

CITIZEN BUDGET SURVEY 2021



INTRODUCTION

From August 31 to October 11, 2021, the Town of Olds ran a citizen budget survey. The purpose was to learn about the priorities of local residents and to give them a say in where they would like to see decreases or increases in spending.

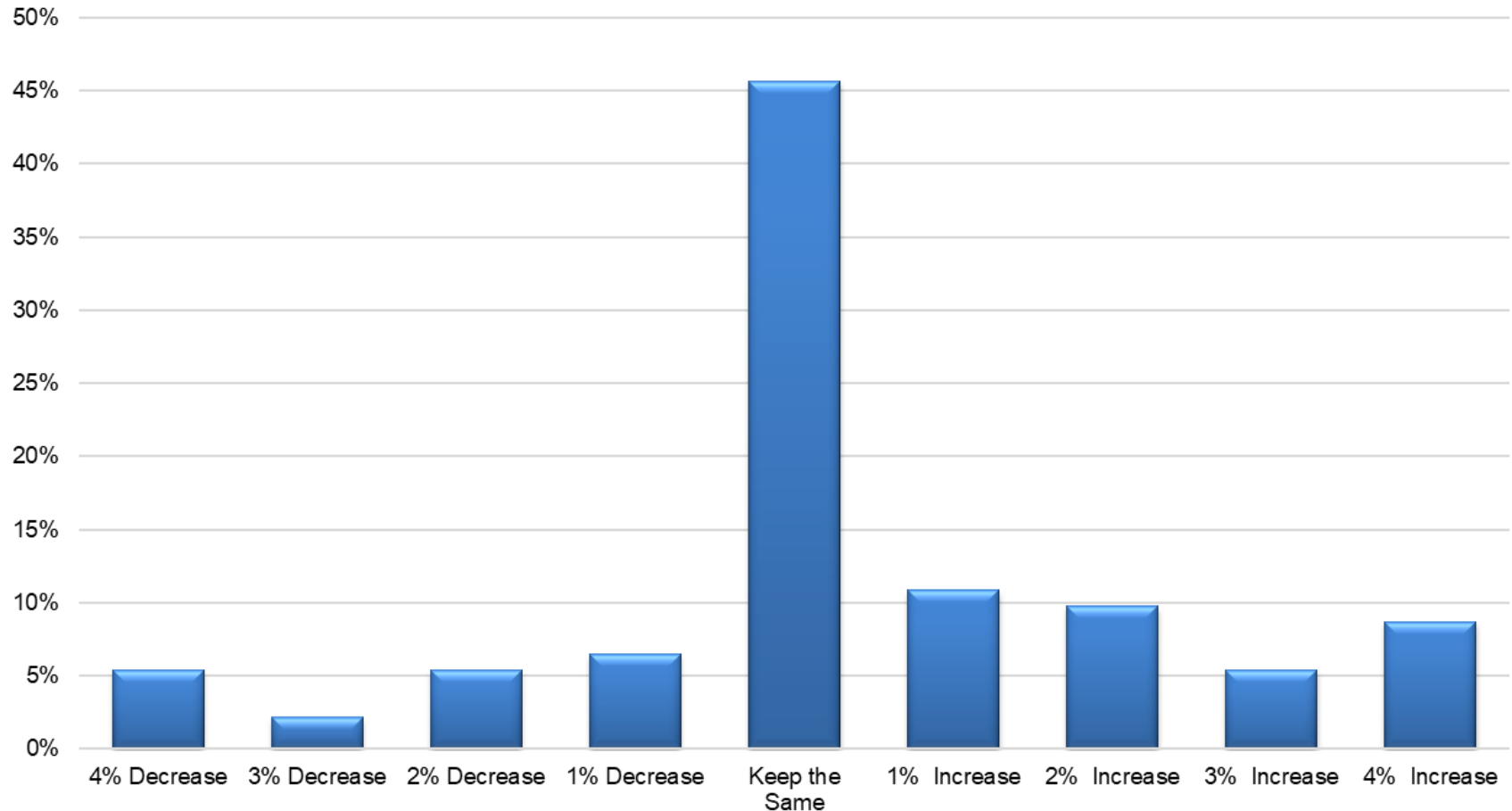
- Participants were asked based on their satisfaction of the specific budget area how they would adjust their property tax funding.
- If they had chosen to increase the funding for the specific budget area they were then asked if they would support a tax rate increase to do so.
- There were open-ended questions asking which services respondents would like to see reduced and/or eliminated, their top priorities over the next 3 to 5 years and areas that they would like to see expanded.
- Finally respondents were asked to rate the overall value they feel they receive for their tax dollars.

*Any comments are in original form, they have not been modified in anyway

PARTICIPATION

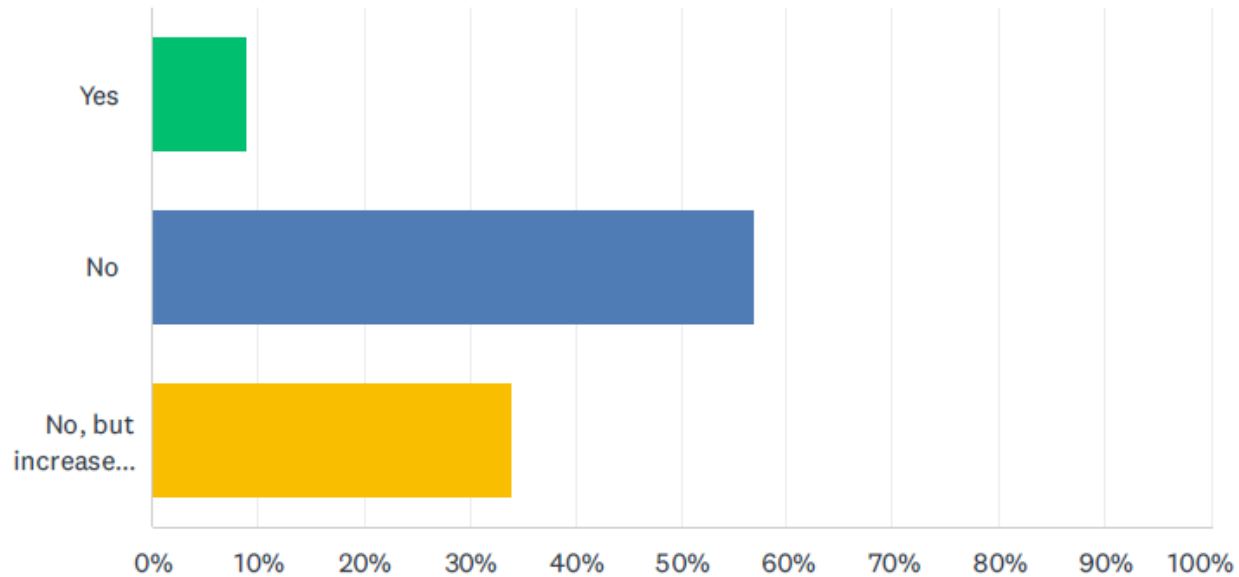
TOTAL RESPONSES	COMPLETION RATE	TYPICAL TIME SPENT	MOST SKIPPED QUESTION
155	86%	7M46s	Q16 ARE THERE SPECIFIC SERVICES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE REDUCED OR ELIMINATED? SKIPPED:111

FUNDING OPERATIONAL SERVICES



Total Responses	Decrease	Keep the Same	Increase
92	19%	46%	35%

IF YOU CHOSE TO ENHANCE THIS SERVICE WOULD YOU SUPPORT A TAX RATE INCREASE TO DO SO?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	9.00%	9
No	57.00%	57
No, but increase service by reducing services in other areas to balance the budget	34.00%	34
TOTAL		100

COMMENTS

From what I seen the community did a good job of providing the appropriate amount of maintenance.

In winter, the roads in the downtown core need to be cleared before businesses open, otherwise, people avoid that area and go to cornerstone to shop.

Please implement no street parking from first to last snowfalls (October to April). Require permits for street parking and fines for non permitted vehicles. That way smaller, more affordable snow removal vehicles will be able to access side streets, and income will be generated from fines and permits to offset costs

Possible. Depending how much of an increase

Service levels good, some of the out outlying neighborhoods could benefit from a quicker snow removal service.

Snow removal needs to improve.

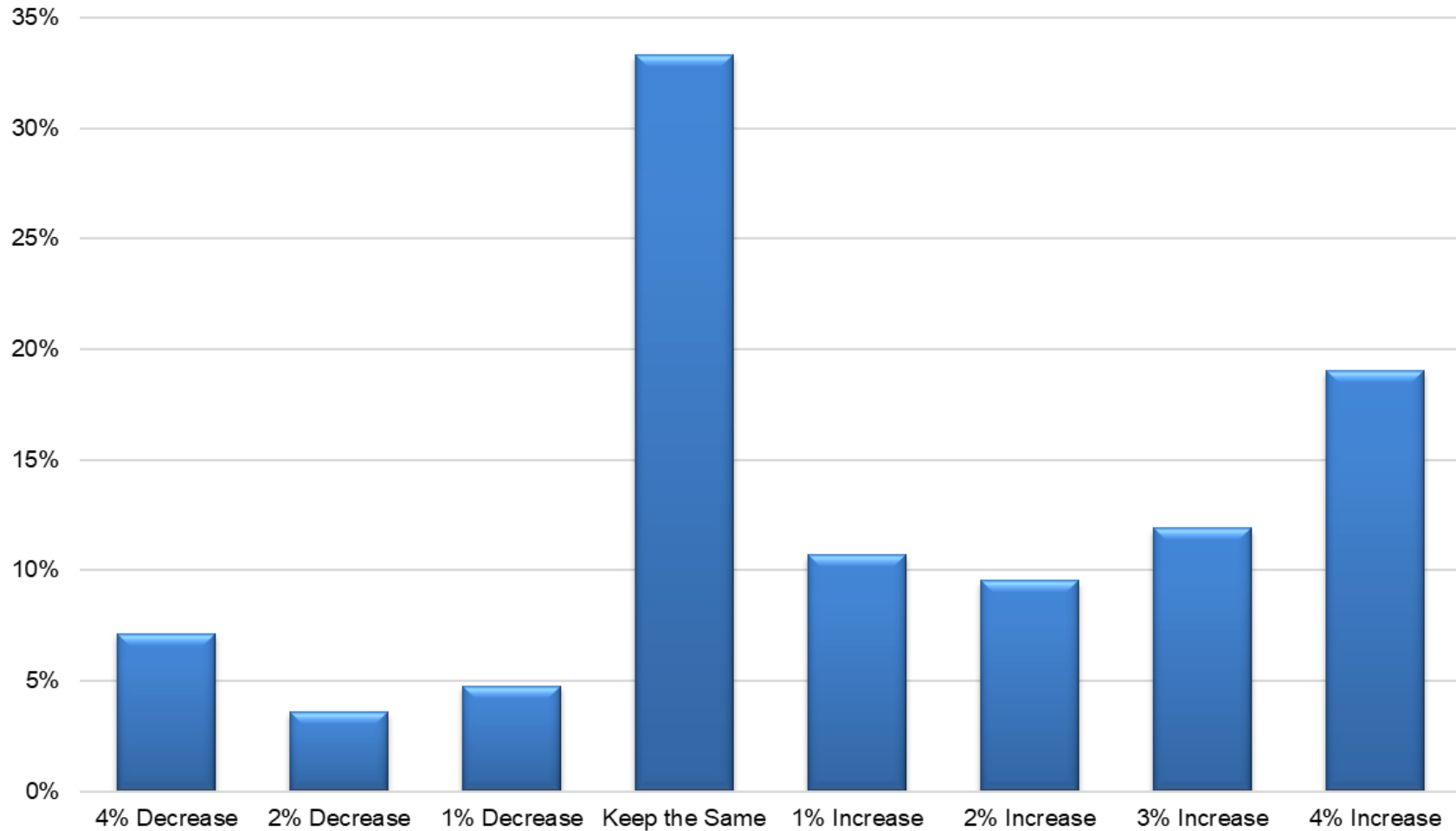
Some services are provided to us by our mobile home Park...included in our land rent!

the staff do a good job of clearing roads and paths in the winter and have very good equipment

What is spent on operations? Give hard numbers!

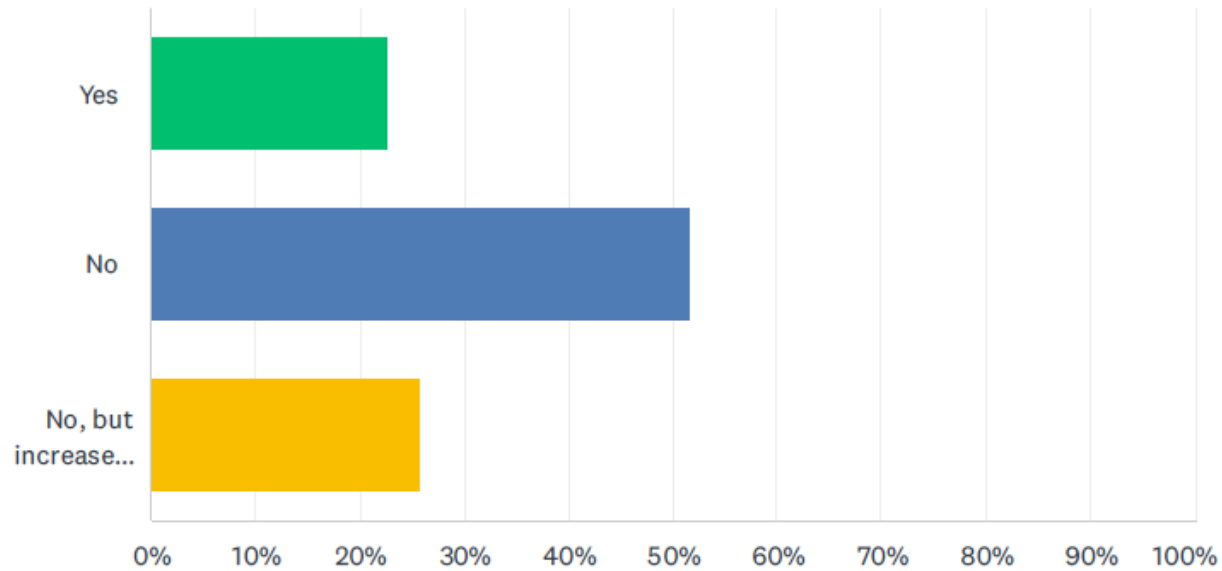
Street sweeping can be reduced

PROTECTIVE SERVICES



Total Responses	Decrease	Keep the Same	Increase
84	16%	33%	51%

IF YOU CHOSE TO ENHANCE THIS SERVICE WOULD YOU SUPPORT A TAX RATE INCREASE TO DO SO?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	22.58%	21
No	51.61%	48
No, but increase service by reducing services in other areas to balance the budget	25.81%	24
TOTAL		93

COMMENTS

Again seems like a good job by what I used, but the challenge should be for each department to run more efficient ever year as it gets better and that money can do to other things for the town

Do not fund more full time fire staff. It's unclear if this will improve fire services, but may be a continued burden without gain for the town. Please support current members

Feel safe in the present situation?

I do not support funding more full-time paid chiefs or deputy chiefs at the Fire department. Throwing money at a mismanaged problem doesn't fix a problem. Surely there can be a "bottom-up" solution to emergency response, that doesn't increase taxpayer burden, rather than a "top-down" approach that does nothing to encourage comprehensive response from the existing "paid on call" members.

More patrols at night time in residential and downtown core, doing something about drunk driving in Olds. Helping to prevent thefts

Olds is a safe community

Please start catching the repeat impaired drivers leaving local bars (especially Tracks & Flames).

RCMP TO STAY

Reduce peace officer budget

Rural crime has never been higher, we need to back and support our police and emergency services

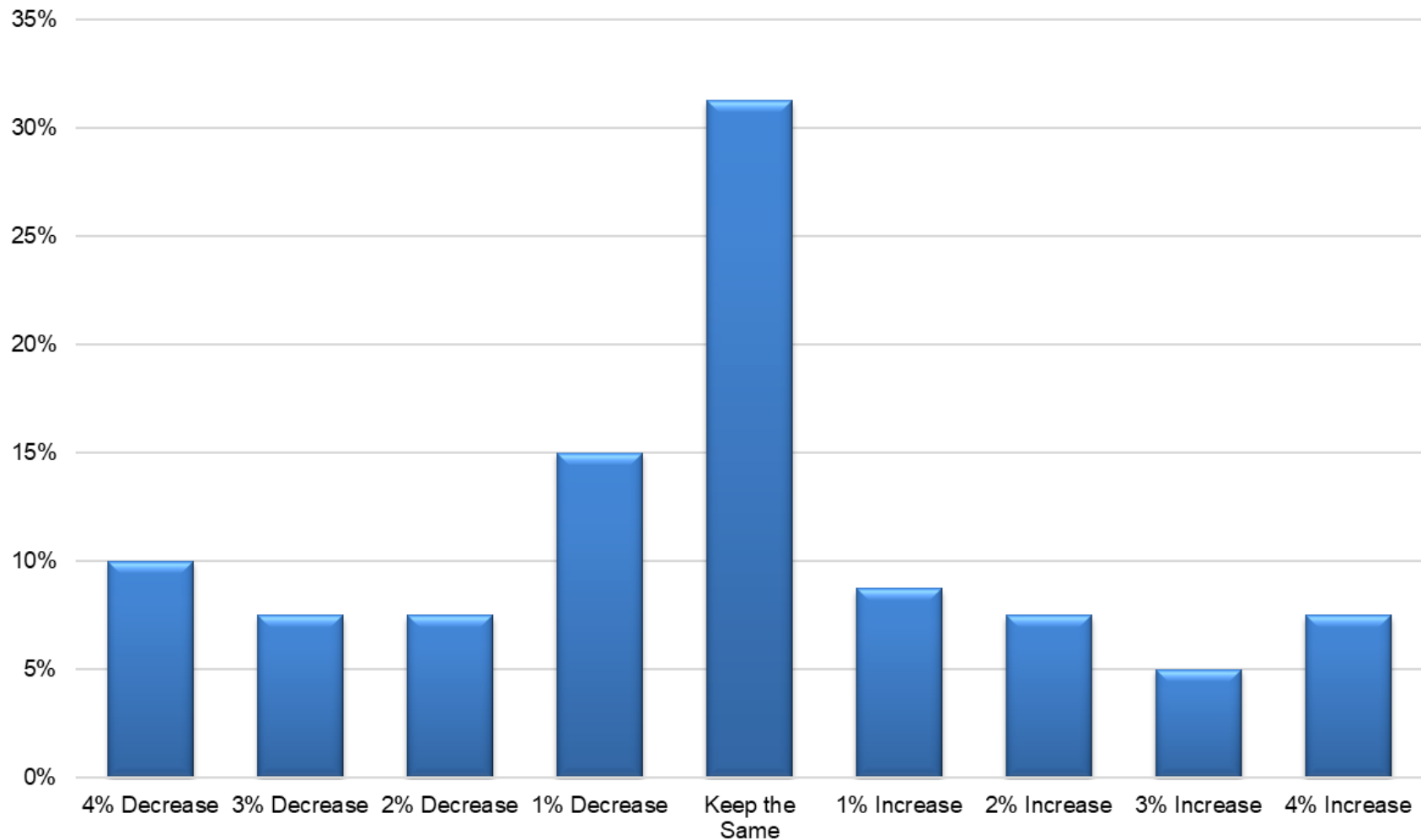
The fire department is a busy place. Implementation of a fire cadet program, external firefighting courses, in house training programs! You need another full time guy or 3

The Olds Fire department has 4 full time employees. This is at least 3 more than any other department in the county. Too many, justify their time.

Use money collected from fines to increase police services

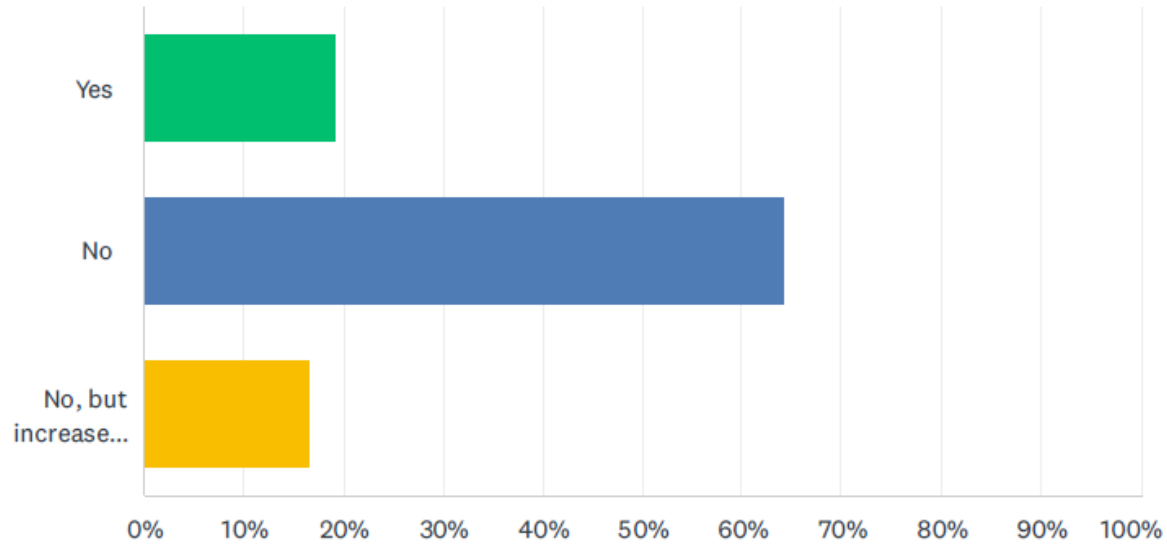
What is spent on protective services? Give hard numbers!

COMMUNITY SERVICES



Total Responses	Decrease	Keep the Same	Increase
80	40%	31%	29%

IF YOU CHOSE TO ENHANCE THIS SERVICE WOULD YOU SUPPORT A TAX RATE INCREASE TO DO SO?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	19.23%	15
No	64.10%	50
No, but increase services by reducing services in other areas to balance the budget	16.67%	13
TOTAL		78

COMMENTS

Bring back the fair, and drop the ridiculous art expenditures. A community like Olds deserves a proper fair not borderline sexualized, mediocre art.

Have more things to do for teens and young adults. Town caters WAY to much to seniors.

I don't use myself , but keep improving value for all that use

I think we spend too much on flowers and art.

If it means a tax increase then this is an area I would reduce in order to not increase taxes. These are perks, not necessities.

More mental health services needed...family, teen counseling

Nu2u is not an antique store, prices should be reduced back down, the object of that store is to help the low income and put back in the community.

Reduce the pretty flowers, stop investing in sculptures that few people acknowledge due to location and subject matter. Not to mention that some of the items are not originals but appropriated designs from artist(s) from the past. There are other areas. Let's start with these.

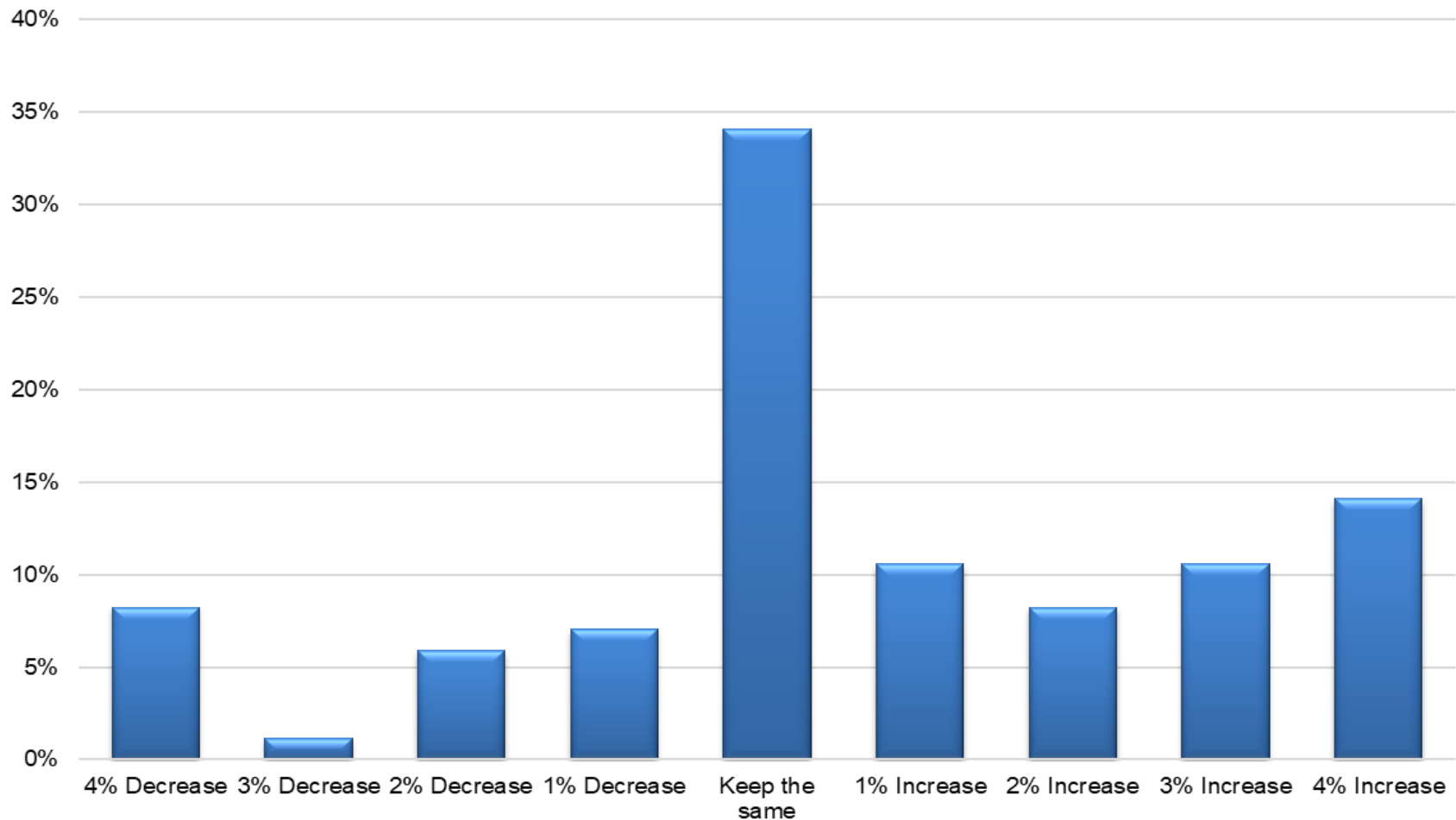
Reduce town operating services, it's over funded and ineffective

We need local access to these services.

What is spent on community services. Give hard numbers!

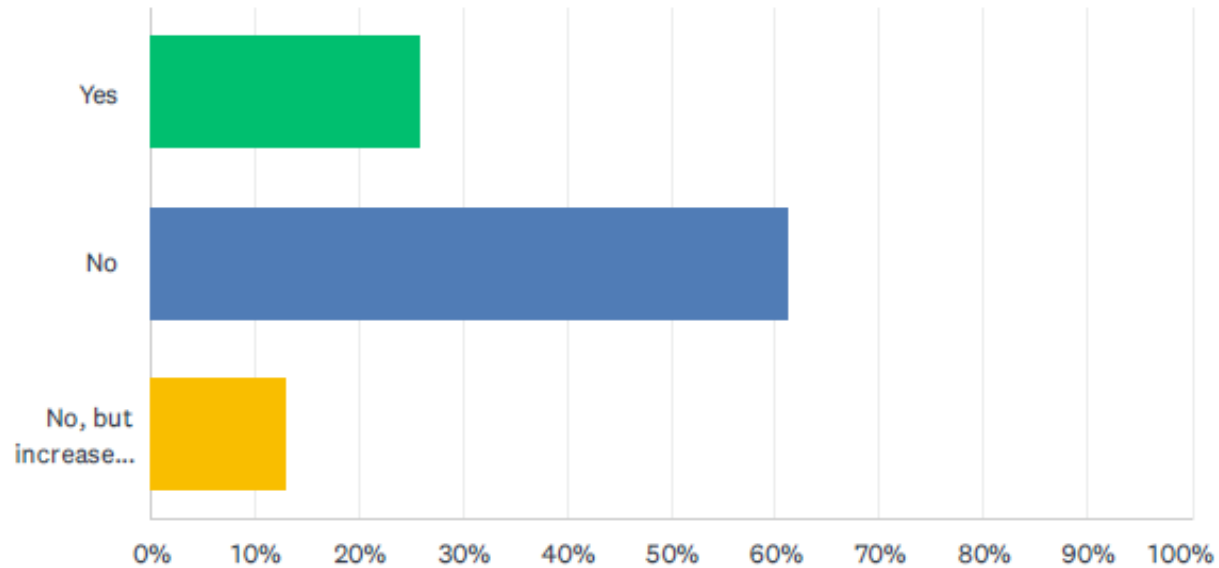
would like to see transportation planning re future public busing as many seniors reside here and also others who may not have vehicles - perhaps less money going to support special events

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES



Total Responses	Decrease	Keep the Same	Increase
85	22%	34%	44%

IF YOU CHOSE TO ENHANCE THIS SERVICE WOULD YOU SUPPORT A TAX RATE INCREASE TO DO SO?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	25.88%	22
No	61.18%	52
No, but increase service by reducing services in other areas to balance the budget	12.94%	11
TOTAL		85

COMMENTS

All should be able to use these services. We all pay taxes for them

As a senior I only make use of the Aquatic Center and the Curling Club and the golf course...which are adequate to me at this time?

Building a Pickleball facility and improving the Tennis Courts at the Collège

Does the town have a plan for replacement of the Sportsplex? Is the town willing to provide increased support for the Grizzlys, without whom the town loses substantial municipal prestige.

facilities are not hardly ever open. They are not accessible to everyone.

I am quite frustrated that our tax dollars fund the cost of the splash park which is used by anyone who wants to use the facility, whether they are tax payers or not, at NO COST TO THEM while the few people who use the ball diamonds are paying way too much in comparison. It costs far more to maintain the splash park and to pay for the water than it does to cut the grass at the ball diamonds.

I would guess the majority of this cost is for the arena and the pool. If needed then user pay should be used instead of raising taxes. This is a very expensive town to live in compared to our neighbouring communities.

Improving our recreational services will positively impact/improve community services

Need to have some real outdoor skating rinks for the kids

Olds needs a fieldhouse a tent like structure is cheaper than a bricks and mortar and would fit soccer, lacrosse rugby etc, lessons games etc all year long. We cannot be hockey centric as our population grows.

Pick camomile and other noxious weeds down at rotary park and imperial.

The diamonds turned out great! Must have cages in the dug ours! Have heard from many how they love them. I actually sponsored putting foul ball posts up as it was a miss, but overall impressed. Use this year's money to continue to develop, and encourage on the local sports teams to host tournaments or provincials that bring a lot of money into the community

there is way too much WASTE in this department, no more money is needed

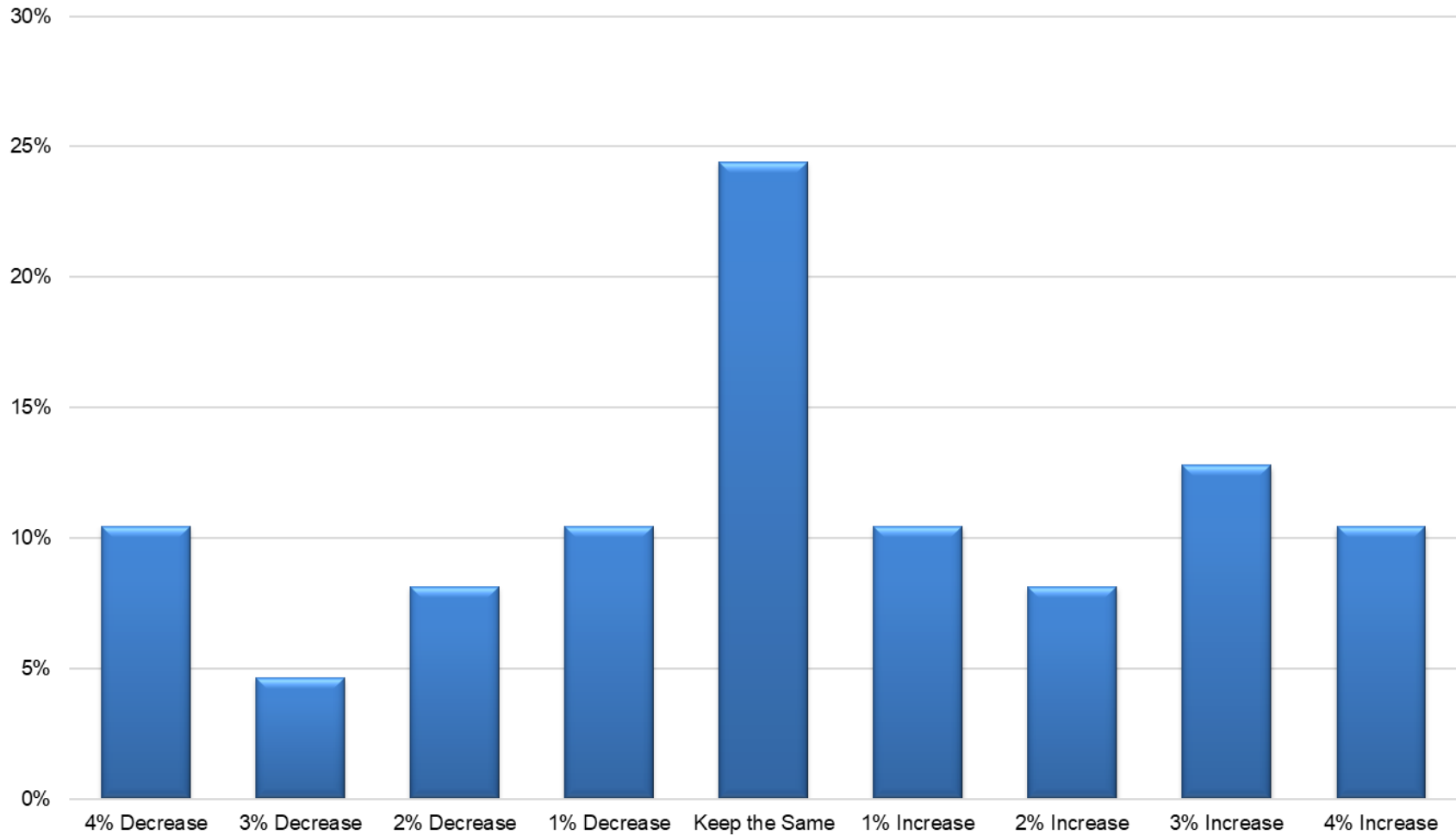
We need a field house so people can participate in soccer, lacrosse; etc: it can't be just about hockey.

We need a public football field that isn't run and controlled by the CLC.

What is spent on recreational opportunities? Give hard numbers!

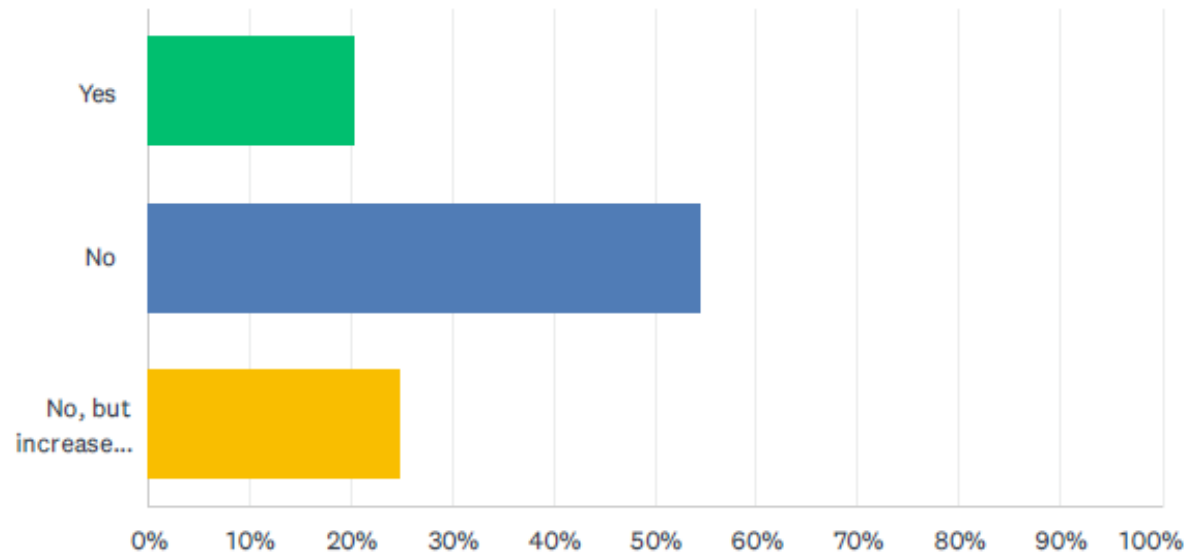
Where are the new tennis and pickle ball courts that could have easily been built along with the new ball diamonds

PARKS AND TRAILS



Total Responses	Decrease	Keep the Same	Increase
86	34%	24%	42%

IF YOU CHOSE TO ENHANCE THIS SERVICE WOULD YOU SUPPORT A TAX RATE INCREASE TO DO SO?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	20.45%	18
No	54.55%	48
No, but increase service by reducing services in other areas to balance the budget	25.00%	22
TOTAL		88

COMMENTS

But this area of services seems adequate to me at present?

Dial it down on the planters. Don't put planters on the lawns. Looks tacky and adds more maintenance. Maintain the weeds in median where you put planters

Good job, I question renting art if we get the value there. The statues don't provide the value I feel for the costs, where that money could go to actual improvements that more problem would enjoy and get benefit from

I feel the maintenance of the landscaping and gardens hasnt been great and gardens are looking unkept and rough. I would choose to enhance this service so that better maintenance could be done.

I love the trails, parks and playgrounds in Olds. The flowers and hanging baskets are beautiful, but the number of planters on Hwy 27 is ridiculous. Please reduce the number by half and use those resources to pull or spray the scentless chamomile in the empty lot north of Grouchy Daddy's.

I think to much is spent on flowers along Highway 27

Olds is well kept in all seasons - sometimes think the maintaining of pathways is a excessive

Our pathways in our parks need lighting that works in the dark hours of the morning. The solar lights are off by then, making walking in the early morning dangerous for most months of the year. Please make Olds more walkable. We also need to extend our pathway/trail system. Our town is way behind other towns with their walking areas.

Please, more accountability on the maintenance of these

Remove the flower pots along highway 27, put them in the parks where everyone could enjoy them or do without them and put money towards something else!!!

Seriously, stop with the planters along highway 27! Cost outweighs effect by far...

The amount of staff that cut the grass till it's dead is stupid!! STOP cutting the grass when it doesn't need to be and when it's not raining!!! How stupid can one get?? Use our tax money with a brain!!

The summer flowers are excessive. Other towns have volunteers maintaining flowers.

the town only look after anything on highway 27, NOTHING ELSE

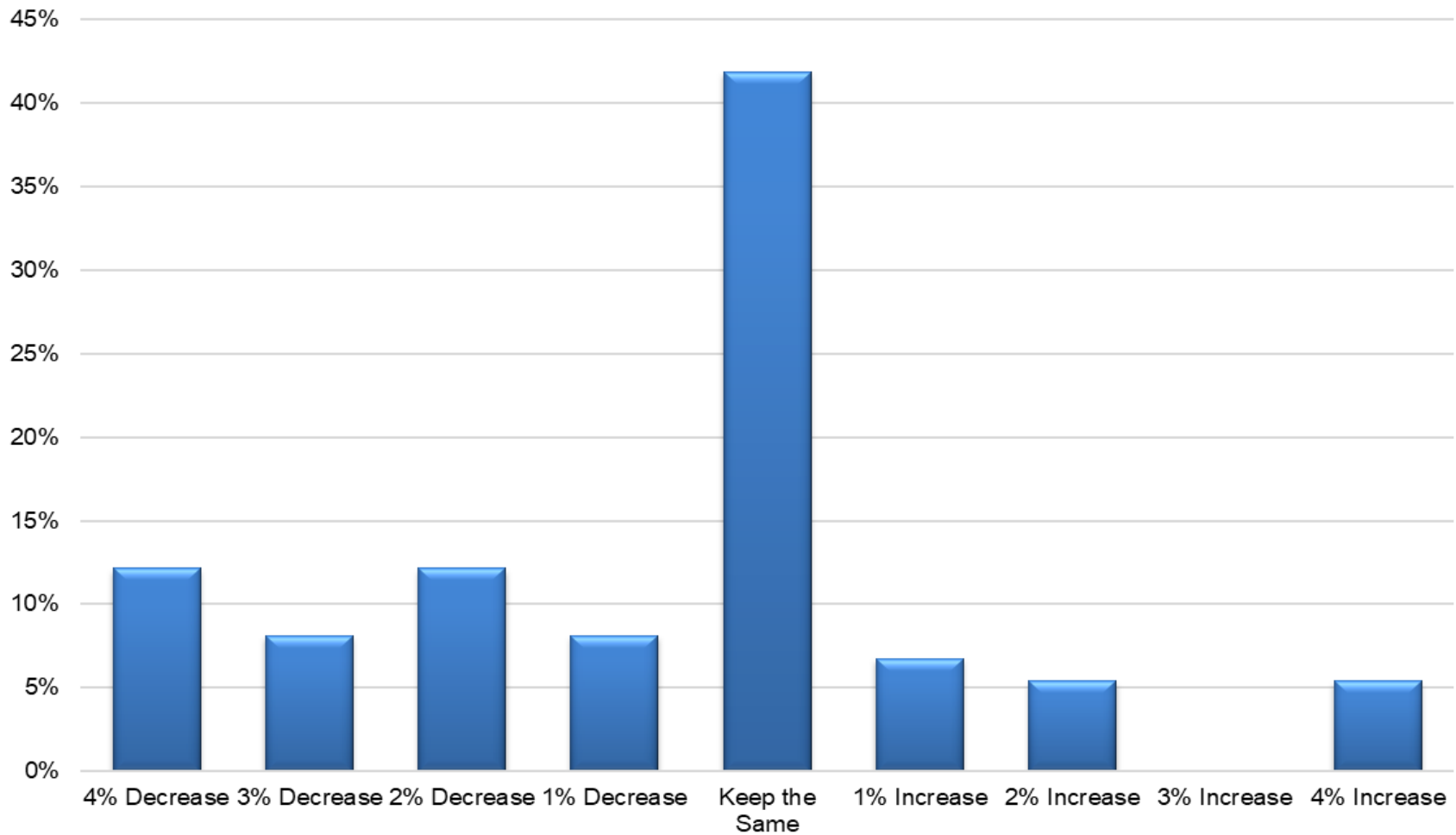
The trails and parks are wonderful. This year the flowers along Hwy 27 are much nicer than in past year. Well done.

There are WAY too many flowers along hwy 27. That could easily be cut back to reduce cost.

We must beautify our town. after 6 months of Fall/Winter it is important for our psyche to see green, and a variety of colours. We love the floral displays.

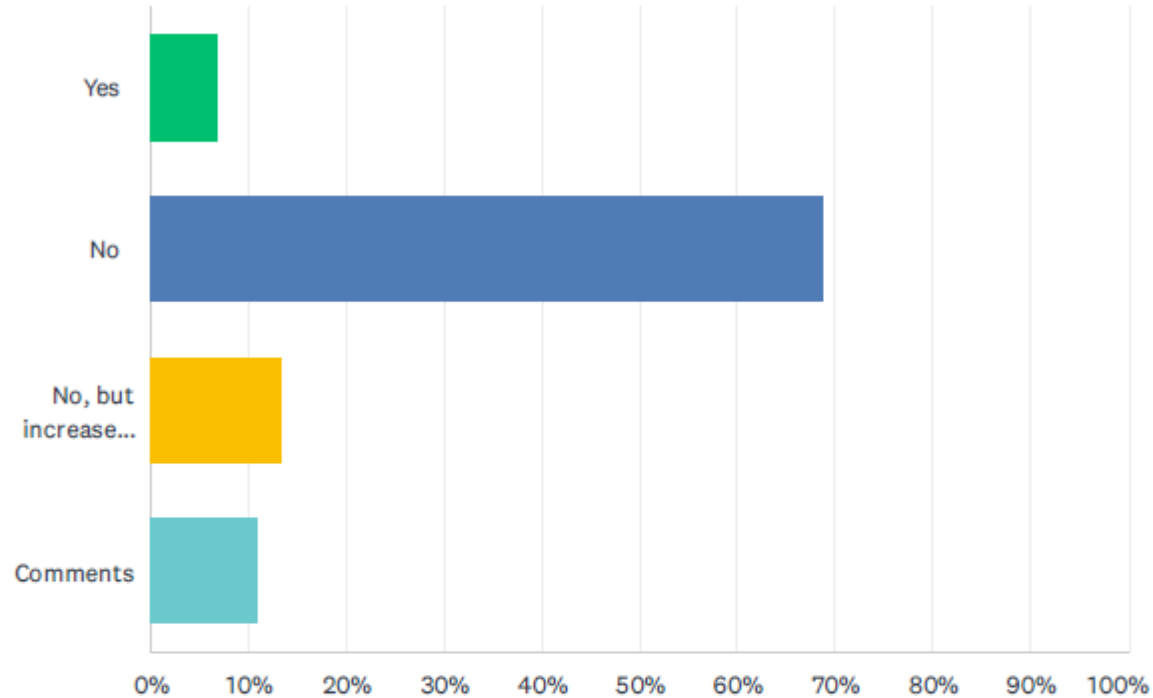
What is spent on parks? Give hard numbers!

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT



Total Responses	Decrease	Keep the Same	Increase
74	40%	42%	18%

IF YOU CHOSE TO ENHANCE THIS SERVICE WOULD YOU SUPPORT A TAX RATE INCREASE TO DO SO?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	6.76%	5
No	68.92%	51
No, but increase service by reducing services in other areas to balance the budget	13.51%	10
Comments	10.81%	8
TOTAL		74

COMMENTS

Don't think the planning in the traffic circle was properly put through the towns views on it

need more information on how this happens - not sure of process

New town building 🤔what were you thinking?

Planning and development is key to any community growth, more people that live hear more taxes and money for our community to ideally keep the local Taxrate down and continue to grow more services for the public to use

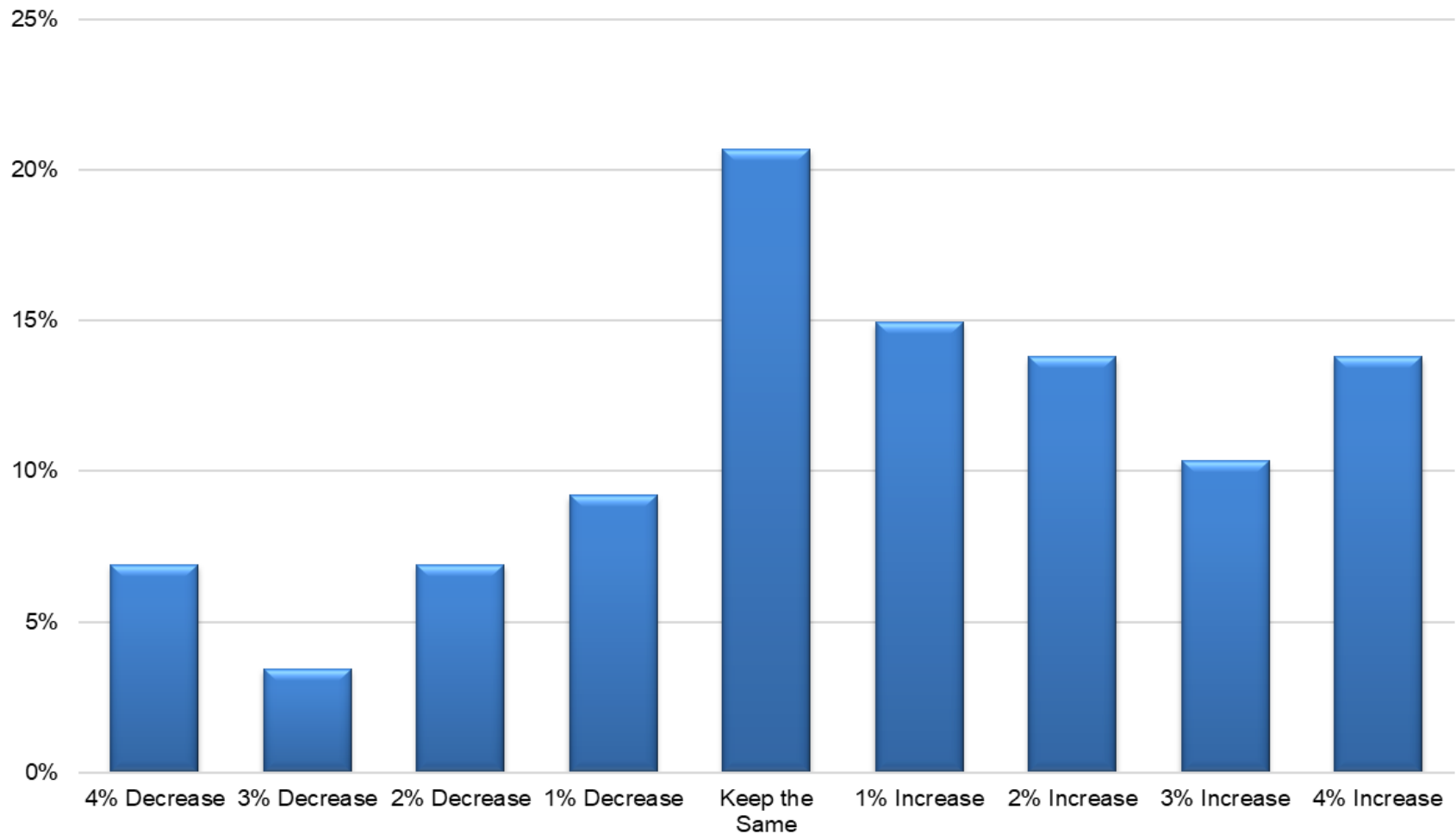
There's a planning department? You mean the haphazard fashion in which this town has grown was deliberate? There is nowhere near enough industrial and commercial space in this town, and past administrations have have proven incompetent. Local businesses have been frozen out out of ever buying industrial lots, because everything was earmarked for future cannabis operations, with inflated real estate prices. We need an intelligent approach to being "business friendly"

This service is often over rated in my opinion. Especially hiring "experts. Consultants, etc to advise in the development? I favour using citizen surveys and imput to develop and deside fixture improvements and or changes!

What is spent on planning & development? Give hard numbers!

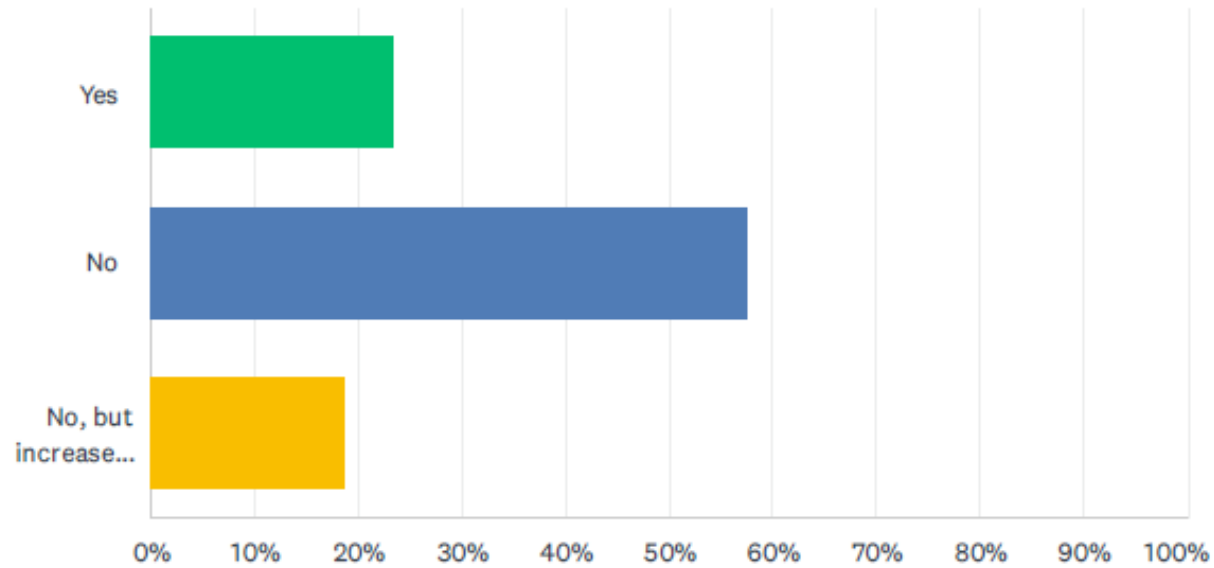
What is this even, there is no detail.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Total Responses	Decrease	Keep the Same	Increase
87	26%	21%	53%

IF YOU CHOSE TO ENHANCE THIS SERVICE WOULD YOU SUPPORT A TAX RATE INCREASE TO DO SO?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	23.53%	20
No	57.65%	49
No, but increase service by reducing services in other areas to balance the budget	18.82%	16
TOTAL		85

COMMENTS

Again support this, but a business like ONET if it can't survive we have to move on even at a loss. All businesses need to be run profitable and I think better to leave that to the private sector , agree with tax benefits to bring busines here , which brings jobs and more tax dollars

I have never heard of anything positive they have done.

It's important to retain local retail businesses.

New town office 😞what were you thinking?

Olds needs more middle class jobs for young families. More jobs = more population retention and growth. The vacancy rate appears to be far too high for commercial and retail property.

Tax rate shouldn't go up if you get more businesses in town. A better sport store for example. In reality taxes should go down.

The town needs to put pressure on absentee landowners to clean up their properties. The old Bank of Montreal building needs some work done on the outside of the building, it makes the downtown look shabby when the buildings are not maintained.

The town's recent belligerence surrounding O-net, and the Olds Institute (both brought about by a passionate volunteer base and business community) demonstrates the current administration's hostility towards business retention and expansion. This perceived attitude needs a complete reversal if Olds is going to truly embrace economic expansion. Civic planning also needs to approve more high density, low cost housing projects. Young graduates, entrepreneurs, and families need places to live too.

They do Nothing anyway

This is one of the areas that I would use to reduce the overall budget.

this seems like an area best left to business

This town needs to spend money to make money. An effective liason between the Town and businesses, more intelligent thought processes concerning industrial and commercial spaces. Local businesses can't compete against real estate speculators when the town designates all the available industrial spaces as cannabis grow ops. Realize that you need to attract more "meat and potatoes" businesses, and stop trying to attract the 1% "golden goose" businesses. How about greenhouses for food production, rather than cannabis

What is spent on this economic development? Give hard numbers! Provide details on what is being accomplished, since the town felt they needed to bring this in house.

ARE THERE SPECIFIC SERVICES THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE EXPANDED?

Bigger budget for protectives those guys go full out for this community even during the toughest of times They deserve to be recognized and supported Olds needs them and so does mountain view county

A wider variety of sport/recreation opportunities for youth and adults. BMX or pump track, extended pathways for recreational bicycling, expanded program and swim lesson options at aquatic centre, art classes for kids and adults, opportunities for low cost, low commitment sports and activities. Expanded program offerings in conjunction with Olds library would also be positive as they have many great spaces/resources to utilize.

Access to public sporting fields

Arena

Attention to seniors needs, re-evaluating flora at street corners that block the view of cars trying to pass, turn, etc. While a by-law may say the flora complies with the distance from a corner, the fact that a view is blocked is a priority - safety. Too many near misses. More stop signs at uncontrolled intersections in and around Uptowne Olds. The roads in Olds need proper examination and repair, especially in Uptowne Olds.

Businesses. Need more stores. More clothing stores for men. Better sports store like sportchek or source for sports. Need better snow removal. Snow is only removed once a year on my street. There is also a huge hole filled with gravel on my street that has been like that since spring. Unacceptable for the cost of our taxes. More activities for younger adults.

By-law enforcement - I have seen a number of annually extremely unsightly yards (piles of tires in the yard, sofas or appliances in the yard) and uncleared (snow) sidewalks that should have been dealt with a long time ago.

Clothing shops and grocery stores

Community events, Local Arts

Community programming, Economic Development

Costs of every aspect of life go up. Trying to keep a zero tax increase every year leads to a big jump in the future, just to maintain the status quo. Taxes need to increase at least as much as inflation, every year.

Economic development and tourism.

Emergency services

Extra staff for the RCMP

Garbage and recycling. We have 2 children in diapers and are having to get our 240 pound daddy to pack the bin down to make it all fit. Same goes for the recycling. Not to mention after 3 weeks no matter how many bags you put the garbage in it still stinks.

Garbage pickup more frequently but compost and recycling less frequently to balance the cost.

Garbage, recycling and compost removal. Compost could cease in the winter to save on costs. There needs to be a medium for families, other towns are bi weekly, even weekly for all services.

Have bylaw walk the sidewalks and get people to trim hedges and branches.

Hospitals and senior lodges

I would like to see better traffic flow at the corner of hwy 2A & 54th St. Especially bad during morning afternoon school times.

I would like to see more Green bin Pickups during the summer. Maybe even more snow removal (although last year's snow removal was vastly improved)

Increase the number of physicians serving Olds and allowing for hospital privileges

Indoor soccer/lacrosse/gym facility to use year round

Lighting in parks that works during early morning hours. Extend our pathways and trails!!!

Local business have been hit hard with COVID. We need to be sure they have livelihood as well.

Maintenance at ball diamonds on weekends.

More community support ! Along with provincial support to General health and especially..Mental Health!

More walking trails and a Pickleball facility

No, I'd prefer less if possible.

No.

No. Our spending is outrageous

Outside auditing of council's shenanigans

Parks and trails; improve trail connectivity and bike accessibility. The single railroad crossing for the north tier of town is a rough and dangerous choke point, for example.

Pay for the workers at the concession at the sportsplex like Didsbury does instead of putting extra volunteer hours or cost of paying them out to already overworked parents.

Please go back to trimming grass along fence lines which back onto trails and parks. The current lack of trimming is unsightly and often weed infested. We live behind a business that has never trimmed their weeds or grass along a fence bordering a town path. The trimming done by property owners is very hit and miss. We could do with less flowers and better maintenance of grass and trees.

Please turn the Olds Fibre debacle into a profitable Town-owned entity, not simply another embarrassing money pit

Protective services to help with increase in theft in the community.

Recreation

Recreation facilities for kids and families outside of organized sports venues

Recreational facilities. Proper access to ice services for disabled and mothers with strollers. Field house to support dying lacrosse program and support winter soccer programs. Attract business from neighbouring communities.

Recreational indoor activities especially for winter. More animal rescues and shelters. More wealth generated in the community to create both more jobs and make me not have to travel to other cities for shopping, food, drink and entertainment. I'd rather put the money back into my community. More variety of courses offered at our college as well.

Road maintenance in town

Snow removal and road repair.

snow removal and road/sidewalk maintenance

Stick to the budget and challenge teams to come under and use those resources for lower taxes and improvements. Health care in town does need a boost

Sunshine Bus - would like services offered on weekends

Trail system

Trails

transportation as Olds is a growing community , is widespread with many seniors and also citizens who may not have vehicles (ie new citizens working in lower paid sectors)

Wave pool

ARE THERE SPECIFIC SERVICES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE REDUCED OR ELIMINATED?

Like I said earlier , reduce street sweeping increase snow removal

Administration budget and staff need to be reduced.

Administration.

Art

Budgets for all services should be reviewed and 5%+ should be removed. Everyone is seeing a cost of living increase and job-jeopardy. The town should follow suit.

Don't use tax dollars to pay for town employees to sit at the front of recreation facilities requesting personal medical information to get in. Relocate the AJHL to a different arena so Olds residents are not forced to vaccinate just to enter public rec spaces we pay for.

Economic development. Council/mayors nose in the air attitude

Flowers

Flowers

I am pleased to see control being exercised re the Olds Institute and all the costs associated with it as I do not believe that the Town should have taken on this liability without more input from the citizens.

I am sure the bureaucracy and inefficiency of delivery of the various services could always be streamlined?

I would like to see more efficiency in town operating services with saved funds going to increase economic development efforts

I would reduce the budget for parks but not in a crazy way

Land annexing Home utilities are super expensive in olds

Liquor stores and cannabis stores

Operations. From a resident and business owner point of view it appears to be wildly inefficient

Our art budget could definitely use a roll back

Parks. The new ball diamonds/soccer fields were a waste of money when there are already lots of ball diamonds in town. There are already lots of playgrounds.

Peace officers

Planters and cost to upkeep!

Public Art

Public arts.... The "Art" along highway I feel was a waste of money. No value added to the community. I am sure that money could have been put towards some better Out door rinks or something. Or maybe a reduction in taxes instead of wasting it on "Public Art"

Reduce art until all roads are fixed and All leaking water is fixed

Reduce peace officers and budget.

Reduce the flower pots on highway 27 and plant more trees along trails and parks. The flowers are high maintenance and temporary and there are still way too many.

Reduce the roadside art costs.

Reduction in council salaries as this past several years we have seen little progress or logic coming out of council.

Snow removal

The horrific selection of public art on the highway.

The rented art

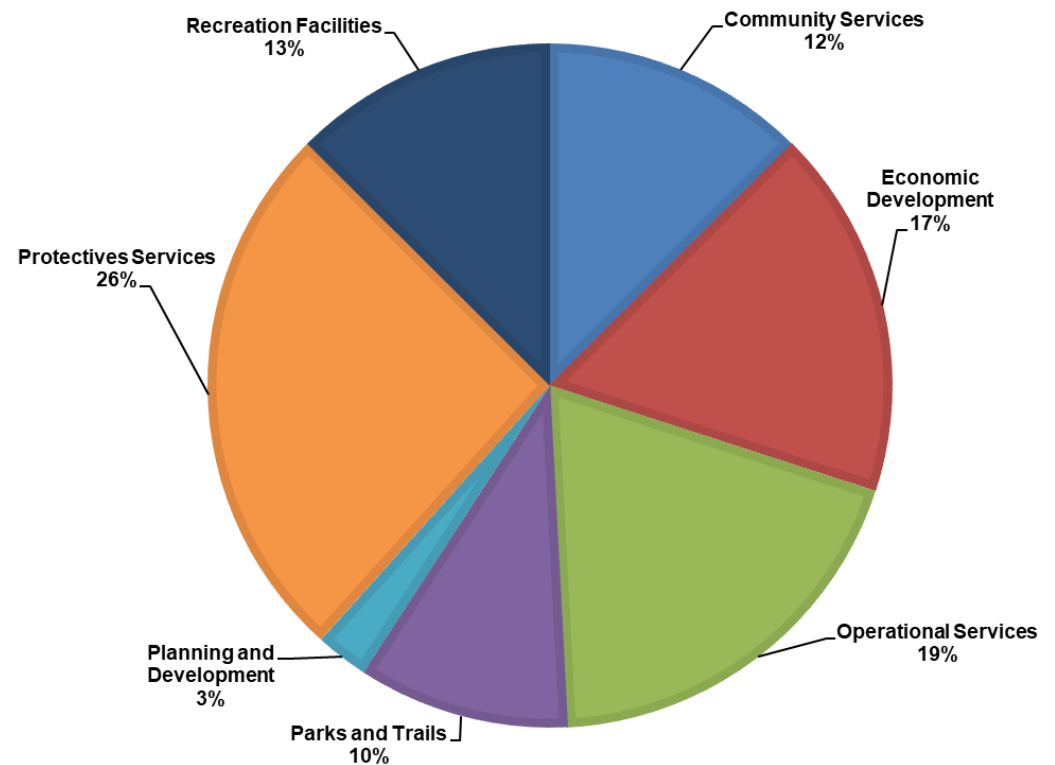
To be more strategic when snow clearing. If certain business are closed they obviously don't need snow plowing

Unhappy with the bylaw efforts. Feel they should have more accountability.

We dont need a planter every 40 feet on ahighway 27

FOR SERVICES PRIMARILY FUNDED DIRECTLY FROM YOUR TAX DOLLARS, WHAT AREA DO YOU FEEL SHOULD RECEIVE THE GREATEST ATTENTION FROM YOUR MUNICIPAL LEADERS?

Service	Responses
Protectives Services	31
Operational Services	23
Economic Development	21
Community Services	15
Recreation Facilities	15
Parks and Trails	12
Planning and Development	3
Total Responses	120



THINKING ABOUT FUTURE PRIORITIES FOR THE TOWN OF OLDS OVER THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS, WHAT DO YOU FEEL SHOULD BE THE TOP AREAS OF FOCUS?

Areas of Focus	Responses*
Debt Reduction	57
Crime and Safety	55
Road Maintenance	45
Protective Services	41
Economic Development	34
Snow Removal	31
Communication	29
Recreation	27
Water	27
Community Development	26
Trails	26
Uptown Revitalization	23
Waste Removal	23
Events and Festivals	19
Parks	19
Facilities	16
Green Initiatives	13
Curbside Recycling	10
Sports Fields	9
Playgrounds	7
Welcoming and Inclusive Communities	7
Wheelchair Accessibility	6
Public Art	2
Report a Problem	2
TOTAL RESPONSES	554

*Participants were asked to choose their top five areas of focus.

COMMENTS

An RCMP detachment that gave a crap about small to modest theft would be lovely.

Debt reduction while the economy comes back is possible with a growing economy, manage that debt and we can use the interest money we were paying in the future for the community vs giving it to the banks

Let's focus on working together to keep our community clean and respectful of wildlife, keep us active and in a good mental state by providing us things to do especially in the winter, get more businesses blossoming right here in town, and some more courses offered through our college. Especially shorter more affordable ones to keep individuals debt rates down and able to get started on careers that will keep our heads above water.

transportation

Wave pool

Reducing taxes and cutting back but retaining the same level of quality. Every other industry has done this there just seems to be to much waste. Even simple things like summer students, everyone else pays minimum wage for the job why don't we?

More green bin pickups in summer

outdoor ice rinks - lighted.maybe only 2 or so.

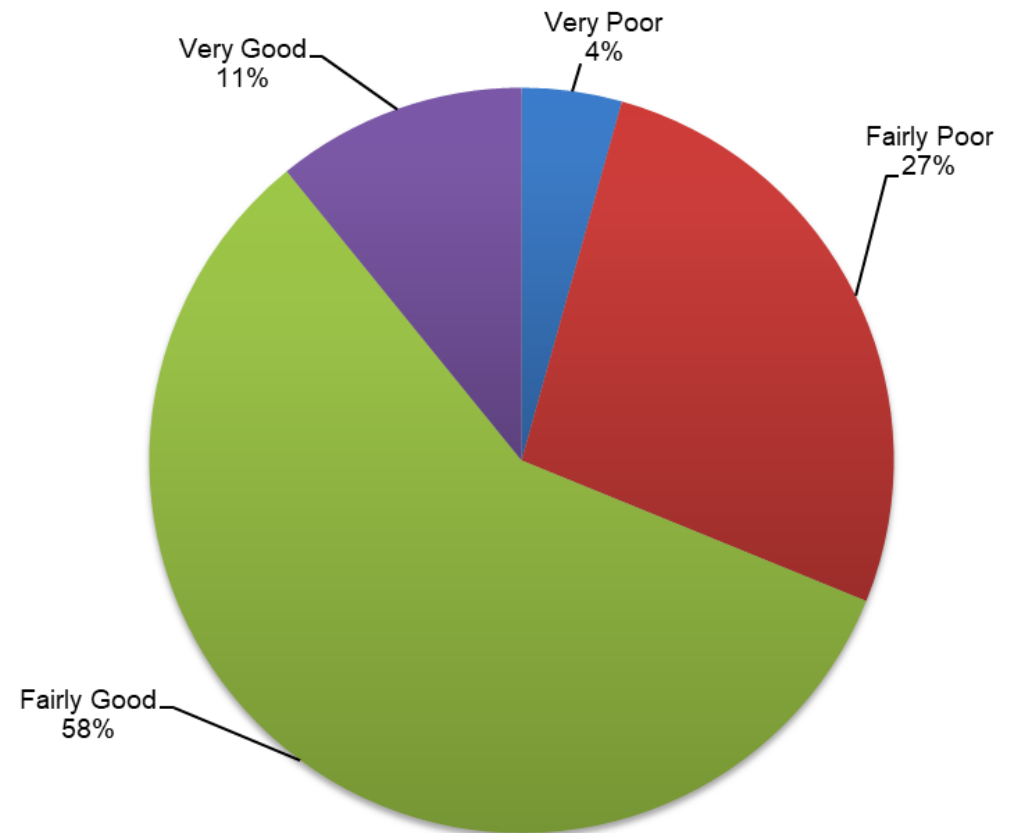
Learning to file standard budget reports not fluff

Economic development, handicap accessibility, road maintenance, communication

It would be interesting to know what it has cost the taxpayers for the new unnecessary town signs. Also, what did it cost for all of the increase in the flower pots along Hwy 27 which appear to take two people to water them. Also, why does it take 6 people to pick up garbage along the cemetery?

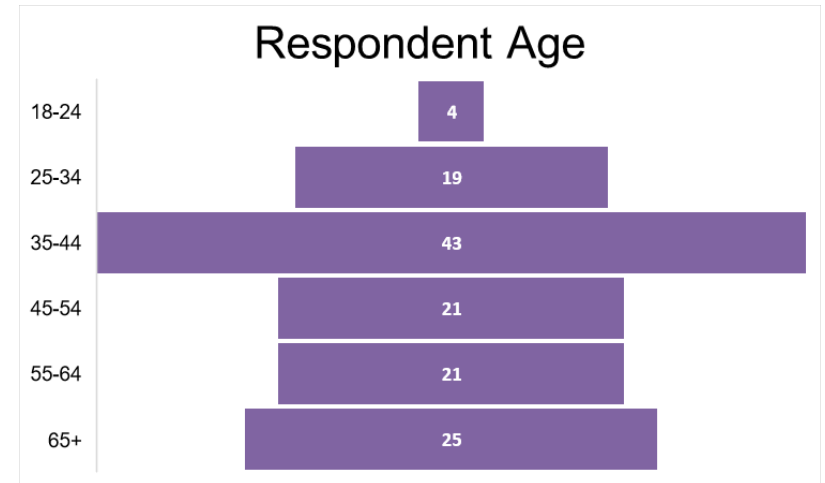
**THINKING ABOUT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES YOU RECEIVE FROM THE TOWN OF OLDS, WOULD YOU SAY
OVERALL YOU GET**

Value	Response
Very poor value for your tax dollar	6
Fairly poor value for your tax dollar	37
fairly good value for your tax dollar	80
Very good value for your tax dollar	15
Total Responses	138



RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Total Responses: 133



Which Category Describes You?

