

Budget 2024

Engage Ottawa Survey

As-We-Heard-It Report

November 8, 2023

Finance and Corporate Services Department

Disclaimer: The Draft Budget 2024 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 by the budget planning team.

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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 residents' opinions on City services and what the priorities of residents are. The focus of the consultation was on services reporting to the City of Ottawa Standing Committees. Ottawa Police Services, Ottawa Public Library and Ottawa Public Health were not considered service topics within this consultation as they create and table their own budgets independently. The As-We-Heard-It report summarizes residents' feedback collected through the online survey, including themes of the most common sentiments shared by respondents. The survey was open from September 13, 2023 to October 27, 2023. In total, 1,421 submissions were received. Demographic and ward data was collected to better understand trends 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 public transportation (63.5 per cent), construction of affordable housing (62.8 per cent), development of affordable housing (62.3 per cent), social housing programs, emergency shelters, supportive housing and homelessness programs (55.4 per cent) and Light Rail (53.2 per cent) as very important priorities.

We also heard that media relations (26.5 per cent), arts and culture (9 per cent), funding, community agencies and non-profit organizations (8.3 per cent), local businesses (8 per cent) and economic development, investment and tourism (7.6 per cent) were considered priorities that were noted as least important.

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

The operating budget is designed to ensure the dependable delivery of a broad array of programs and services that residents rely on every day. Your 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.

To keep Ottawa both affordable and prosperous, City staff needs to determine how best to deliver all these services while balancing revenues and expenditures as guided and directed by Council. Ottawa is one of the largest cities in Canada – larger than the areas of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton combined. Ottawa covers an area of 2,760 square kilometres. Only 10 per cent of that is urban while the remaining 90 per cent is agricultural land, villages, marginal and forested lands, and wetlands. Given the sheer scale and diverse requirements of the city, it's no wonder that a 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 look beyond simply providing existing services. A City needs to be guided by a clear and overarching vision of what it is to become. The capital budget funds City infrastructure as well as [Council's Strategic Initiatives](#), which support the Term of Council Priorities.

The Capital budget is developed in accordance with the Council approved Transportation Master Plan, Infrastructure Master Plan, 2019 Development Charges Background Study, and the [Long Range Financial Plans \(LRFP\)](#). The City funds its capital program through a combination of tax funds from reserves, development charges on the growth portion of eligible projects, and debt and grants from senior levels of government. Debt funding used to fund eligible components of the capital program will be in accordance with the Fiscal Framework and are well below the provincial debt limit.

The bulk of infrastructure funding goes to maintaining and rehabilitating existing infrastructure 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 including buses and vehicles, water pipes, roads, bridges, trunk sewers, street lighting, libraries and much more. 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.

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.

Strong financial management and financial sustainability continue to be a commitment and a priority for the City. The Budget is guided by Council-approved Long Range Financial Plans, the Fiscal Framework, Strategic Asset Management Plans, Reserve Management Plans, ongoing continuous improvement initiatives, and the approved Service Review framework and principles.

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 1,421 submissions between September 13, 2023 and October 27, 2023. The online survey was promoted through social media, Ottawa.ca and public service announcements. The survey questions are provided in Appendix A.

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

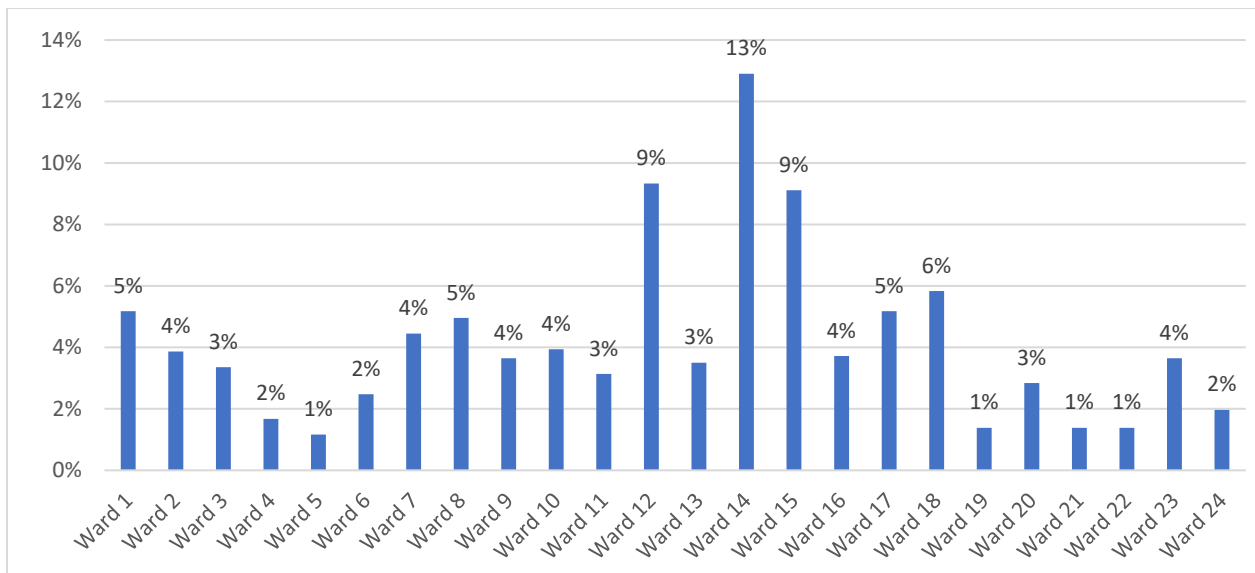
themed to identify the most common sentiments. For some survey questions, respondents could select more than one option, resulting in some graphs adding up to more than 100 per cent.

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. These questions were not mandatory and may not represent the total numbers of responses. Total number of responses to each question is noted along with each figure.

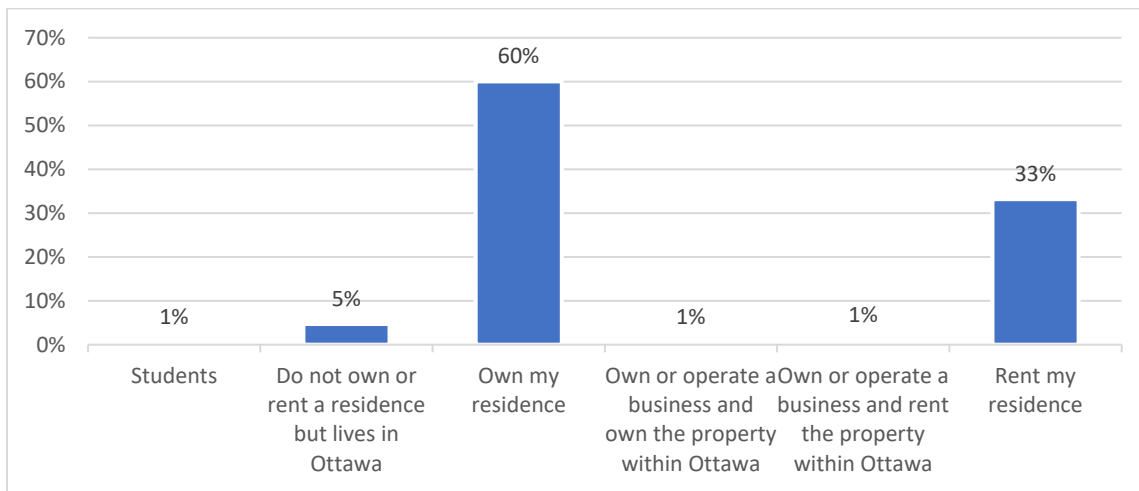
There were 1,372 responses to question of which ward the respondent lives in. Individuals belonging to Ward 14 made up 13 per cent of responses, followed by Ward 12 (9 per cent), and Ward 15 (9 per cent). (Figure 1)

Figure 1 - Geographic distribution



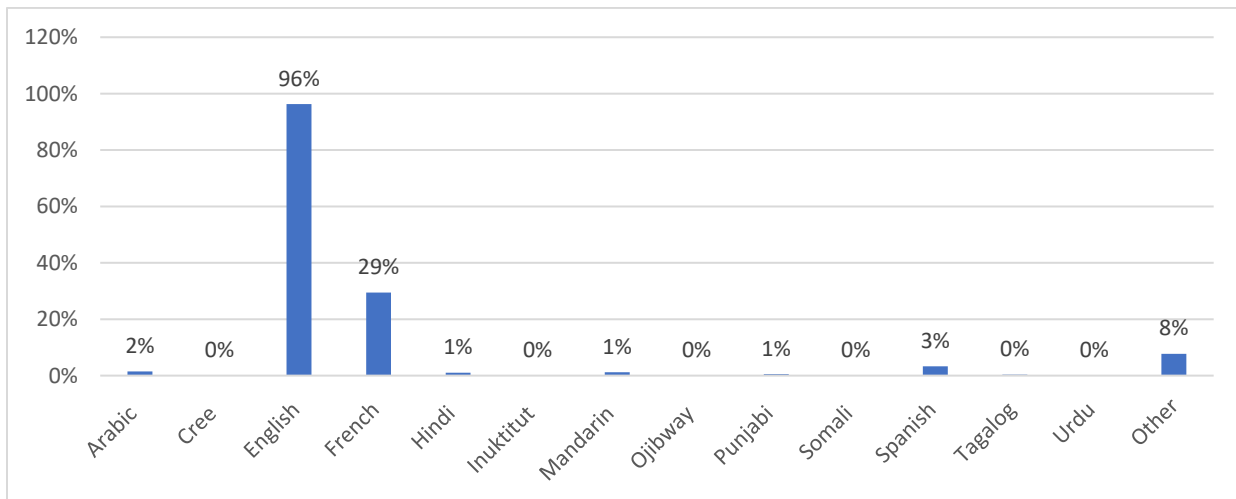
When asked to identify type of residence, there were 1,359 responses. Individuals who own their residence made up 60 per cent of responses, followed by those who rent their residence (33 per cent) and those that do not own or rent a residence but live in Ottawa (5 per cent). (Figure 2)

Figure 2 - Type of property occupancy



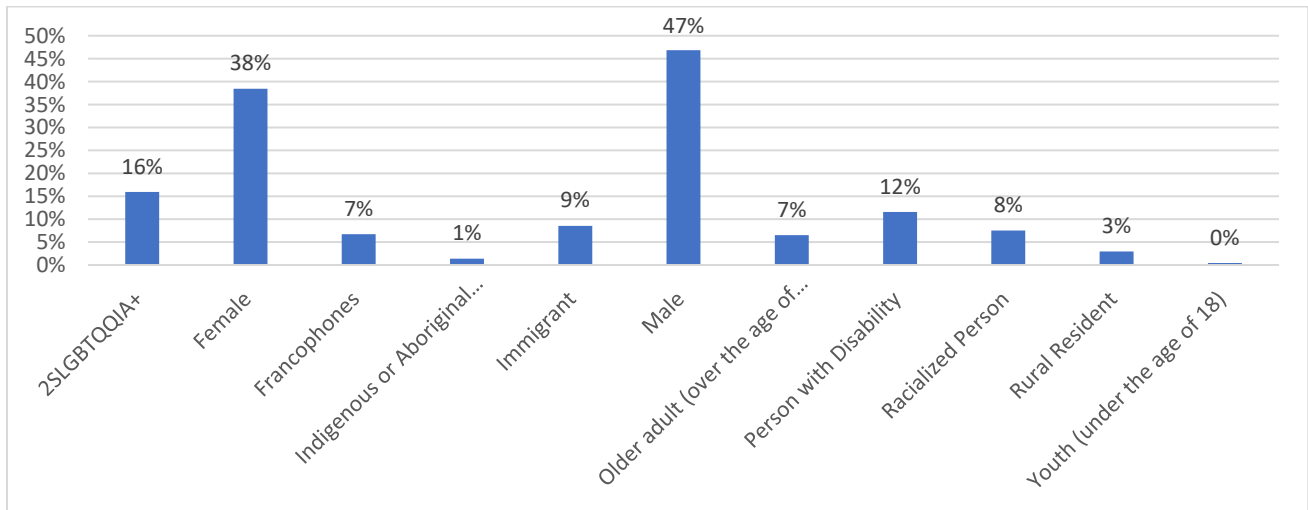
There were 1,396 responses when asked to identify all languages spoken at home. Respondents were invited to select as many as applicable. Individuals primarily speak English at home (96 per cent), French (29 per cent) and other languages (8 per cent) in their home. (Figure 3)

Figure 3 - Languages spoken at home



When asked to self-identify in as many equity, inclusion and diverse groups as applicable there were 1381 number of responses to this question. Individuals who identify as a male made up 47 per cent of responses, followed by those who identify as female (38 per cent), 2SLGBTQQIA+ (16 per cent) and persons with a disability (12 per cent). (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 three main questions asking respondents to identify their priority of City services, offer suggestions on reducing Operating Budgets and finding efficiencies, and an open comment section. The breakdown of overall responses is provided below in Figures 5 to 8, responses by ward in Table 1 and responses by demographics in Table 2).

Priorities

Public transportation (63.5 per cent), construction of affordable housing (62.8 per cent), development of affordable housing (62.3 per cent), social housing programs, emergency shelters, supportive housing and homelessness programs (55.4 per cent) and Light Rail (53.2 per cent) were identified as the **highest** priorities for Draft Budget 2024 when respondents were asked to identify how important each service is to them.

Media relations (26.5 per cent), arts and culture (9 per cent), funding, community agencies and non-profit organizations (8.3 per cent), local businesses (8 per cent) and economic development, investment and tourism (7.6 per cent) were identified as the **lowest** priorities for Draft Budget 2024 when respondents were asked to identify how important each service is to them.

Figure 5 - Priorities (A to E)

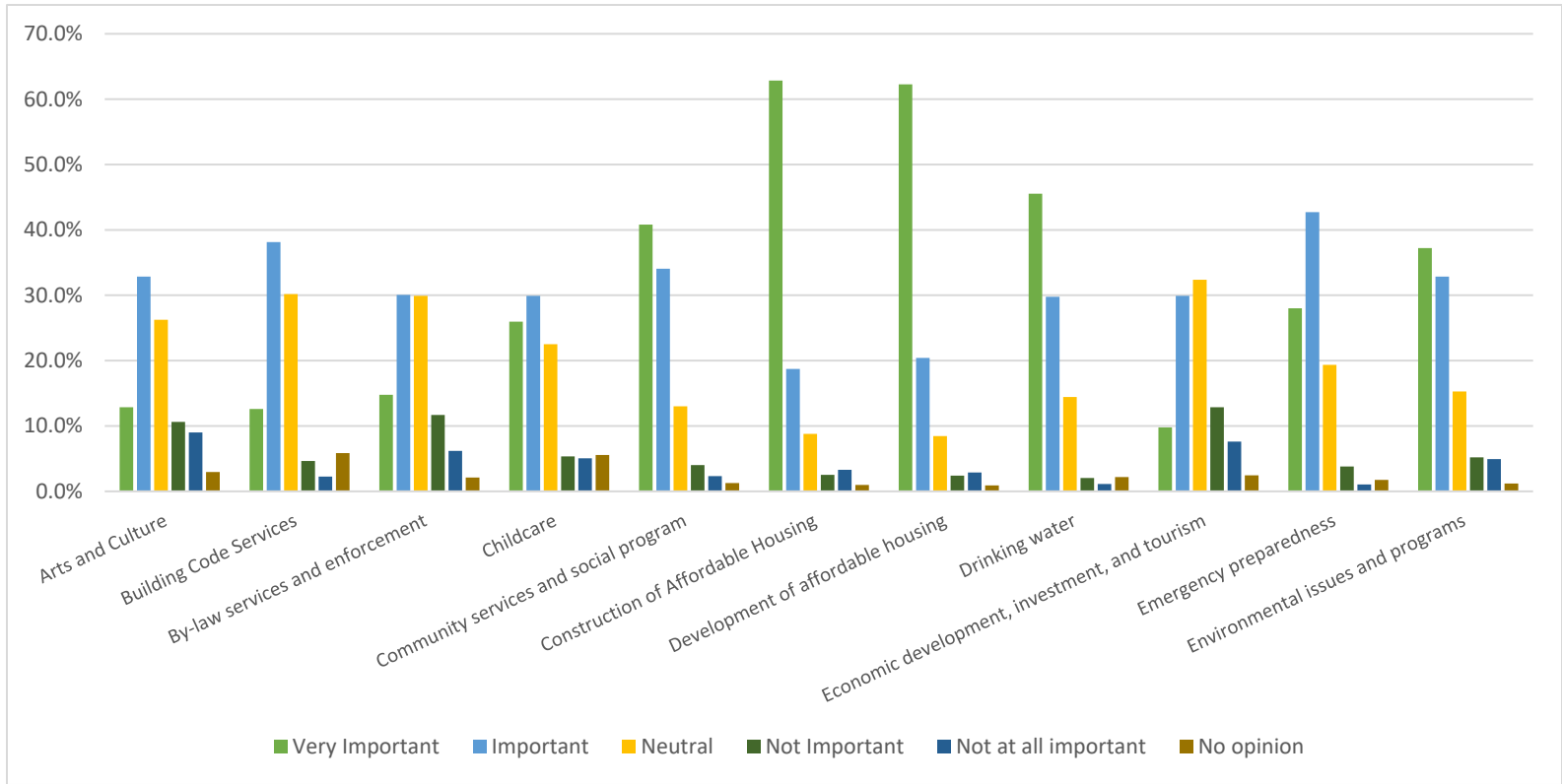


Figure 6 - Priorities (F to M)

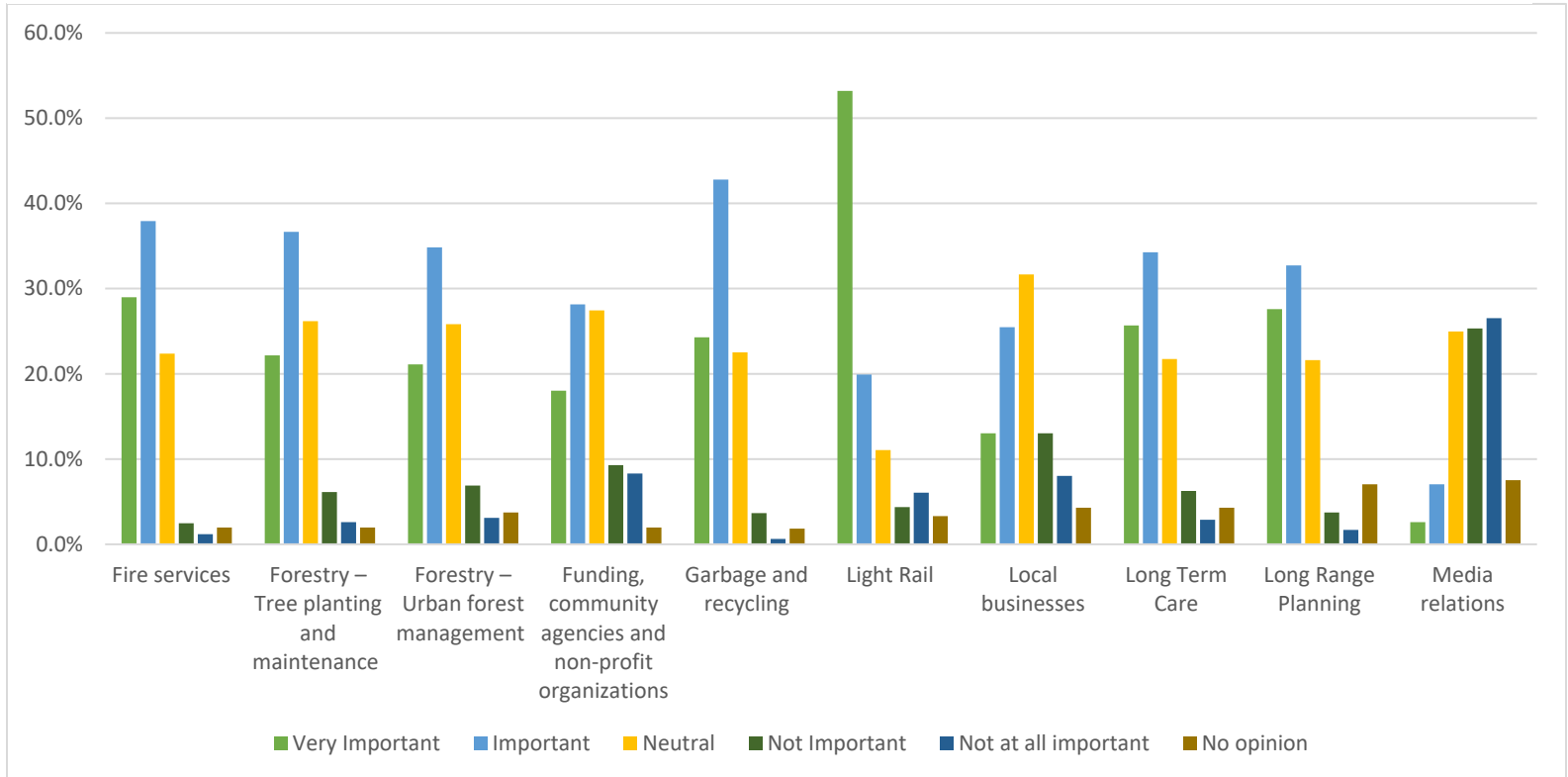


Figure 7 - Priorities (P to R)

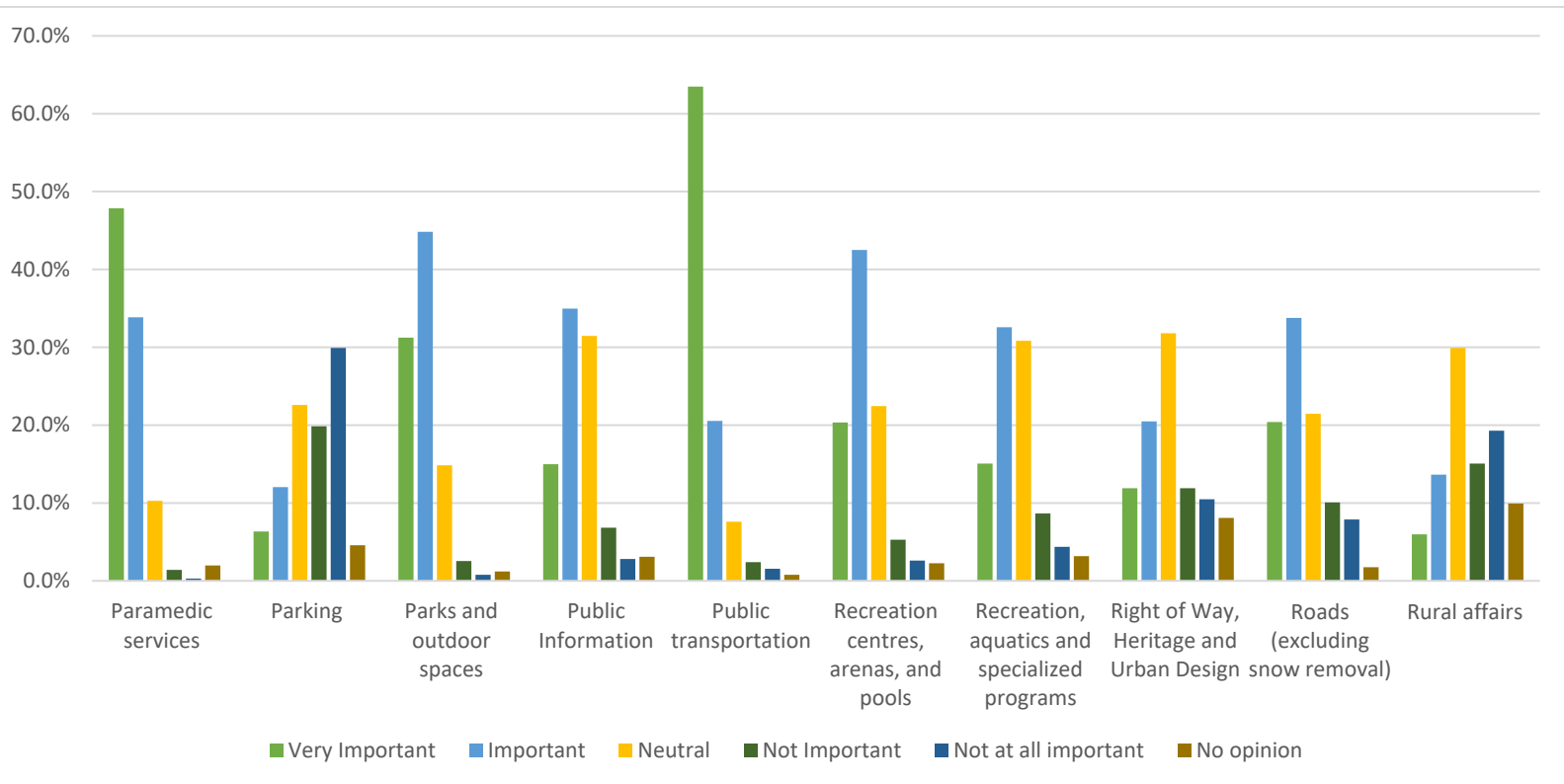
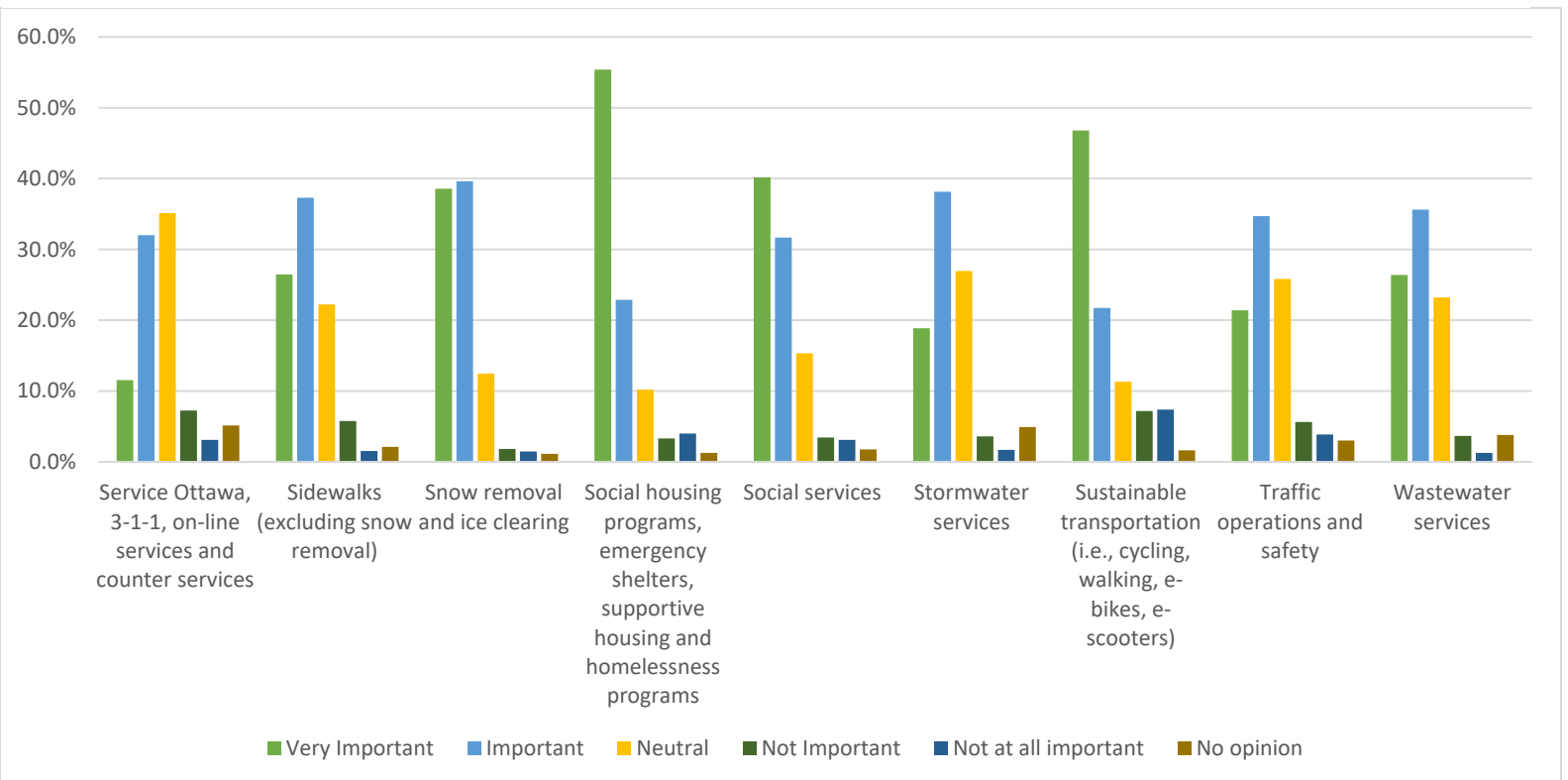


Figure 8 - Priorities (S to Z)



Priorities by ward

Respondents were not required to share their ward however for those that did, table 1 identifies highest priorities for Draft Budget 2024 based on those who selected their ward.

Table 1 - Priorities by ward

Ward	Highest Priority	Second Highest Priority	Third Highest Priority
Ward 1 Orléans East-Cumberland	Paramedic services	Drinking water	Public transportation
Ward 2 Orléans West-Innes	Paramedic services	Public transportation	Development of affordable housing
Ward 3 Barrhaven West	Public transportation	Paramedic services	Drinking water
Ward 4 Kanata North	Paramedic services	Snow removal and ice clearing	Construction of affordable housing
Ward 5 West Carleton-March	Paramedic services	Development of affordable housing	Construction of affordable housing
Ward 6 Stittsville	Paramedic services	Drinking water	Public transportation
Ward 7 Bay	Public transportation	Development of affordable	Light Rail
Ward 8 College	Construction of affordable housing	Public transportation	Development of affordable housing
Ward 9 Knoxdale-Merivale	Development of affordable housing	Public transportation	Construction of affordable housing

Ward	Highest Priority	Second Highest Priority	Third Highest Priority
Ward 10 Gloucester-Southgate	Development of affordable housing	Public transportation	Construction of affordable housing
Ward 11 Beacon Hill-Cyrville	Public transportation	Construction of affordable housing	Light Rail
Ward 12 Rideau-Vanier	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable	Public transportation
Ward 13 Rideau-Rockcliffe	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable housing	Public transportation
Ward 14 Somerset	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable housing	Public transportation
Ward 15 Kitchissippi	Public transportation	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable housing
Ward 16 River	Public transportation	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable housing
Ward 17 Capital	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable housing	Public transportation
Ward 18 Alta Vista	Public transportation	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable housing
Ward 19 Orléans South-Navan	Community services and social programs	Snow removal and ice clearing	Construction of affordable housing
Ward 20 Osgoode	Rural affairs	Paramedic services	Roads (excluding snow removal)
Ward 21 Rideau-Jock	Paramedic services	Public transportation	Drinking water

Ward	Highest Priority	Second Highest Priority	Third Highest Priority
Ward 22 Riverside South-Findlay	Drinking water	Snow removal and ice clearing	Construction of affordable housing
Ward 23 Kanata South	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable housing	Paramedic services
Ward 24 Barrhaven East	Paramedic services	Public transportation	Development of affordable housing

Priorities in relation to demographics

Respondents were not required to self-identify, however for those that did, table 2 identifies highest priorities for Draft Budget 2024 based upon an equity, inclusion and diversity lens.

Table 2 - Priorities by Demographics

Demographics	Highest Priority	Second Highest Priority	Third Highest Priority
2SLGBTQIA+	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable housing	Public transportation
Female	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable housing	Social housing programs, emergency shelters, supportive housing and homelessness programs

Demographics	Highest Priority	Second Highest Priority	Third Highest Priority
Francophones	Public transportation	Construction of affordable housing	Social housing programs, emergency shelters, supportive housing and homelessness programs
Indigenous or Aboriginal Peoples	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable housing	Social housing programs, emergency shelters, supportive housing and homelessness programs
Immigrant	Public transportation	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable housing
Male	Public transportation	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable housing
Older adult (over the age of 65)	Paramedic services	Snow removal and ice clearing	Drinking water
Person with Disability	Construction of affordable housing	Development of affordable housing	Social housing programs, emergency shelters, supportive housing and homelessness programs
Racialized Person	Public transportation	Light Rail	Construction of affordable housing
Rural Resident	Paramedic services	Rural affairs	Snow removal and ice clearing
Youth (under the age of 18)	Light Rail	Drinking water	Social housing programs, emergency shelters, supportive housing and homelessness

Other important issues and feedback to be considered for Draft Budget 2024

Two open-end questions were asked to allow respondents an opportunity to identify any other important issue that should be considered as a budget priority or provide additional feedback to be considered for Draft Budget 2024. Common themes are summarized below.

While the focus on the consultation was on services reporting to the City of Ottawa Standing Committees, police services and public safety was a frequent topic. Since the focus of this survey was on services related to each Standing Committee, options to prioritize the services offered by Ottawa Police Services, Ottawa Public Library and Ottawa Public Health were not included in this consultation as they conduct their own consultations with residents and users.

The most common theme noted was climate initiatives, environmental sustainability and green spaces. Some of the suggestions provided include focusing on advancing the City of Ottawa's green initiatives and climate resiliency, protecting our green spaces from development, enhancing existing spaces and looking at electric equipment and vehicles for City services where possible.

There were mixed opinions on the increase of property taxes. There were many responses who were advocating for a greater tax increase to better fund City services. There were equally as many comments who find Ottawa unaffordable and do not want to see the property taxes increased.

Public transit was a frequent topic and respondents would like to see an increase to the reliability of the service without a rise in cost. Most comments mentioned that a review of services needs to be done to provide the most efficient transportation while enhancing the ridership experience. The inflation of transit costs has not seemed reflective of the services and therefore any increase on property taxes or fares doesn't seem appropriate.

The opioid crisis was frequently mentioned, and respondents want to see more resources in place to help control the crisis by way of alternative methods and supports.

Finally, some suggestions were offered to increase the budget allowance for renewal of infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks, buildings, water systems, wastewater

collection, storm sewers and more. Respondents would like to see more action being taken faster to address aging infrastructure.

Appendix A – Budget 2024 Survey Questions

1. Municipal services are funded from all levels of government and some funds may be restricted to specific services. From your perspective, and recognizing that not everything is within City of Ottawa control, what do you feel are the important local issues facing the City at the present time? Please note it is not required to rank all services listed below.

(Very important, important, neutral, not important, not at all important, no opinion)

- Arts and Culture
- Building Code Services
- By-law services and enforcement
- Childcare
- Community services and social program
- Construction of Affordable Housing
- Development of affordable housing
- Drinking water
- Economic development, investment, and tourism
- Emergency preparedness
- Environmental issues and programs
- Fire services
- Forestry – Tree planting and maintenance
- Forestry – Urban forest management
- Funding, community agencies and non-profit organizations
- Garbage and recycling
- Light Rail
- Local businesses
- Long Term Care
- Long Range Planning
- Media relations
- Paramedic services
- Parking
- Parks and outdoor spaces
- Public Information
- Public transportation
- Recreation centres, arenas, and pools
- Recreation, aquatics and specialized programs
- Right of Way, Heritage and Urban Design
- Roads (excluding snow removal)
- Rural affairs
- Service Ottawa, 3-1-1, on-line services and counter services
- Sidewalks (excluding snow removal)
- Snow removal and ice clearing

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- Social housing programs, emergency shelters, supportive housing and homelessness programs
 - Social services
 - Stormwater services
 - Sustainable transportation (i.e., cycling, walking, e-bikes, e-scooters)
 - Traffic operations and safety
 - Wastewater services
2. If the most important local issue facing the City at the present time was not listed above, please tell us what it is.
3. Do you have any other feedback to be considered for Draft Budget 2024?

Demographics

The City of Ottawa is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion and strives 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.

4. Ward information is collected to ensure that there is appropriate representation from all over Ottawa and to see if there are differing support needs that need to be considered during the budget process. What ward do you live in?
- 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

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- Ward 22 – Riverside South – Findlay Creek
 - Ward 23 – Kanata South
 - Ward 24 – Barrhaven East
5. Select the statement that applies to you.
- I am a student who lives in the City of Ottawa during school but consider my permanent residence to be elsewhere
 - I live in the City of Ottawa but do not own or rent a residence
 - I own my residence in the City of Ottawa
 - I own or operate a business and own my business property
 - I own or operate a business in the City of Ottawa and rent my business property
 - I rent my residence in the City of Ottawa
 - Other (please specify)
6. What languages are spoken in your home? (Choose all that apply)
- Arabic
 - Cree
 - English
 - French
 - Hindi
 - Inuktitut
 - Mandarin
 - Ojibway
 - Punjabi
 - Somali
 - Spanish
 - Tagalog
 - Urdu
 - Other (please specify):
7. Do you personally identify as someone in the following group(s)? (choose all that apply)
- 2SLGBTQQIA+
 - Female
 - Francophones
 - Indigenous or Aboriginal Peoples
 - Immigrant
 - Male
 - Older adult (over the age of 65)
 - Person with Disability
 - Racialized Person
 - Rural Resident
 - Youth (under the age of 18)
 - Not applicable
 - Prefer not to answer