

Budget 2023

Engage Ottawa Survey As-We-Heard-It Report

February 1, 2023

Finance and Corporate Services Department

Disclaimer: The Draft Budget 2023 survey results is one of many ways the City of Ottawa collects budget input from the public. Survey results are reflective of those who participated and may not reflect the overall views shared across the many forms of input offered throughout the budget process. Residents are welcome to participate in Committee meetings, attend Councillor led public consultations, get in touch with their Councillor or share their thoughts through the City of Ottawa social media channels. The results of all feedback platforms are carefully considered and are passed along to the appropriate budget planning teams. When planning for the Draft Budget 2024 staff will be considering feedback from prior years and will work with Councillors on ensuring a revised survey that will allow residents to provide input well in advance of the budget tabling.

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Executive Summary

Every year, the City of Ottawa produces a municipal budget. One of the City's most important documents, the budget is the blueprint that defines how resources are collected and allocated. The overall budget comprises two main components – the Operating Budget and the Capital Budget.

Public engagement and feedback are critical to the budget process, to guide and direct investment of public funds. As part of the pre-budget process, the City offered online resources to raise awareness about the budget process, including a survey to understand priorities and gather feedback.

The online survey was designed to gather resident and stakeholder opinions on how the City of Ottawa should allocate funds,

The As-We-Hear-It report summarizes resident and stakeholder feedback collected through the online survey, including themes of the most common sentiments shared by respondents. The survey was open from December 19, 2022 to January 31, 2023. In total, 1,034 submissions were received. Demographic and ward data was collected to better understand trends within the various demographics or wards within the City of Ottawa. The online survey was promoted through social media, Ottawa.ca and public service announcements.

The Engage Ottawa survey showed that the majority of respondents consider housing, affordability and homelessness (7.8%), public transportation (7.3%), sustainable transportation (5.5%), environmental issues and programs (5.4%) and community services and social programs (5.3%) as their top priorities.

We also heard that Police Services (8.9%), By-law services and enforcement (7.9%), economic development, investment, and tourism (7.0%), on-line services including ServiceOttawa and Ottawa.ca (6.7%) and local businesses (6.2%) were considered the lowest priorities.

Background

Every year, the City of Ottawa produces a municipal budget. One of the City's most important documents, the budget is the blueprint that defines how resources are collected and allocated. The overall budget comprises two main components – the Operating Budget and the Capital Budget.

Operating Budget

Every City program and service is funded through the City's Operating Budget, which is designed to ensure the dependable delivery of a broad array of programs and services that residents rely on every day. A municipal government is responsible for emergency services (fire, police and paramedics), roads, clean water, parks and recreation, public health programs, garbage and recycling programs, libraries and the buses that take residents to work and home. The Operating Budget funds all this and much more. To keep Ottawa both affordable and prosperous, the Operating Budget determines how best to deliver all these services while balancing revenues and expenditures.

Given Ottawa's size, that's not as simple as it might sound. Ottawa is one of the largest geographic cities in Canada – larger than the areas of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton combined. Ottawa covers an area of 2,760 square kilometres. 10 per cent of that is urban while the remaining 90 per cent is agricultural land, villages, marginal and forested lands, and wetlands. The majority of City funds are spent on delivering existing services, many of which are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Capital Budget

In order to progress and grow, Ottawa must also look beyond simply providing existing services. A City needs to be guided by a clear and overarching vision of what it is to become.

City infrastructure is funded through the Capital Budget. The bulk of that funding goes to maintaining and rehabilitating existing infrastructure such as identified in the Comprehensive Asset Management analysis. As funding allows, the City continues to fund growth, building new infrastructure and investing in the future. The City adds between \$600 million and \$800 million worth of new capital to Ottawa's existing asset base every year – from buses and vehicles to water pipes, roads to trunk sewers, from street lighting to libraries. These are investments that residents and businesses will benefit from for years to come and which contribute to the growth of Ottawa's economy

and quality of life. The Capital Budget also funds Council's Strategic Initiatives, which support the Term of Council Priorities.

Developing the budget

With direction from City Council, the City's Finance and Corporate Services Department is responsible for assisting departments in developing their detailed draft budgets every year. A series of budgets are tabled, broken down by category so that the various City committees, commissions and boards responsible can review and discuss what is proposed and ensure everything included complies with existing City plans.

The City must maintain a balanced Operating Budget. The Municipal Act prohibits the City from running a deficit on operating expenditures. The City can only borrow funds and incur debt for the Capital Budget.

During development of the Operating and Capital Budgets, Council has some flexibility for reallocating or reprioritizing funds between programs and services to address emerging issues. Given these limits on discretion and the financial realities of limiting tax increases to residents, it is difficult to address all these issues or to implement significant changes from year to year.

How We Engaged

The online survey had a total of 1,034 submissions between December 19, 2022 and January 31, 2023. The online survey was promoted through social media, Ottawa.ca and public service announcements.

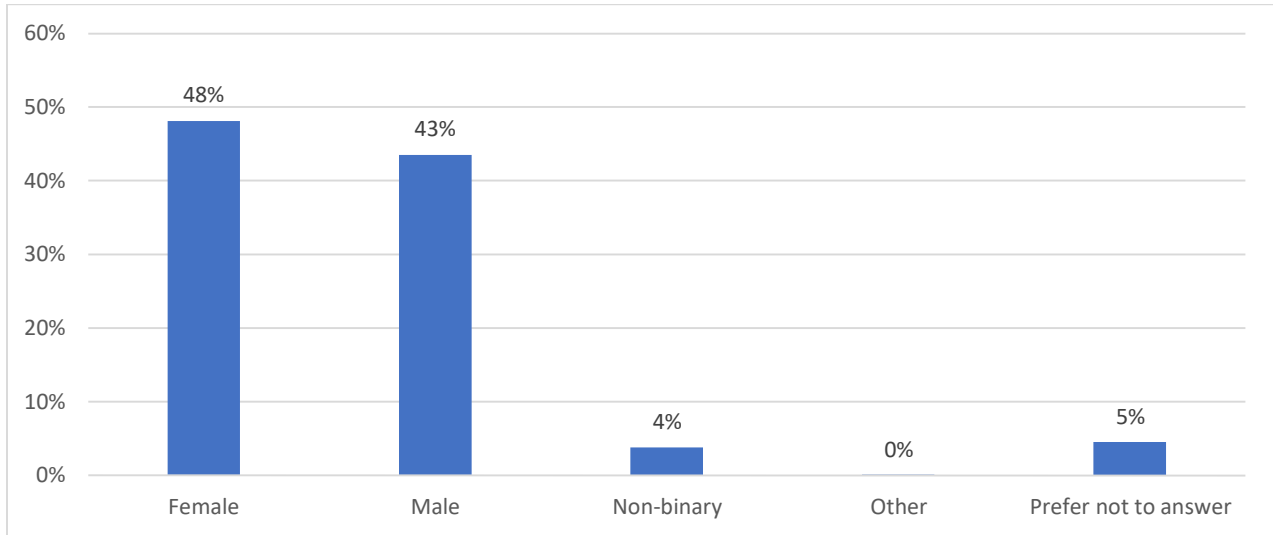
All feedback collected through the survey was considered in this report, and all participation is given equal weight in the analysis. Text data from the survey was themed to identify the most common sentiments. For some survey questions, respondents could select more than one option, resulting in some graphs adding up to more than 100 per cent.

Overview of Demographic Information

Basic demographic information was collected through a series of questions within the survey. Registrants had the option to self-identify or select 'prefer not to answer.' The breakdown of responses in terms of gender identity, geographic distribution of survey respondents, type of residency and self-identified declaration as Indigenous people and Equity and Inclusion Lens groups are depicted in Figures 1 to Figure 4 as follows.

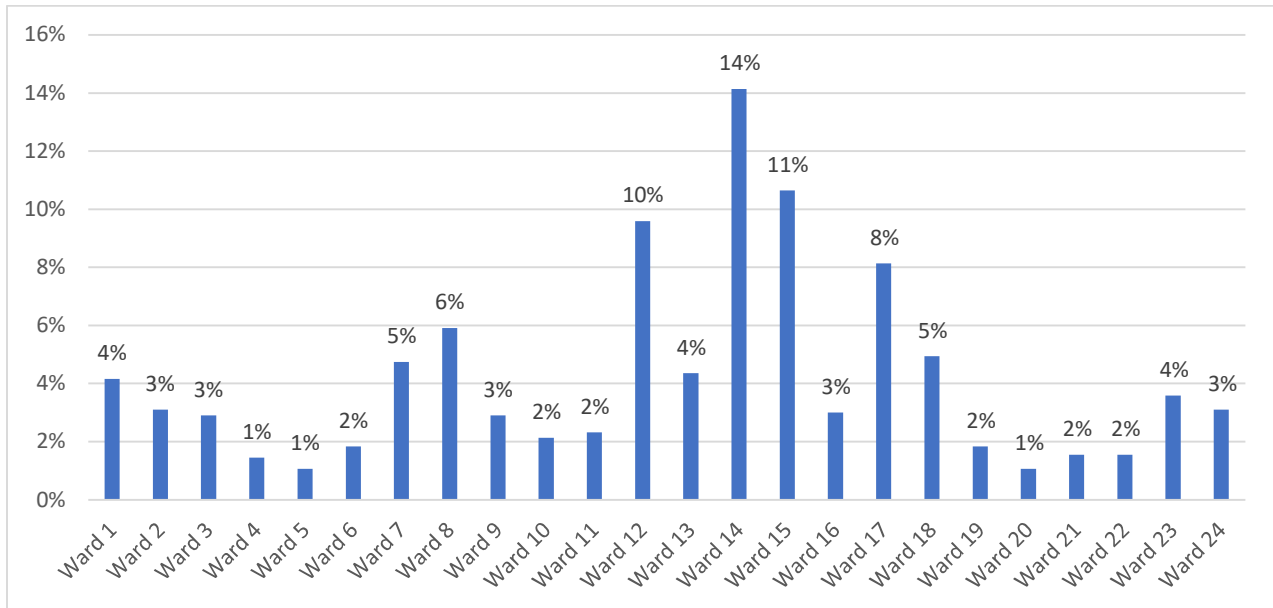
Respondents were divided between female (48%), male (43%), non-binary (4%) and some preferred not to answer (5%). (Figure 1)

Figure 1 - Gender identity demographics



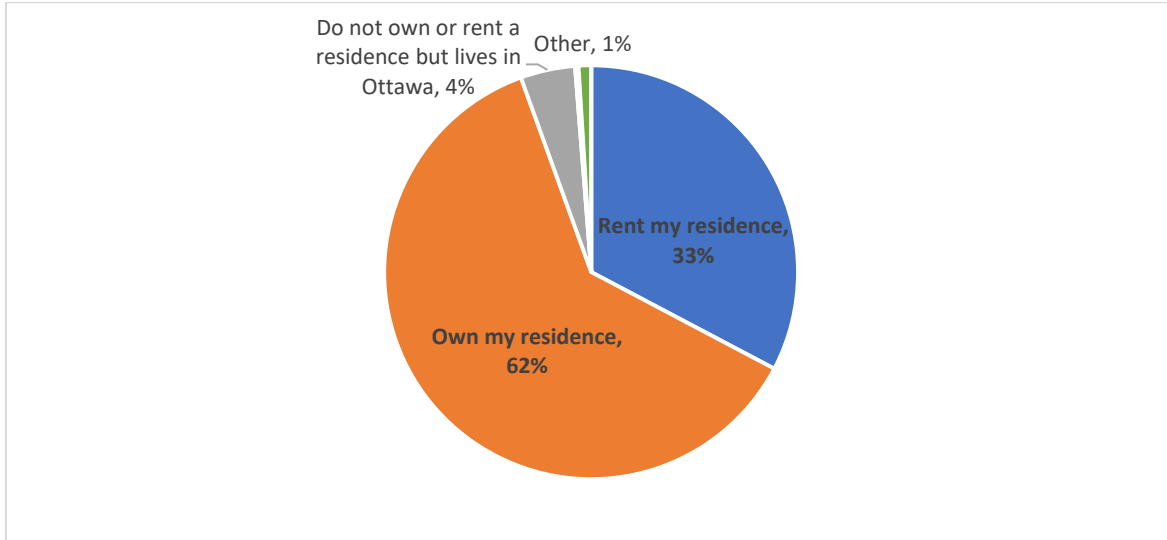
Individuals belonging to ward 14 made up 14% of responses, followed by ward 15 (11%), and Ward 12 (10%). (Figure 2)

Figure 2 - Geographic Distribution



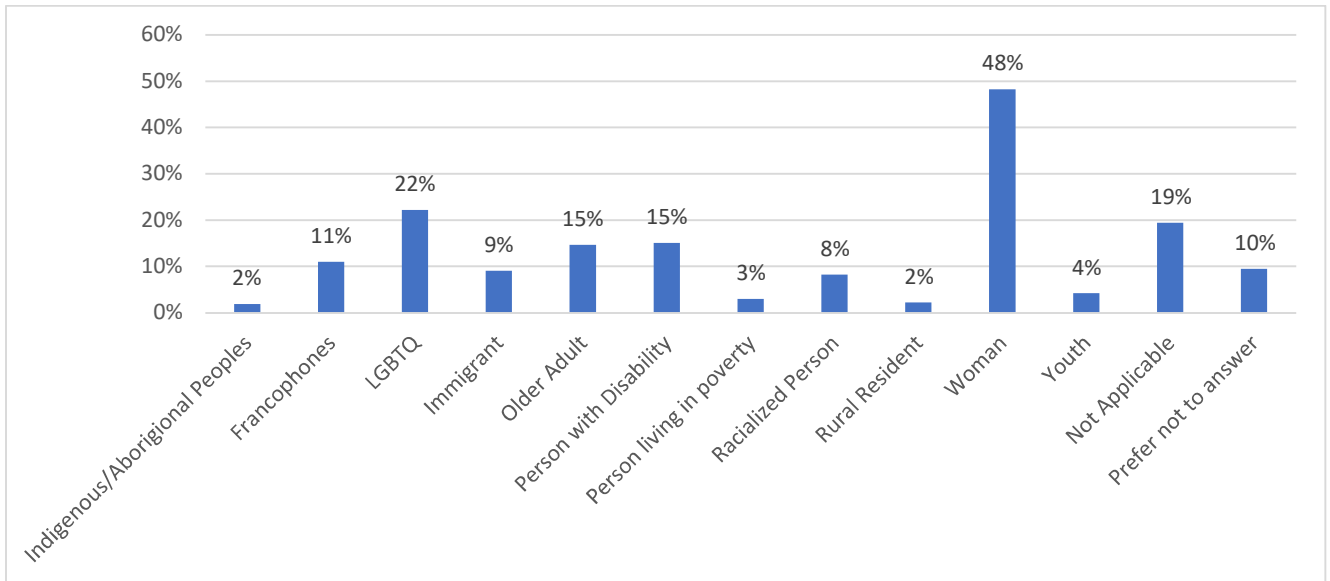
Individuals who own their residence made up 62% of responses, followed by those who rent their residence (33%), those that do not own or rent a residence but live in Ottawa (4%) and other (1%). (Figure 3)

Figure 3 - Type of property occupancy



Individuals who identify as a woman made up 48% of responses, followed by those who identify as LGBTQ (22%), those that did not identify with any of the groups listed (19%) and persons with a disability and older adults (15% each). (Figure 4)

Figure 4 - Self-identified declaration as Indigenous people and Equity and Inclusion Lens groups



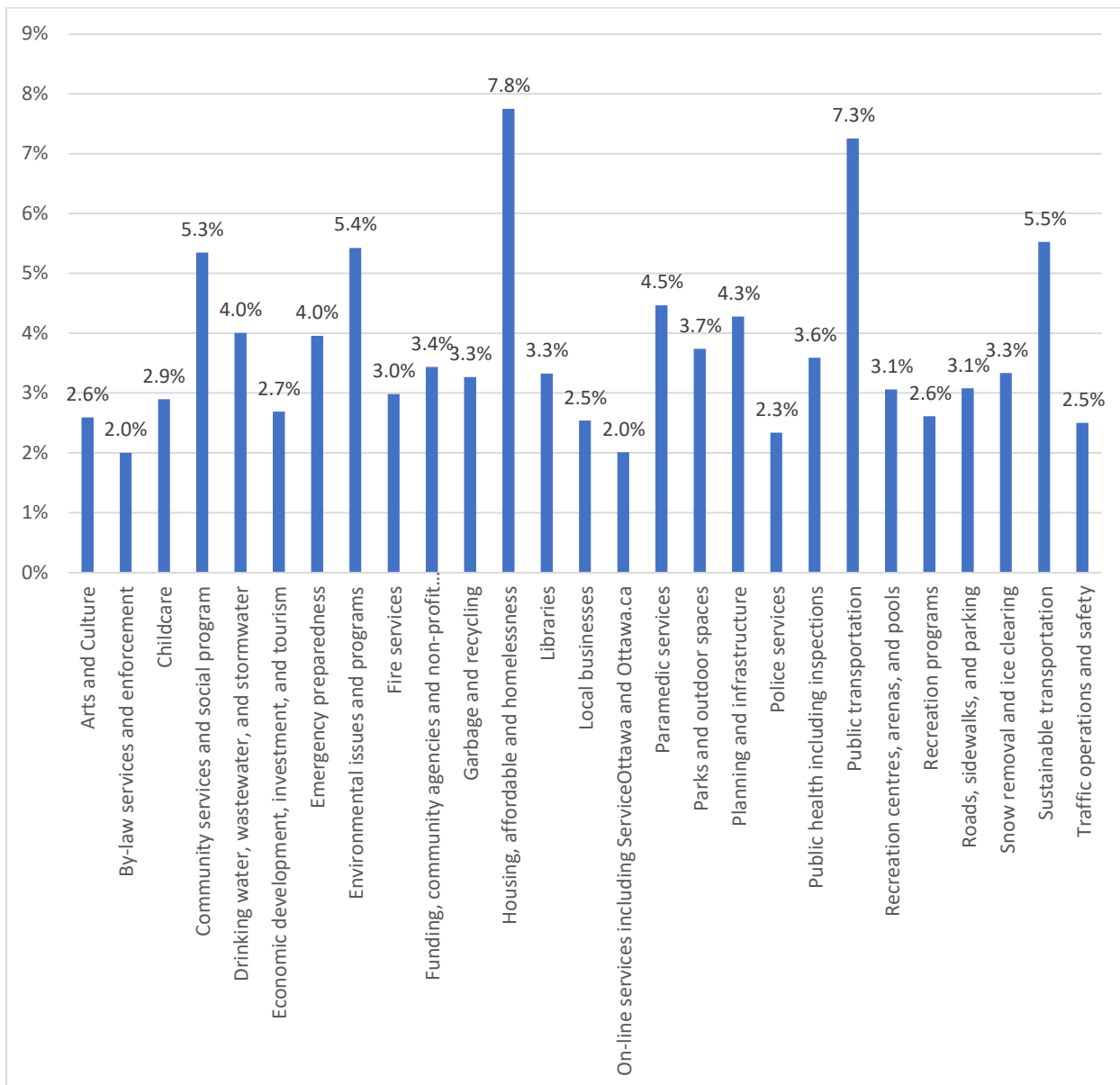
What We Heard - Survey Results

The survey was comprised of four main questions regarding highest priority ranking for budget topics, lowest priority ranking for budget topics, suggestions on reducing Operating Budgets and finding efficiencies, and an open comment section. The breakdown of overall responses, responses by ward and responses by Indigenous people and Equity and Inclusion Lens groups are listed below. (Figures 5 and 6 and Tables 1 and 2).

Overall priorities

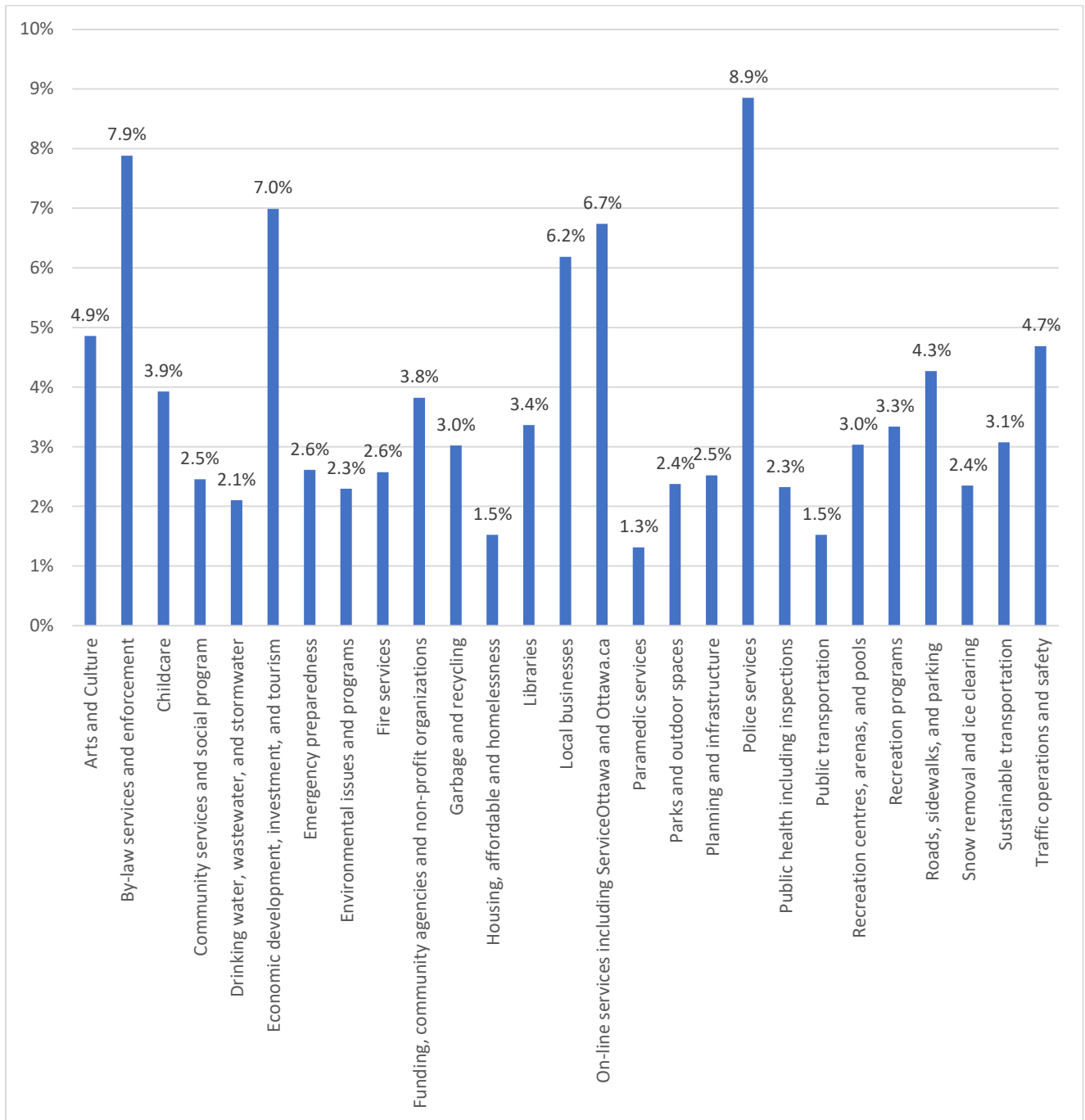
Housing, affordability and homelessness (7.8%), public transportation (7.3%), sustainable transportation (5.5%), environmental issues and programs (5.4%) and community services and social programs (5.3%) were identified as the **highest** priorities for Budget 2023 when respondents were asked to rank their top five areas of highest importance.

Figure 5 – Highest priorities



Police services (8.9%), By-law services and enforcement (7.9%), economic development, investment, and tourism (7.0%), on-line services including ServiceOttawa and Ottawa.ca (6.7%) and, local businesses (6.2%) were identified as the **lowest** priorities for Budget 2023 when respondents were asked to rank their top five areas of least importance.

Figure 6 – Lowest priorities



Priorities by ward

Table 1 identifies highest priorities for Budget 2023 based on ward.

Table 1 - Priorities by ward

Ward	Highest Priority	Second Highest Priority	Third Highest Priority
Ward 1 Orléans East-Cumberland	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation	Drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater
Ward 2 Orléans West-Innes	Public transportation	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Paramedic services
Ward 3 Barrhaven West	Paramedic Services	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation
Ward 4 Kanata North	Public transportation	Roads, sidewalks, and parking (not snow removal and ice clearing)	Paramedic services
Ward 5 West Carleton-March	Drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Funding, community agencies and non-profit organizations
Ward 6 Stittsville	Garbage and recycling	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater
Ward 7 Bay	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation	Environmental issues and programs
Ward 8 College	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation	Sustainable transportation (i.e., cycling, walking, e-bikes, e-
Ward 9 Knoxdale-Merivale	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Environmental issues and programs	Emergency preparedness

Ward	Highest Priority	Second Highest Priority	Third Highest Priority
Ward 10 Gloucester-Southgate	Public transportation	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Community services and social program
Ward 11 Beacon Hill-Cyrville	Public transportation	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Community services and social program
Ward 12 Rideau-Vanier	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation	Community services and social program
Ward 13 Rideau-Rockcliffe	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Environmental issues and programs	Public transportation
Ward 14 Somerset	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation	Sustainable transportation (i.e., cycling, walking, e-bikes, e-scooters)
Ward 15 Kitchissippi	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation	Community services and social program
Ward 16 River	Public transportation	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Community services and social program
Ward 17 Capital	Public transportation	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Sustainable transportation (i.e., cycling, walking, e-bikes, e-scooters)
Ward 18 Alta Vista	Public transportation	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Environmental issues and programs
Ward 19 Orléans South-Navan	Public transportation	Environmental issues and programs	Housing, affordable and homelessness
Ward 20 Osgoode	Police Services and Paramedic Services	Paramedic services	Garbage and recycling
Ward 21 Rideau-Jock	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Paramedic services	Public health including inspections
Ward 22 Riverside South-Findlay	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation	Environmental issues and programs

Ward	Highest Priority	Second Highest Priority	Third Highest Priority
Ward 23 Kanata South	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Community services and social program	Drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater
Ward 24 Barrhaven East	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation	Paramedic services

Priorities in relation to Indigenous people and Equity and Inclusion Lens groups

Table 2 identifies highest and lowest priorities for Budget 2023 based on Indigenous People and Equity and Inclusion Lens groups.

Table 2 - Priorities by Indigenous People and equity and inclusion groups

Indigenous People and Equity and Inclusion Lens groups	Highest Priority	Second Highest Priority	Third Highest Priority
Francophones	Public transportation	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Sustainable transportation (i.e., cycling, walking, e-bikes, e-scooters)
Immigrant	Public transportation	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Environmental issues and programs
Indigenous/Aboriginal peoples	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Emergency preparedness	Environmental issues and programs
LGBTQ	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation	Environmental issues and programs
Older adult	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Environmental issues and	Community services and social program
Person with disability	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation	Community services and social program

Indigenous People and Equity and Inclusion Lens groups	Highest Priority	Second Highest Priority	Third Highest Priority
Person living in poverty	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Community services and social	Public transportation
Racialized person	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation	Environmental issues and programs
Rural resident	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Fire services	Garbage and recycling
Women	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation	Community services and social program
Youth	Housing, affordable and homelessness	Public transportation	Community services and social program

Suggestions to reduce operational spending, find efficiencies or general feedback

Two open-end questions were asked to allow respondents an opportunity to share their suggestions on reducing operational spending and finding efficiencies within the budget, and to provide general feedback. Common themes are summarized below.

The most common theme was reducing the budget allocated to the Ottawa Police Services. Some of the suggestions included providing alternative services and reallocating funds to social service and mental health programs.

Respondents recommended to look at the variety of services offered to residents and prioritize those that serve the current needs of residents. Often, respondents stated that the tax increase should be sufficient to meet the needs of the most critical services offered by the City of Ottawa.

Housing affordability and reducing the homeless population by addressing underlying causes was a re-occurring topic. Using existing tools and allocating more funds to mental health services and addiction programs were common suggestions offered.

Finally, some suggestions were offered to create more sustainable transportation networks and to increase campaigns to promote the benefits of sustainable and public

transportation. Respondents were looking to reduce spending on road infrastructure and in turn increase revenue from public transportation.

Appendix A – Budget 2023 Survey Questions

1. Select the statement that applies to you.
 - I rent my residence in the City of Ottawa
 - I own my residence in the City of Ottawa
 - I live in the City of Ottawa but do not own or rent a residence
 - I am a student who lives in the City of Ottawa during school but consider my permanent residence to be elsewhere
 - I own or operate a business in the City of Ottawa and rent my business property
 - I own or operate a business and own my business property
 - Other (please specify)

2. What City ward do you live in (please select one)?
 - Ward 1 – Orléans East-Cumberland
 - Ward 2 – Orléans West-Innes
 - Ward 3 – Barrhaven West
 - Ward 4 – Kanata North
 - Ward 5 – West Carleton March
 - Ward 6 – Stittsville
 - Ward 7 – Bay
 - Ward 8 – College
 - Ward 9 – Knoxdale-Merivale
 - Ward 10 – Gloucester-Southgate
 - Ward 11 – Beacon Hill-Cyrville
 - Ward 12 – Rideau-Vanier
 - Ward 13 – Rideau-Rockcliffe
 - Ward 14 – Somerset
 - Ward 15 – Kitchissippi
 - Ward 16 – River
 - Ward 17 – Capital
 - Ward 18 – Alta Vista
 - Ward 19 – Orléans South-Navan
 - Ward 20 – Osgoode
 - Ward 21 – Rideau-Jock
 - Ward 22 – Riverside South – Findlay Creek
 - Ward 23 – Kanata South
 - Ward 24 – Barrhaven East

3. How do you identify?
 - Female

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- Male
 - Non-binary
 - Other
 - Prefer not to answer
4. The City of Ottawa uses an Equity & Inclusion Lens to ensure that we are consistent and coherent in our efforts to move equity and inclusion forward in our services and to the benefit of our city. It is critical to democracy and public engagement that voices from all diverse backgrounds are heard. Do you personally identify as someone in the following group(s)?
- Indigenous/Aboriginal Peoples
 - Francophones
 - LGBTQ
 - Immigrant
 - Older Adult
 - Person with Disability
 - Person living in poverty
 - Racialized Person
 - Rural Resident
 - Woman
 - Youth
 - Not applicable
 - Prefer not to answer
5. Please identify the top five areas of **high priority** for Budget 2023, with top priority as the highest.
- Arts and Culture
 - By-law services and enforcement
 - Childcare
 - Community services and social program
 - Drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater
 - Economic development, investment, and tourism
 - Emergency preparedness
 - Environmental issues and programs
 - Fire services
 - Funding, community agencies and non-profit organizations
 - Garbage and recycling
 - Housing, affordable and homelessness
 - Libraries
 - Local businesses
 - On-line services including ServiceOttawa and Ottawa.ca

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- Paramedic services
 - Parks and outdoor spaces
 - Planning and infrastructure
 - Police services
 - Public health including inspections
 - Public transportation
 - Recreation centres, arenas, and pools
 - Recreation programs
 - Roads, sidewalks, and parking (not snow removal and ice clearing)
 - Snow removal and ice clearing
 - Sustainable transportation (i.e., cycling, walking, e-bikes, e-scooters)
 - Traffic operations and safety

6. Please identify the top five areas of **low priority** for Budget 2023, with least important priority as the lowest.

- Arts and Culture
- By-law services and enforcement
- Childcare
- Community services and social program
- Drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater
- Economic development, investment, and tourism
- Emergency preparedness
- Environmental issues and programs
- Fire services
- Funding, community agencies and non-profit organizations
- Garbage and recycling
- Housing, affordable and homelessness
- Libraries
- Local businesses
- On-line services including ServiceOttawa and Ottawa.ca
- Paramedic services
- Parks and outdoor spaces
- Planning and infrastructure
- Police services
- Public health including inspections
- Public transportation
- Recreation centres, arenas, and pools
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- Roads, sidewalks, and parking (not snow removal and ice clearing)
- Snow removal and ice clearing
- Sustainable transportation (i.e., cycling, walking, e-bikes, e-scooters)

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- Traffic operations and safety
7. Do you have any suggestions on how the City of Ottawa could reduce operational spending or find efficiencies?
 8. Do you have any other feedback on Budget 2023?