



# 2022 Budget Questionnaire

## Summary Report

NOVEMBER 1, 2021

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District of Oak Bay

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# Overview

## Background

Each year, the District of Oak Bay seeks public input to support the annual budget process. Council considers resident feedback when setting, reviewing and revising priorities.

The District's annual budget questionnaire is one of many ways residents can provide feedback.

## Topics Covered

The 2022 Budget Questionnaire asked residents whether they wished to increase, decrease, or maintain a variety of District services. The questionnaire included brief, high-level service descriptions so that residents had information on current service levels when providing feedback. As well as asking about service levels, the questionnaire also asked residents for feedback on Asset Management funding and Council's Priorities.

## Timing

The 2022 budget questionnaire was launched through an online platform [www.connect.oakbay.ca](http://www.connect.oakbay.ca) on October 4, 2021, and closed on October 24, 2021. Paper copies were also available at District recreation centres.

## Responses

280 questionnaires were returned by the deadline. Of those, 267 were completed online and 13 were completed on paper. Responses to paper questionnaires were entered into the online data base by staff and are reflected in the detailed response report. A few responses on paper questionnaires could not be entered due to the way they were answered (checking multiple responses, providing detailed comments on closed questions, etc.) or due to illegibility.

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Returns were slightly lower than for the 2020 budget questionnaire (320), which is not surprising given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and resulting fatigue.

Twelve responses were from people living outside Oak Bay. Those responses were removed from the analyzed data set. There were nine respondents who skipped answering the location of residence question. Those responses were not removed from the tabulation. Within Oak Bay, there was a relatively even distribution between North Oak Bay and South Oak Bay responses.

Questionnaire respondents differed somewhat from Oak Bay's population profile. Residents in the 65-74 age group are over-represented while respondents in the 25-34 and 75+ categories are under-represented.

There were two responses from individuals under 18 and twelve responses from individuals who did not disclose their age. Questionnaires completed by these individuals were included in the data set but are not reflected in the comparison below.

Population Aged 18+	2016 Census	Questionnaire respondents
18-24	3%	2%
25-34	13%	5%
35-44	10%	10%
45-54	16%	16%
55-64	20%	17%
65-74	20%	33%
75+	18%	12%

64 percent of respondents have lived in Oak Bay for more than ten years.

Residents were invited to comment on as many or as few questions as they wanted, so response totals differed by question. While there was no mechanism to prevent individuals from responding more than once, staff did not detect evidence of response stacking.

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## Statistical Significance

The questionnaire is not a random-sample survey and cannot be considered statistically significant. The questionnaire does, however, provide an indication of the preferences of those who responded to the questionnaire.

## Promotion

The budget questionnaire was promoted through advertisements in Oak Bay News (one half page ad and two quarter page ads costing \$628) and on Facebook and Instagram (\$250). The questionnaire was also promoted for free on the District’s website, via local school newsletters (including Camosun and UVic student associations), with social media posts, through community associations and word-of-mouth, community notice boards, via newsletter to connect.oakbay.ca subscribers, and links in Council/staff email signatures. Facebook and being subscribed to the connect.oakbay.ca newsletter were the most common ways that respondents found out about the questionnaire. Advertising cost per completed questionnaire was \$2.99. By comparison, 2021 budget questionnaire promotions cost \$1011.17, for a cost per completed questionnaire of \$3.16.

## Highlights

Most services received strong **support for being *maintained*** at current levels.

Three services received **strong support (more than 40%) for being *increased***:

Service	2021 Budget Questionnaire	2022 Budget Questionnaire
Mitigate and adapt to climate change	47%	51%
Manage deer population	49%	48%
Develop additional/new land use policies	33%	42%

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One service received **strong support (more than 40%) for being *decreased***:

Service	2021 Budget Questionnaire	2022 Budget Questionnaire
Install & maintain public art	40%	40%

A few services had **mixed support** – in that almost equal numbers favoured increases and decreases, or almost equal numbers favored increases and being maintained.

Service	Decrease	Maintain	Increase
Provide areas where dogs are allowed off-leash	33%	39%	28%
Regulate vacation rentals	23%	39%	38%
Regulate to protect heritage	25%	49%	26%
Provide road space dedicated to cycling	26%	41%	33%
Provide electric vehicle charging station	24%	38%	39%

The 2022 Budget Questionnaire asked residents about their familiarity with Oak Bay’s infrastructure challenges, how they wished to achieve sustainable annual funding, their opinion on infrastructure levels of service, as well as respondent interest in engaging with the District on future infrastructure challenges.

Most respondents (48%) answered that they are aware of the District’s infrastructure challenges but are only beginning to understand the funding/effort/years required to address the issues.

Of the options provided for achieving sustainable annual funding, for each infrastructure service the preferred option was the one recommended by staff (eight annual rate increases of 2.5% for sanitary sewer and water utilities; six annual rate increases of 2.06% for tax-funded infrastructure).

When respondents were asked about their views about infrastructure levels of service, the greatest number (40%) indicated they did not know enough to comment on infrastructure levels of service. Most residents (44%) would like more information from the District about infrastructure levels of service and long-term funding but do not wish to participate in engagement/consultation, while 39% of residents would like more information and want to participate in additional public engagement/consultation.

The 2022 Budget Questionnaire asked respondents to indicate whether they agreed with each of Council’s five priorities, and if they felt enough was being done in support of each priority by the District.

Most residents agreed with each of Council’s Priorities and felt enough was being done by the District, except regarding Diverse Housing. When residents were asked about Diverse Housing, the largest percentage of respondents agreed with it being a priority but wished that more would be done by the District.

Council Priority	Responding I agree with this being a priority and feel <b>enough is being done</b> by the District	Responding I agree with this being a priority but <b>wish that more would be done</b> by the District	Responding I agree with this being a priority but <b>wish that less would be done</b> by the District	Responding I agree with this being a priority but <b>would prefer different responses</b>	Responding I <b>disagree</b> with this being a priority
Service Excellence	<b>50%</b>	30%	2%	9%	9%
Health and Resilience	<b>46%</b>	30%	3%	7%	15%
Quality of Life	<b>46%</b>	25%	5%	9%	16%
Sustainable Service	<b>41%</b>	35%	5%	12%	8%
Diverse Housing	21%	<b>41%</b>	4%	7%	27%

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Respondents were invited to provide feedback on current and potential future District services via open-ended comments. The following topics were commented on most frequently: bike lane infrastructure, District services, roads and sidewalks, and District infrastructure (other than roads and sidewalks). Many expressed interest in increasing cycling infrastructure throughout the District while a few disagreed. Comments on District services focussed on the approach to and effectiveness of service delivery. Among those commenting on roads and sidewalks, there was a focus on the poor condition of roads and requests for wider sidewalks. Respondents commenting on District infrastructure (other than roads and sidewalks) generally recognized that the District must address asset management and encouraged the District to do so. Other common comment themes (more than 10 comments) related to: cost recovery for EV charger use; licensing of cats; concern about off-leash dogs/request for more facilities for off-leash dogs; quality of park infrastructure; approach to communications; and content of the questionnaire.

## **Next Steps**

The upcoming budget process will provide an opportunity for Council to consider service adjustments to respond to community feedback.