

2026 BUDGET SURVEY

WHAT WE HEARD



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The 2026 Budget Survey launched May 6, 2025, and remained open until June 9, 2025. The survey was shared via the Town's website, social media channels and through the e-News newsletter.

Administration and Council thank all those who took the time to complete the 2026 Budget Survey. The survey supports transparency and encourages meaningful engagement with residents and businesses in the budgeting process. The feedback received will help inform Council decisions by reflecting the community's priorities and values.

Who Engaged?

The budget engagement received a total of 104 responses, equating to approximately 2.5% of the Town's population.

The majority of respondents to the budget survey were over the age of 35 years.

- 35% of the respondents are over the age of 55
- 46% of the respondents are between the ages of 35-54
- 18% of the respondents are under the age of 35

Additional details with respondents broken into more refined age categories is noted in Figure 1 along with a cross reference to the Town of Crossfield full demographic.

RESPONDENTS AGE DISTRIBUTION

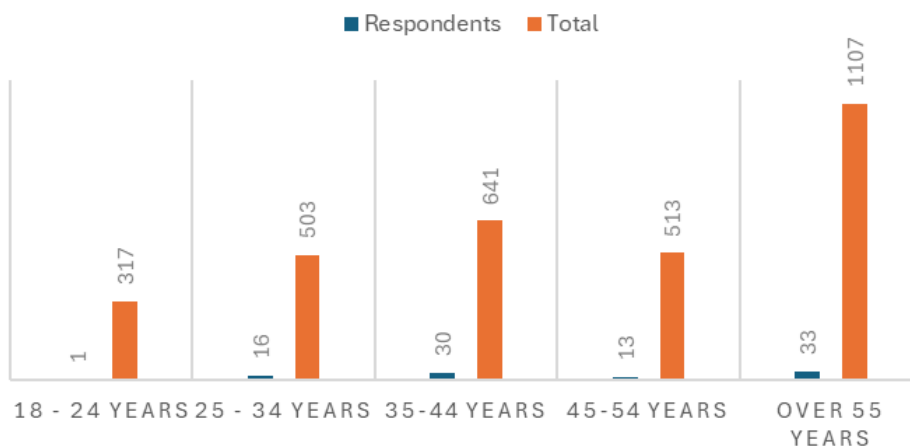


Figure 1

RESPONDENTS GENDER DISTRIBUTION

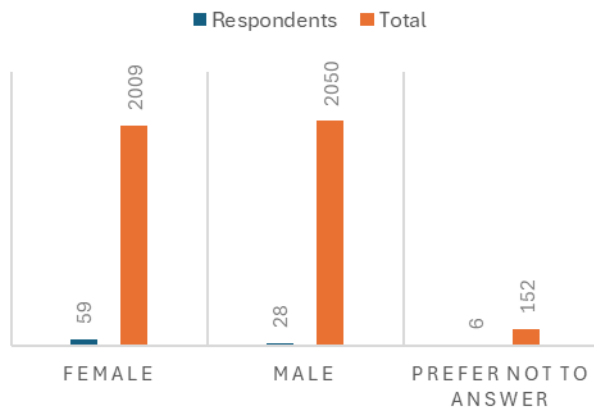


Figure 2

As noted in Figure 3, 51% of respondents have lived or own a business in Crossfield for more than 6 years, while 17% noted living or owning a business in Crossfield for less than 2 years. The data from 2025 is compared to that of 2024 to demonstrate a notable shift in respondent demographic.

DURATION OF LIVING/OWNING A BUSINESS

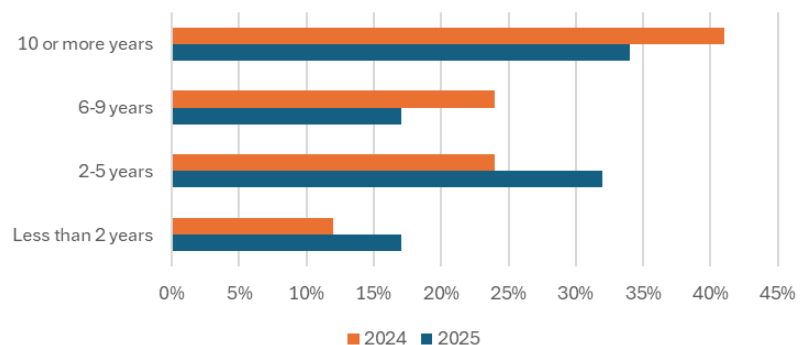


Figure 3



Communication Preferences

Understanding citizen and business owner communication preferences helps us align our communication strategies to meet the community needs. This relates to both budget and other non-emergent communication items.

Of the communication channel options provided those that rated the highest include Social Media, the monthly Newsletter that is shared digitally and provided in paper format, and the Town's website. A full scope of the feedback on preferred communications is noted in Figure 4.

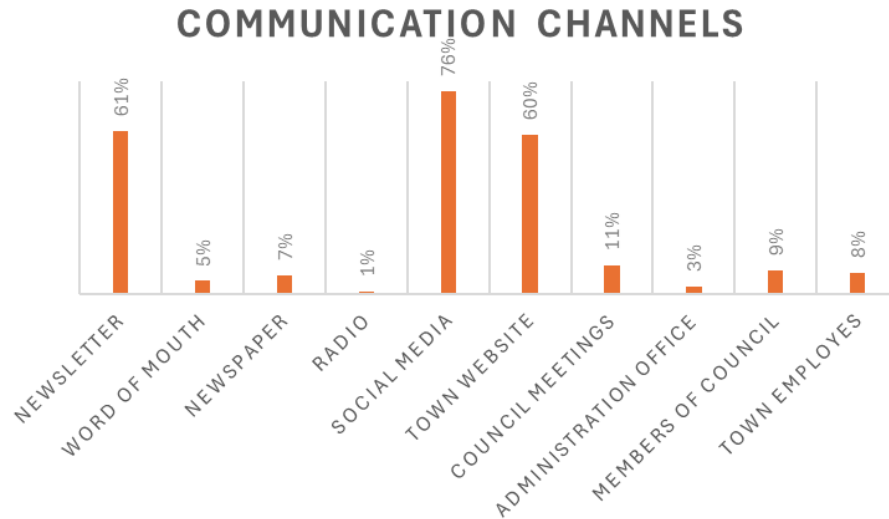


Figure 4

When asked if respondents felt informed about Town activities, projects and decisions 68% of respondents indicated they felt somewhat informed or informed while 32% of respondents felt uninformed.

HOW TO STAY BETTER INFORMED

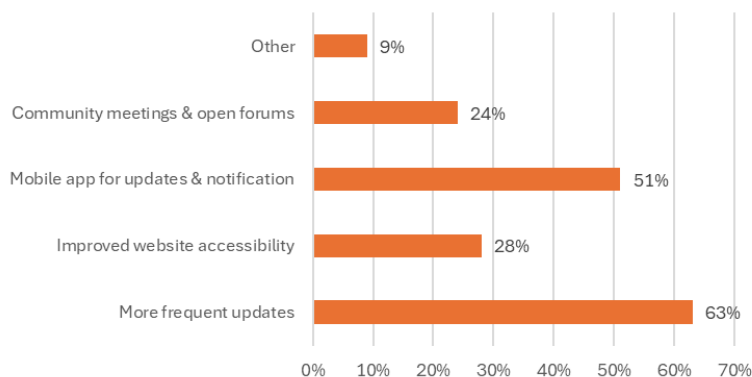


Figure 5

The final communication-related question asked participants what would help them stay better informed about Town projects and decisions. The most common response was a desire for more frequent updates through existing communication channels, followed by interest in a mobile app for Town updates and notifications. A full summary of responses is provided in Figure 5.

Public Priorities

The development of a municipal budget takes multiple factors into consideration, each of which help inform the resulting budget. Those factors include components such as;

1. **Current Financial Standing** (ie. Reserve and debt levels)
2. **Economic Forecasts** (ie. Inflation impacts, development projections, etc.)
3. **Demographic Trends** (ie. Population growth and demographics)
4. **Legal and Regulatory Requirements** (ie. ARO/ TCA)
5. **Capital Improvement Requirements**
6. **Public Priorities**

While each of those form part of the final budget, for the purposes of this report we have focused on Public Priorities. Context on the remaining components will form part of budget deliberations, which will commence later this fall.

Community Values

Respondents were asked to rank key community values to help the Town better understand the guiding principles that matter most to them. These values—ranging from fiscal responsibility to environmental sustainability—represent the foundation on which municipal policies, services, and budget decisions are built.

By identifying which values are most important to the community, the Town can:

- Align budgeting and planning with public priorities
- Support strategic decision-making when trade-offs are required
- Ensure services and investments reflect community values
- Increase transparency and trust in how decisions are made

For example, if respondents place the highest importance on fiscal responsibility and transparent governance, this suggests strong public support for careful spending, financial accountability, and open communication. Similarly, ranking recreation and community events lower may indicate that while valued, these areas are a lower priority compared to essentials like infrastructure, safety, or economic development.

This input helps guide Council and Administration as they balance competing needs in developing a responsible and community-focused municipal budget. The ranking is represented in Figure 6.



Figure 6

Tax Appetite

When provided an opportunity to express their wishes as it relates to adjustments to taxes, survey respondents indicated the following, as noted in Figure 7:

- 33% of respondents support maintaining or enhancing service levels by increasing taxes
- 34% of respondents support cutting services to maintain property taxes
- 22% of respondents support cutting services to reduce property taxes

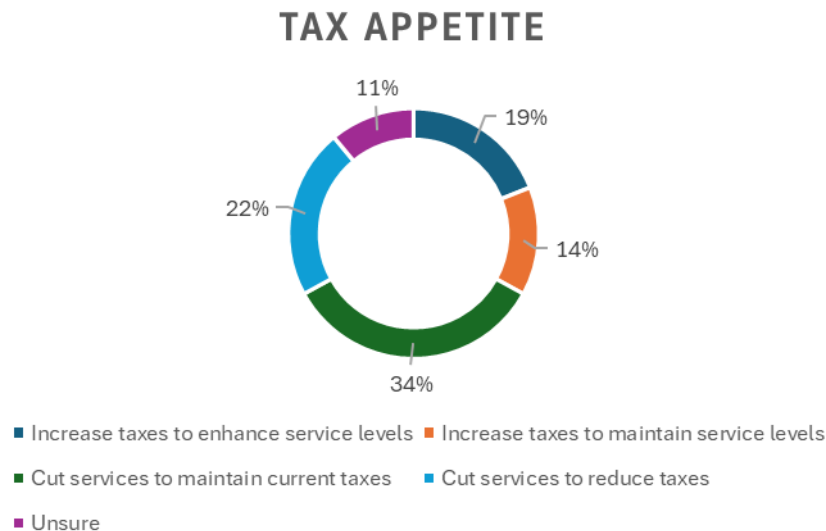


Figure 7

Value For Taxes

Respondents were asked to rate the value they feel they are getting, offering insight into public satisfaction with municipal service delivery and fiscal management. A full summary of responses is available in Figure 8.

- 32% of respondents feel the value for their tax dollars is good or very good.
- 26% of respondents are neutral or unsure about the tax dollar value
- 42% of respondents feel the value for their tax dollars is poor or very poor

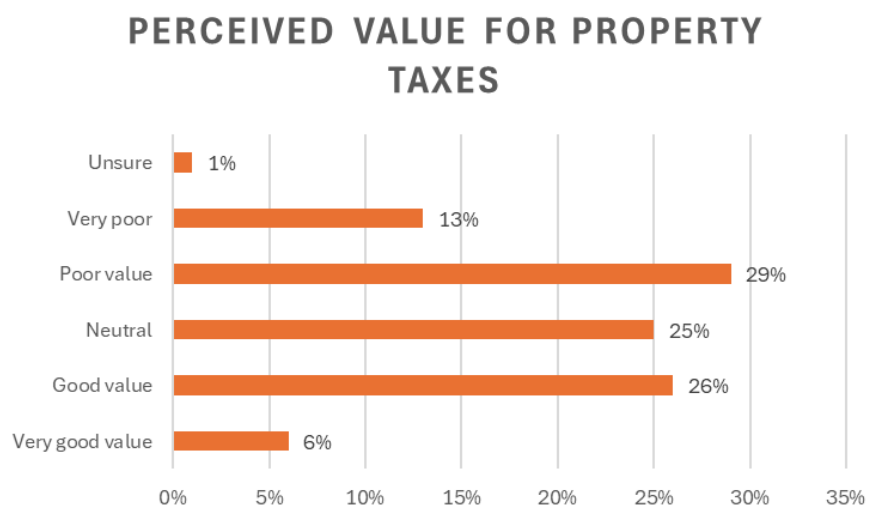


Figure 8

Revenue Preference

Participants were asked how they would prefer the Town to generate additional revenue, if required. The question aimed to gauge community preferences between increasing taxes or user fees and reducing service levels. The majority of respondents indicated a preference for a combination of slightly higher taxes and/or user fees rather than a reduction in services. See Figure 9 for the full summary of responses.

ADDITIONAL REVENUE PREFERENCE

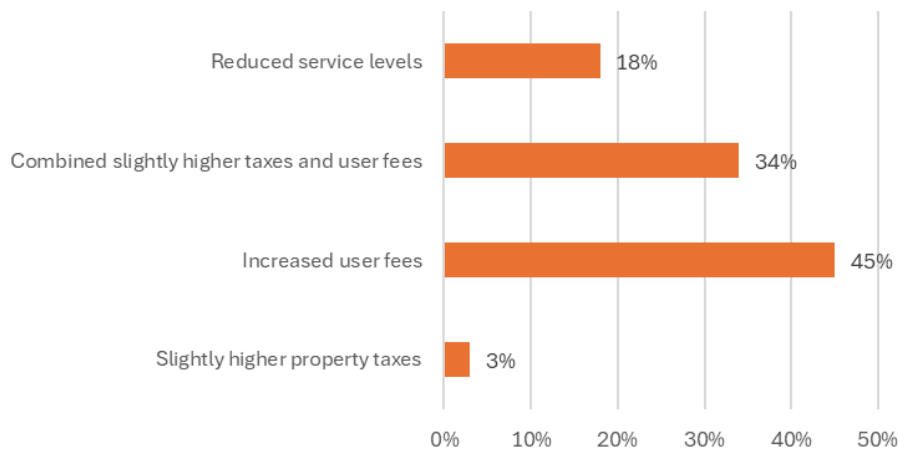


Figure 9

Unexpected Funding Strategy

Participants were asked to determine how unexpected funding, such as grants or budget surpluses should be allocated. The top 3 strategies are highlighted below, with a full summary included in Figure 10.

- Investment in new Town infrastructure
- Enhancement to existing assets and services
- Property tax reduction

UNEXPECTED FUNDING STRATEGY

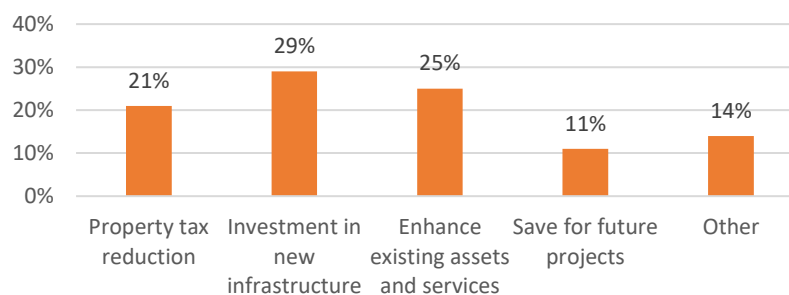


Figure 10

Public Sentiment on Town Services, Amenities and Attractions

Survey results indicate that residents place a high value on core municipal services—particularly community safety, roads and sidewalks, and parks and open space. These areas were ranked among the most important in terms of service delivery priorities.

When asked about usage and appreciation of existing amenities, respondents most frequently cited parks, pathways, and outdoor recreation areas, followed by protective services (fire services, RCMP, and bylaw enforcement), community events, and recreation facilities. This highlights both the functional importance and personal enjoyment residents associate with these services.

Looking ahead, there is strong interest in continued investment in community spaces. The most commonly requested enhancements include additional parks, playgrounds, and active transportation options, as well as expanded recreational facilities. These findings suggest a desire to not only maintain but improve access to well-used, family-friendly amenities that support quality of life and active living in Crossfield.

Additional Comments

All respondents were provided the opportunity to include comments to the following question: If you were sitting on Council, what would your top one or two priorities be when planning the upcoming budget? A total of 104 comments were received with 95 distinct areas identified. The most frequently mentioned comments are summarized below in Table 1.

Topic	# of mentions	% of total mentions	Topic	# of mentions	% of total mentions
Roads & Infrastructure	47	22.0%	Public Safety & Enforcement	11	5.1%
Taxes & Affordability	43	20.1%	Parks & Pathways	10	4.7%
Recreation (facilities & programs)	34	15.9%	Transparency, Communication & Trust	9	4.2%
Fiscal Responsibility	18	8.4%	Youth & Family Services	8	3.7%
Economic Development	16	7.5%	Transit & Connectivity	4	1.9%
Water & Wastewater Upgrades	14	6.5%	Environmental Concerns	4	1.9%

Table 1

Key Insights

- Feedback highlights infrastructure, roads, and sidewalks as key areas of focus, with many suggesting opportunities to improve road conditions, enhance snow removal efforts, and address the needs of aging assets..
- A notable portion of respondents expressed concerns about affordability, the cost of living, and the value of current tax levels, emphasizing the importance of finding solutions that balance financial pressures with community needs.

- At the same time, many would support spending on recreation, particularly for youth, with suggestions for pools, upgraded parks, and community spaces.
- There is feedback regarding fiscal responsibility, with suggestions to streamline administrative overhead, reduce spending, and explore fundraising or cost-recovery strategies to enhance efficiency.
- Specific infrastructure challenges, including sewer and wastewater, were mentioned repeatedly, indicating a growing need for upgrades and maintenance.
- Several respondents advocated for supporting local businesses and attracting more retail to strengthen the tax base and improve amenities.

Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate in the 2026 Budget Survey. Your feedback provides valuable insight into the priorities, values, and expectations of our community. The results will help guide Council and Administration as they make important decisions about the Town's budget, services, and future investments.

Next steps include reviewing this feedback in detail during budget planning discussions and identifying how it can be reflected in the Town's financial and strategic priorities. A summary of how public input has influenced the final budget will be shared once the 2026 Municipal Budget is approved.

The Town remains committed to transparent, responsive, and inclusive financial planning—and we thank you for being a part of the process.

