utilities (water, sewer, drainage)



The utilities question saw a decrease in resident satisfaction in the current year, but is still rated as Meeting Expectations. There were two major drivers for this:

- Increased flooding due to heavier the normal rains
- High cost of utilities

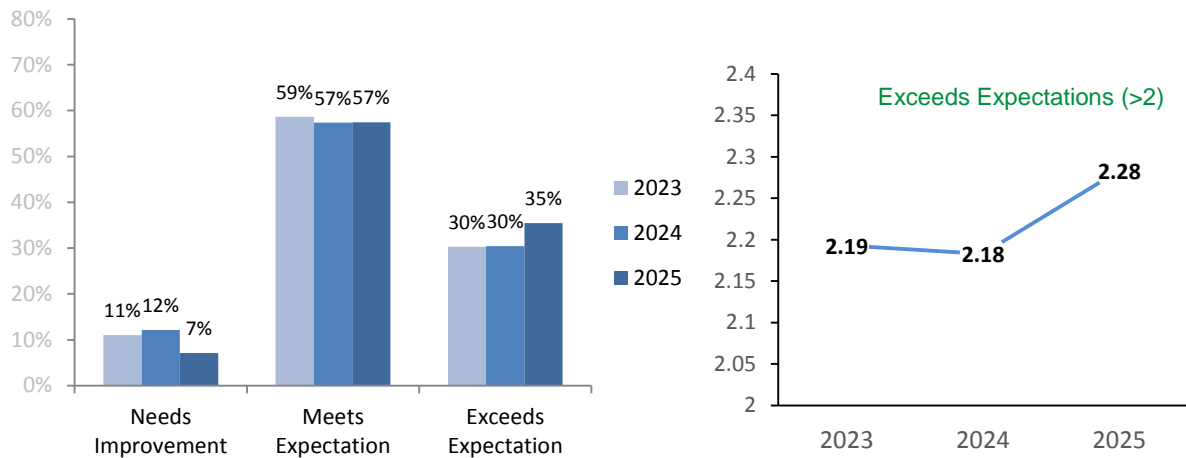
High cost of utilities is driven by Metro Vancouver increases that make up between 79% (water) and 99% (sewer) of the increase to the levy this year. While the City does its best to help mitigate the high cost of utilities from Metro Vancouver, who increased their sewer rate by 42%, the impact is still largely felt by the community.

Flood mitigation and drainage continues to be a priority in the 2025-2026 capital plan with the following key projects expected to be underway in the near future:

- Flood Prevention Program (2025/26 focus on the CMO)
- Maple Creek Drainage Pump Station Upgrade
- Cedar Drainage Pump Station Upgrade
- Cedar Dr Culvert Replacement
- Wilson Ave/Gates Park Drainage
- Tyner St Sanitary Upgrades

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Garbage, Recycling and Green Cart



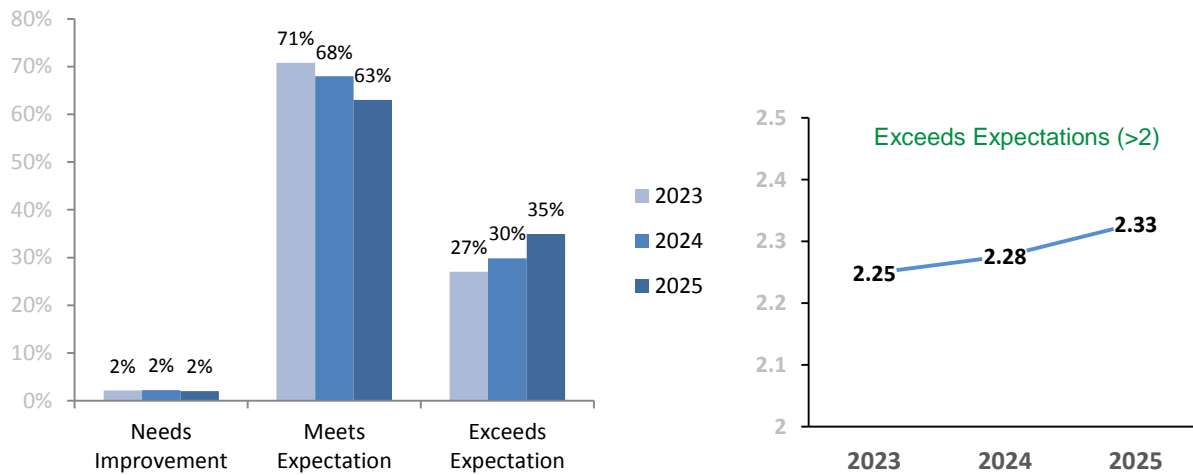
Residents express high satisfaction with Port Coquitlam's waste management services, praising the efficient recycling facilities, timely pickups, and the addition of curbside large item and glass bottle recycling. The service is seen as reliable, cost-effective, and a model for other municipalities.

While there is appreciation for the improved garbage pickup along the river this year, concerns remain about garbage on side streets, in parks, and near bus stops, as well as the need for more garbage cans and regular trash collection. Suggestions for improvement include scheduled street cleaning, community clean-up incentives, and increased garbage collection in high-traffic areas. Overall, the service is highly regarded, with many residents expressing their gratitude and satisfaction.

The City continues to invest in its' garbage, recycling and green waste program and is beginning residential curbside glass pick up for 2025.

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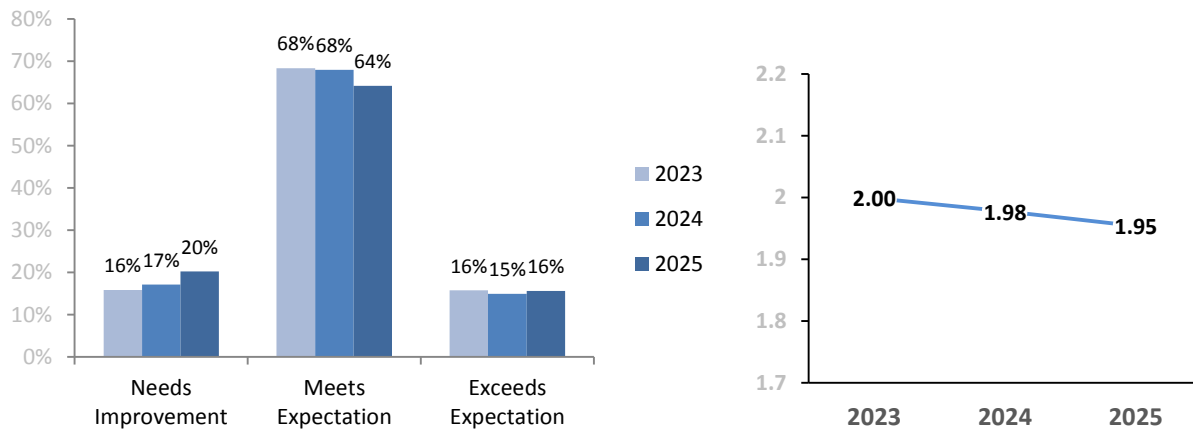
Fire Services



The fire department continues to exceed expectations and has received numerous mentions for its professionalism and helpfulness, particularly in handling emergencies and providing assistance. The majority of comments reflected positive sentiments, highlighting a general appreciation for the dedicated work of fire personnel underscoring their responsiveness and excellent customer service.

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Police Services



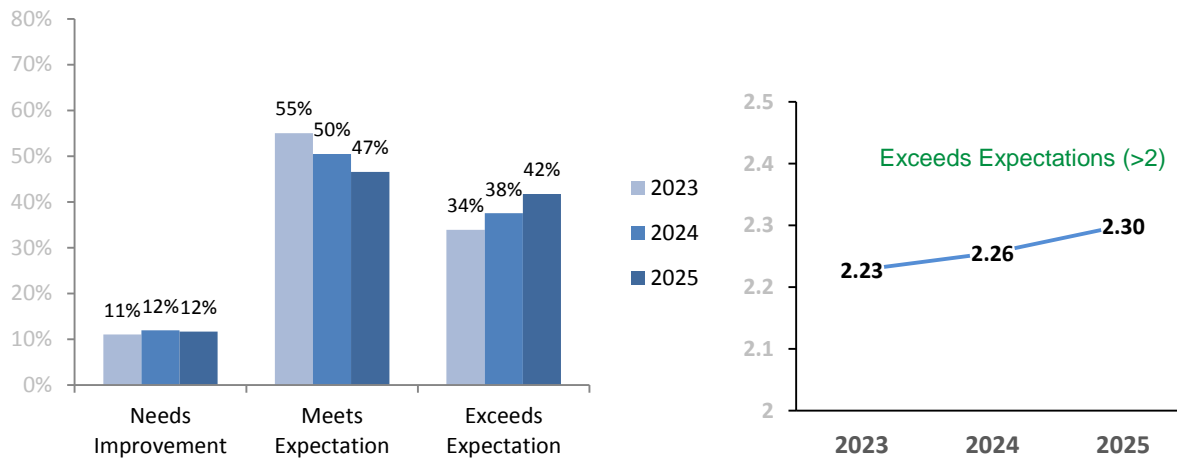
Public feedback on police services is mixed, with some residents expressing satisfaction and others highlighting areas for improvement, such as better communication and transparency about crime trends and police activities. Consistent with last year, respondent satisfaction with Police Services experienced a slight decline compared to the previous year, with most comments reflecting 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 in public spaces was also prominently mentioned.

There are suggestions for further investment in community policing initiatives to strengthen relationships between officers and residents, including more community engagement events and neighborhood patrols. Concerns about traffic speed, noise, and vehicle custom exhaust noise have led to calls for additional support and enforcement, particularly in residential areas. Recommendations for crime prevention initiatives include educational programs for youth and improving surveillance in high-traffic areas to help reduce crime rates.

The City continues to work with Coquitlam RCMP in advocating for a greater police presence in Port Coquitlam (particularly in the downtown) and more transparency in budgets and police activities.

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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 reporting that their expectations were met or exceeded. Many positive comments highlighted the beauty of PoCo's Parks and Trails, and there has been a consistent upward trend in satisfaction scores over the past four years.

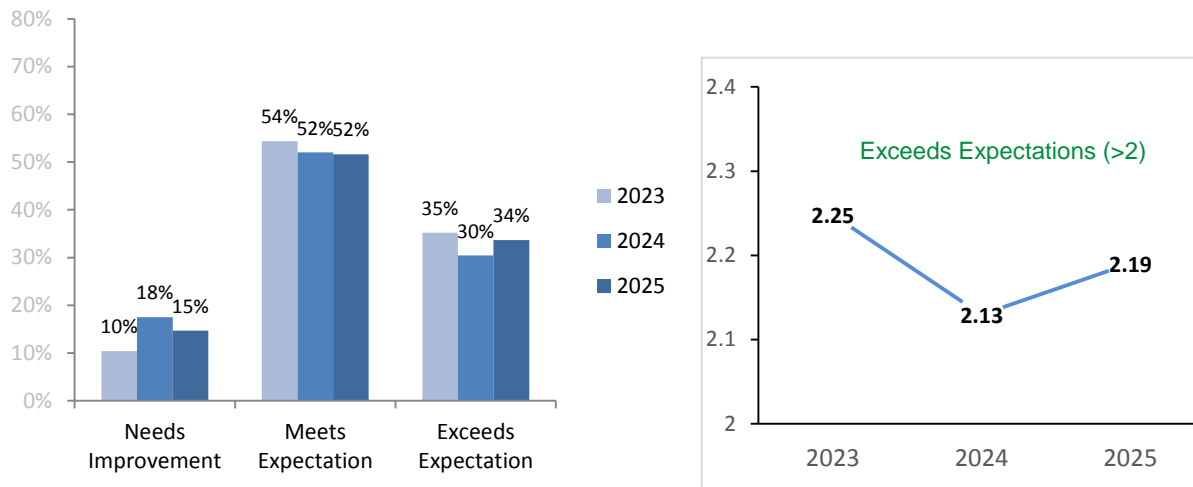
However, those expressing dissatisfaction focused primarily on trail maintenance, expressing a desire for increased provision of playgrounds and sports fields, as well as improvements to the existing ones. Additional concerns were raised regarding the need for enhanced lighting fixtures in both trails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

The City continues to invest in its parks and trails through the capital plan including:

- Park Lighting
- Poco Climb
- Dog Park additions

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Recreation and Culture Programs and Facilities

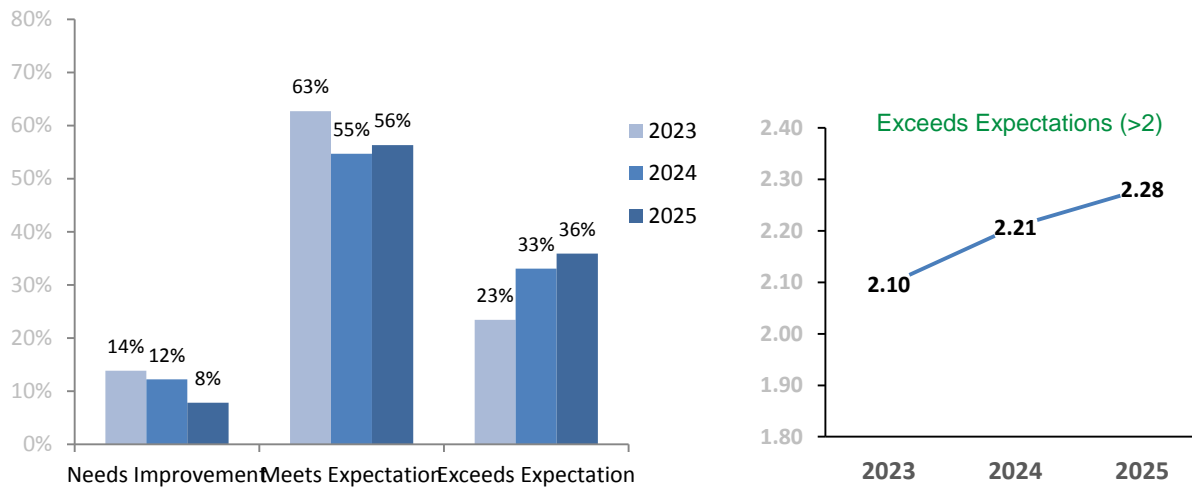


Respondent satisfaction with Recreation and Culture Programs, as well as Facilities, continues to remain in “exceeding expectations”. While the majority of responses were satisfied with the service offering, there were numerous recommendations for the recreation facilities, particularly the Port Coquitlam Community Centre (PCCC). There were also expressed desires for additional swim 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 lessons with the implementation of rolling registration, providing more lesson turnover opportunities, and continued recruitment for Aquatic Leaders. To further increase program and facility access, operating hours have been extended to meet community demand and resident priority registration will be extended to instructor led drop-in programs.

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Festivals and Special Events

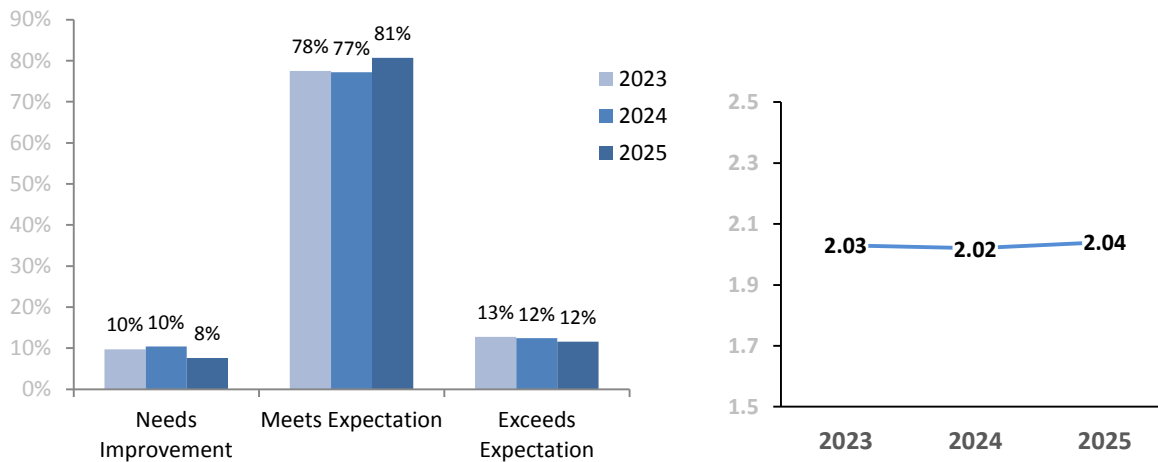


Festivals and Special Events overall exceeded respondent expectations marked by a 5% increase in respondent satisfaction compared to the preceding year. Notably, almost 90% of respondents reported that their expectations were either met or exceeded, indicating a significant achievement in delivering 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. Additional comments include the desire for more food trucks, better facilities at event locations, and the need for more events that cater to different age groups and interests. Some residents also felt that City funding of events could be decreased for a lower tax rate.

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Business Licensing & Services



Respondent satisfaction with Business Licensing & Services remained consistent with the previous year and overall continues to meet or exceed expectations.

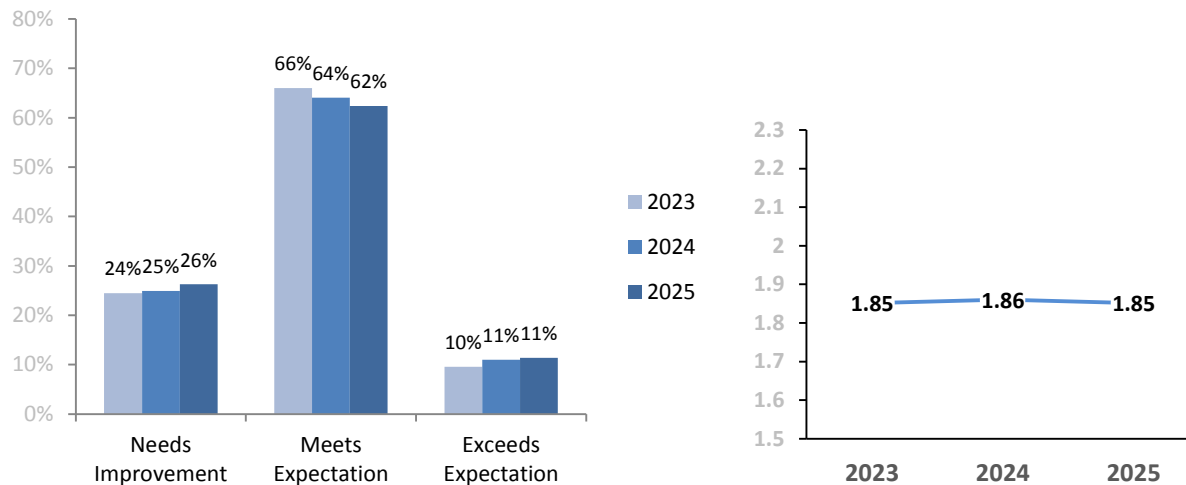
Of the minority that had comments for areas of improvement, they included:

1. Business Variety and Support: Residents express a need for more variety in businesses, particularly in the downtown area, and suggest focusing on smaller family-run businesses and supporting local startups.
2. Licensing and Regulations: There are calls for streamlining the business licensing process, offering more online services, and reducing government red tape to make it easier for small businesses and new entrepreneurs.
3. Community Engagement and Marketing: Suggestions include increasing marketing efforts to attract small businesses, reviving downtown Port Coquitlam, and fostering a stronger connection between the city and local businesses through networking events and partnerships.

The City continues to support its local businesses through marketing, outreach and advocacy. The annual Biz Awards highlights the best of Port Coquitlam's business community. New for 2025, the Mayor's hospitality roundtable has been created to foster more dialogue and feedback among the city's local hospitality businesses.

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Bylaw Enforcement



In general, 75% of respondents indicated that bylaw enforcement either met or exceeded their expectations. There were 3 general themes in the comments:

Parking Enforcement:

There are numerous mentions of parking issues, including cars parked in no-parking zones, blocking fire hydrants, and parking on sidewalks. Residents suggest more frequent patrols and stricter enforcement of parking regulations.

Animal Control:

Many comments focus on the need for better enforcement of leash laws and the management of dog waste. Residents have reported issues with off-leash dogs in parks and trails, as well as aggressive behavior from some dog owners.

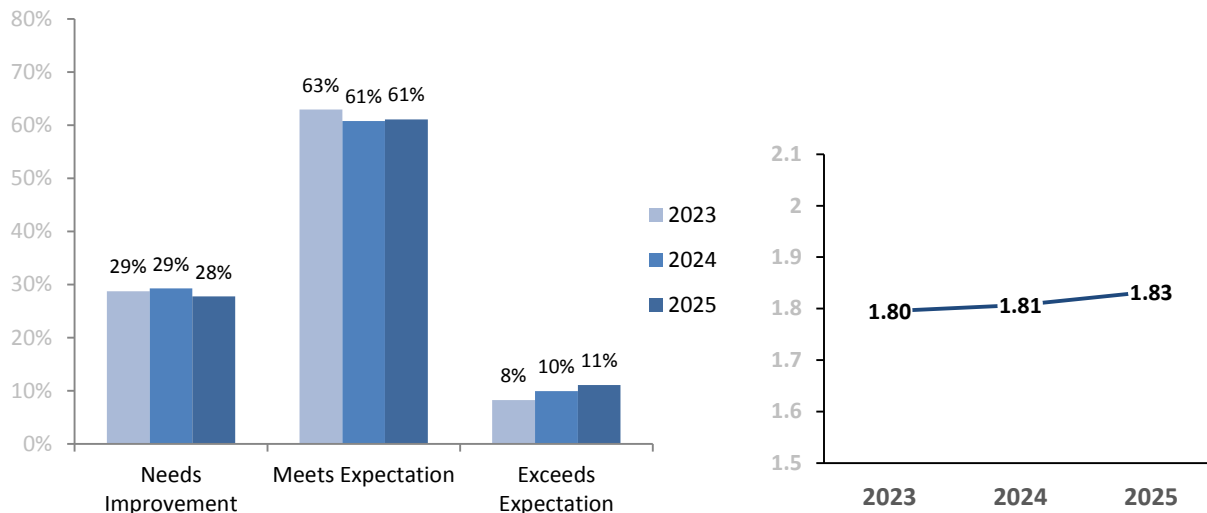
Community Engagement:

Some residents appreciate the efforts of bylaw officers in engaging with the community and providing information on various issues. There are suggestions for more educational campaigns to raise awareness about bylaw regulations and the importance of compliance.

The City continues to focus its effort in increasing safety in the community. This includes additional bylaw officers approved in previous years to increase bylaw services in the community. This will help operations and enhance officer presence/visibility; allowing for an enhanced focused on community safety.

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Building Permit, Planning and Development Services



Building Permit, Planning, and Development Services remained consistent with the previous year, with over 70% of respondents indicating that services met or exceeded expectations. While most residents were satisfied, there were some comments with requests for faster permit issuance, especially for local residents, and clearer communication.


A key priority for the City's 2025 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.

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Conclusion

The public input is presented to the Committee for consideration in finalizing the 2025-2029 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 2026 financial planning process.

OPTIONS (☐ = Staff Recommendation)

	#	Description
	1	Approve the 2025 operating budget and direct staff to prepare the applicable bylaws for approval.
	2	Council to provide alternate direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – 2025 Budget Survey Response and Summary

Lead author(s): Kushal Pachchigar