



Investing in Toronto's Future: Public Consultation on the City's Long-Term Financial Plan

November Survey Results

November 30, 2016

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Introduction

The City of Toronto is facing a structural financial challenge: costs are increasing faster than inflation, and there are billions of dollars in planned but unfunded capital spending. In July 2016, City Council directed staff to undertake public consultations to provide input and advice to the renewal of the City's Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP).

The public consultation is divided into two phases.

- Phase 1 – fall 2016
 - November: The first of three online surveys was open from November 9 to 20 for the public to provide input on what the City should consider as it makes decisions about long-term financial sustainability.
 - December: A second online survey – open from December 5 to 23 – will gather input on long-term financial options and strategies related to expenditure, revenue and assets.
 - A series of in-person community meetings will be held on December 5, 6, 7, and 8, 2016. Location and registration information can be found at <http://www.investinginTO.ca>. All meetings will be webcast.
 - In December, consultation toolkits will be available to download for groups and organizations who wish to conduct their own meetings
- Phase 2 – winter/spring 2017
 - A final online survey and a second series of in-person community meetings is planned to gather input on the governance and financial management required for long-term financial sustainability.

This report summarizes input received to the survey on the City's current financial state and guiding principles for financial sustainability. Findings from this survey will be used to help inform the design and approach of subsequent surveys and meetings. The data received through the November survey will be posted to the City's Open Data webpage.

Executive Summary

The survey was online from November 9 to 20, 2016. In total, 367 people signed on and there were 290 partial or completed responses. The survey provides valuable qualitative information about the insight, ideas and questions that the people of Toronto have about the City's finances. The survey was designed to better understand the public's views on the City's current financial state and guiding principles for financial sustainability. In addition, it will help inform the design of the remaining public consultation process. Due to the nature and response rate, the results are not statistically representative of Toronto's residents. It probed several areas regarding the City's finances and strategy, and sought input into how the public want to be engaged.

The sample size for each question is indicated from the 290 partial and completed responses received.

The City's financial health and priorities

This section of the survey asked respondents their views on the City's financial health and priorities.

- Most respondents believe that the City is in poor financial health. Sixty-two per cent of respondents believe the City's finances are either somewhat unhealthy and unstable or very unhealthy and unstable (n=288).
- Fifty-one per cent of respondents believe the City's finances are worse than they were five years ago (n=289).
- When it comes to the City's financial management, 48% of those who responded to this question believe the City sometimes does a good job.
- Respondents were asked whether property taxes, rate supported programs, user fees and fines were too high, just right or too low. In each of these revenue categories, those who responded to this question indicated:
 - 61% believed property taxes are too low (n=261).
 - 53% believed rate supported programs are just right (n=263).
 - 52% believed user fees are too high (n=264).
 - 60% believed fines are too low (n=262).
- The survey asked respondents to explain their choices, and the key themes that emerged are included in this report.

City priorities and goals

In this section of the survey, respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions about the City's strengths and weaknesses in achieving its aspirations and goals.

- When asked, the majority responded that Toronto's residents are the City's strength. Respondents also said the strong economy and sophisticated municipal government are strengths.
- When asked the greatest challenge for the City in achieving its goals, most respondents cited political will to make necessary changes.
- When asked what would make respondents more confident in the City's financial management, respondents indicated that the City needs to raise revenue, follow through on commitments and be more transparent.

Revenues, expenses and assets

This section of the survey asked respondents what the City should consider when making decisions about expenditure, revenue and asset options.

- When asked to rank what the City should consider when prioritizing expenses, the most frequently selected consideration was the impact the expenses would have on Torontonians in need.

- When asked how the City could cut costs and manage expenses, the majority of respondents indicated that they would rather see the City explore new revenue options before making service cuts.
- Participants indicated that they would like information on the long-term impact of any proposed option, especially in social, economic and environmental terms before providing feedback on new revenue options.
- When asked what the City should consider when making the decision to buy, maintain or sell assets, the majority of respondents expressed opposition to selling assets.

Information and communication

This section of the survey asked what further information respondents would like from the City.

- When asked what one question they would ask City staff, most respondents asked about how decisions are made, about specific issues and equity, and about revenue options.
- When asked what additional information would help respondents prepare for consultations, they asked for more detailed information about the City's options, for as much data as possible, and for information on the impact of new revenue options.
- When asked where respondents get their information on the City's finances, services and programs, 55% indicated they get their information from news media.
- Respondents also offered a wide range of suggestions for improving the website and the City's communications surrounding the long-term financial plan consultations.

Demographics

The survey asked a series of optional demographic questions.

- Sixty per cent of respondents shared the first three digits of their area code. Categorized by the six former municipalities, 58% of respondents (n=174) live in the former municipality of Toronto.
- Respondent ages (n=195)
 - 32% of respondents were between 15 and 34 years old.
 - 45% of respondents were between 35 and 54 years old.
 - 23% of respondents were 55+.
- Fifty-two per cent of respondents own homes and 45% rent (n=197).
- Respondent household income levels were nearly equally distributed, with the largest group being 22% of respondents with household incomes over 140,000 (n=194).
- Twenty-nine respondents are business owners.

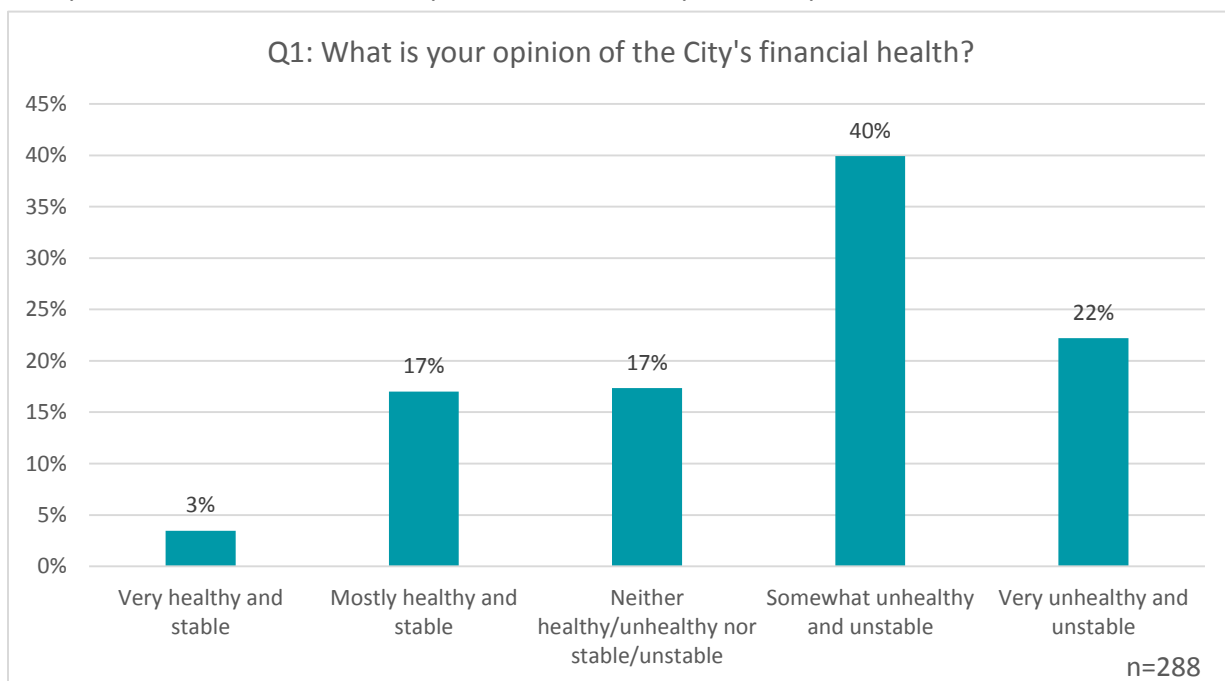
The City's financial goals and priorities

This section of the survey asked respondents their views on the City's financial health and priorities.

- Most respondents believe that the City is in poor financial health. Sixty-two per cent of respondents believe the City's finances are either somewhat unhealthy and unstable or very unhealthy and unstable (n=288).
- Fifty-one per cent of respondents believe the City's finances are worse than they were five years ago (n=289).
- When it comes to the City's financial management, 48% of those who responded to this question believe the City sometimes does a good job.
- Respondents were asked whether property taxes, rate supported programs, user fees and fines were too high, just right or too low. In each of these revenue categories, those who responded to this question indicated:
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- The survey asked respondents to explain their choices, and the key themes that emerged are included in this report.

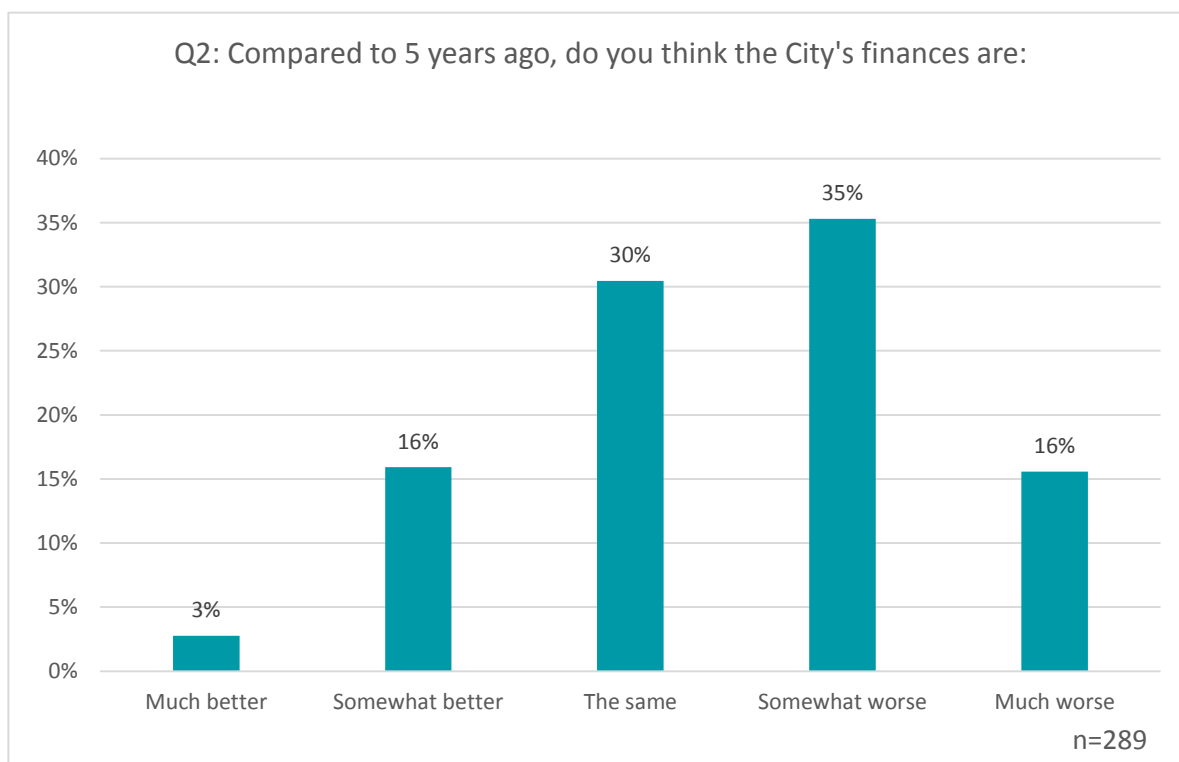
Opinion of the City's Financial Health

Respondents were asked their opinion of the City's financial health. The majority of respondents believe the City's financial health is of concern. The graph below shows that 62% of respondents (n=288) believe the City is either somewhat unhealthy and unstable or very unhealthy and unstable.



Opinions on City finances, compared to 5 years ago

51% of respondents (n=289) believe the City's finances are worse than they were 5 years ago. Nearly a third of respondents believe the City's financial situation is the same, while 19% believe the City's finances have improved compared to 5 years ago.



Emerging themes: The City's financial health

Respondents were asked to explain their answers regarding the City's financial health and the City's finances compared to five years ago. Main themes from the responses are below, organized first by respondent opinion of the City's financial health, and then by respondent opinion of City finances compared to five years ago.

Respondents who believe the City's finances are currently "Very or mostly healthy and stable"

a) Compared to 5 years ago, the City's finances are better

- The fact that there is constant housing construction, especially condominiums, is taken by the many people as an indication that the property tax base must be growing rapidly.
- The current investment in infrastructure was mentioned as a signal that resources are available.
- There is a sense that the City has effectively reduced waste and is continuing to do so.

b) Compared to 5 years ago, the City's finances are the same

- There is room to increase taxes and explore revenue options.
- It can be difficult for the public to understand the actual financial situation.

c) Compared to 5 years ago, the City's finances are worse

- Austerity was mentioned as creating a risk of leaving people and communities behind.
- The need to invest in infrastructure to support a growing population was raised as a reason to explore revenue options.
- The City's continued emphasis on low taxes along with diminishing support from other governments has eroded its ability to fund programs.

Quotes from participants:

"Every year there is much agonizing in the media over the budget process and calls for cuts. But each year, somehow, the budget is balanced and life goes on. So in the absence of specific evidence, I conclude that things aren't much worse than they have been."

"Because nothing ever changes. Whenever the City needs money, it raises at the expense of homeowners and car drivers. The users of those services should pay for them, not the non-users."

"The City continues to respond to pressures with responsible, sustainable measures to ensure appropriate revenue stream[s]."

"The City is embarking on an ambitious agenda to build public transit and park infrastructure. This is much needed infrastructure, but the City needs an increased and sustainable revenue for this development."

Respondents who believe the City's finances are currently "Neither healthy/unhealthy nor stable/unstable"

a) Compared to 5 years ago, the City's finances are better

- The limiting operating cost growth during a period of population expansion, combined with investment in transit and new housing development were taken as signs the financial picture is improving.

b) Compared to 5 years ago, the City's finances are the same

- There have been no obvious changes in service levels or budgeting and spending decision-making.

c) Compared to 5 years ago, the City's finances are worse

- While some high profile areas are funded, other significant needs have not been.
- There were also mentions that changing circumstances, such as increasing extreme weather events and climate change, had placed increased pressure on the City's resources even if the

financial picture had not necessarily worsened.

Quotes from participants:

“Budget restraints are more a result of political will than the state of economy.”

“Toronto as a city seems underfunded on issues like transit and housing, however it has a healthy prosperous tax base that it could tax further to correct these deficiencies.

Respondents who believe the City’s finances are currently “Somewhat or very unhealthy and unstable”

a) Compared to 5 years ago, the City’s finances are better

- There is a sense that spending plans are realistic and professional. The issue of a revenue problem, and an over reliance on certain revenue streams is a risk.

b) Compared to 5 years ago, the City’s finances are the same

- Many ongoing issues were raised, including regular property tax increases as well as systemic problems. These include committing new spending or new projects without a corresponding source of revenue, underinvestment in services and infrastructure, over-reliance on the municipal land transfer tax.
- The increase cost of living and demand for services is an issue, but the City’s level of investment in these has remained the same.

c) Compared to 5 years ago, the City’s finances are worse

- The same systemic issues identified above were expressed repeatedly by those who feel the City’s financial picture is worsening. These include over-reliance on specific revenue sources, below-inflation increases in the property tax and underinvesting in existing programs and services.
- There is a sense that City projects take a long time and that the City is falling behind on critical investment, especially in infrastructure. Some respondents expressed concern about the City’s decision-making on major capital investments, especially transportation and transit, and there were several mentions of the City’s routine commitment to new projects without identifying the necessary funding.
- Increasing salary costs was raised.

Quotes from participants:

“We aren't investing, we're treading water from previous years”

There is “Too much poverty, especially children, and the middle class feels unstable. The housing market is making things worse for the middle class.”

“The City had, and continues to have, a significant infrastructure deficit. Given the passage of time, and growth in population, there is a sense of greater urgency. That said, the situation is not so much 'worse' as unresolved. Additional revenue is required to meet current 'official' goals and broad public expectations.”

“We've got a city with a diverse set of needs, and there isn't enough serious talk about raising enough money to pay for critical services.”

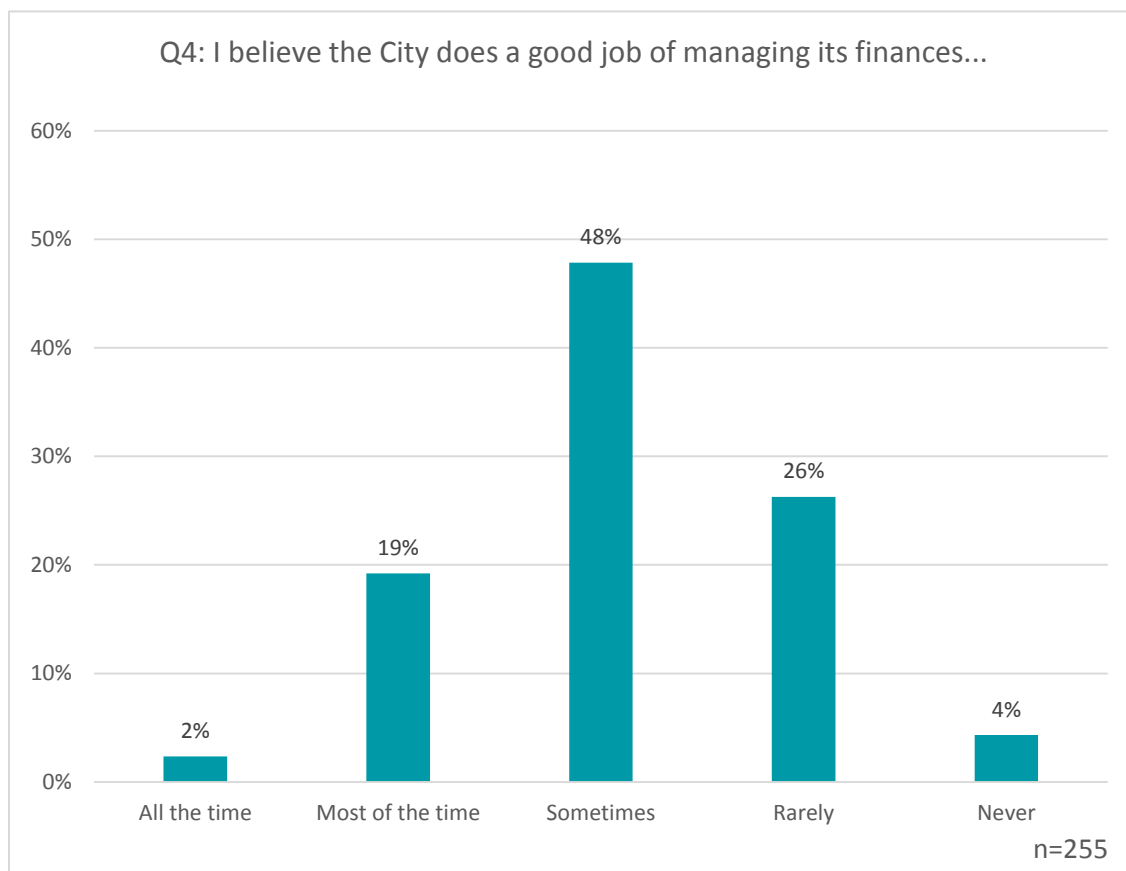
“Revenue sources was an issue five years ago. Five years of not fixing it has strained already tight finances even more.”

“The level of debt is higher; the accumulated state-of-good-repair costs is higher; City Council is making decisions that the City cannot afford to pay for, are contrary to staff advice, are not defensible or sustainable, and are politically self-serving.”

“Short-sighted decisions are made to get through the current year budget but lacking long-term thinking to develop the infrastructure (transit, affordable housing, etc.) that we need.”

Opinions on the City's financial management

Respondents' opinions are more neutral when asked if the City does a good job of managing finances, as 48% of respondents (n=255) believe the City sometimes does a good job. Nineteen per cent of respondents believe the City does a good job of managing finances most of the time or all the time, while 30% believe the City does a good job rarely or never.



Emerging themes: The City's financial management

Respondents were asked to provide additional details about their reason for their rating of the City's management of its finances.

a) Respondents who believe the City does a good job of managing its finances all the time

Only two of the total 290 respondents provided reasoning for this choice, citing "tremendous internal and external oversight" to keep finances managed well, and receiving great services for what we pay.

Quotes from participants:

"I believe the City budget has tremendous internal and external oversight. With so many eyes, the finances are managed well. My concern is with budget priorities and revenue generation."

"For what we pay we get great services, but need rapid expansion especially re: transit."

b) Respondents who believe the City does a good job of managing its finances most of the time

There was a great deal of support for City staff in the responses, with many agreeing that the City has done a good job and that improvements are being made in a realistic manner. Some respondents also commented that they haven't seen any waste or scandals in many years.

Several respondents recognized that there are many things that City staff can't control, and some characterized the City as having a "revenue problem" rather than a "spending problem."

Some complaints include the political climate swaying the budget discussion, questions about the City's spending priorities and some concerns about the City's reliance on one-time measures to balance the budget.

Quotes from participants:

"I see improvements in a realistic manner. I feel that some financial expenditures are responsive to a small and loud number of people and not representative of the larger population."

"While the political climate is swaying the budget discussion, I have faith in senior management who have been able to provide sound advice to Council and make tough decisions to keep City finances within reasonable means."

"For the past 6 years, there has been much greater awareness of providing the taxpayer with value for money, efficient operations and controlling employee wages and benefits. There is also a better balance between the required services and the "nice to have" services."

"The City relies too often on one-time measures to balance the budget and has avoided key long-decisions for too long."

"There is a lot going on in the city. It's not been easy since amalgamation. The basic needs are met, but we need to start to think differently about how the city operates and delivers services."

c) Respondents who believe the City does a good job of managing its finances sometimes

Several respondents who indicated "sometimes" criticized "political decisions" such as the Scarborough subway extension as an example of "reckless" or "bad" financial management. There were also some respondents who feel that there is no strategic plan, or that such a plan is not effectively followed.

A few respondents criticized the City for being unwilling to increase taxes as a means of increasing revenues, and criticized Council for failing to embrace new revenue options. There was also a general feeling that there is too much "playing politics" with the budget and financial plan that prevents advances to infrastructure projects or city building. Some respondents singled out the TTC as an example of underfunded infrastructure.

Quotes from participants:

“Because we are always at a standstill and are never advancing on any real infrastructure projects or city building / bettering work. It seems to me that everyone is caught between playing politics and just trying to keep the lights on. Meanwhile citizens suffer, transit continues to degrade from its already poor state, homelessness is all around us, and mental health / addiction services are nowhere to be found to combat the social issues of this city. If the city did a 'good job' managing finances we wouldn't spend billions on 'political' transit and would instead allocate funds to real transit projects and social welfare programs.”

“They spend recklessly on expensive projects with little benefit, and don’t fund many projects that would make the city safer and better to live in.”

“The City spent too many years with the politically expedient ‘no tax increase’ rather than keeping revenue in line with inflation and strategic planning.”

“There seems to be no long term or wide spread thinking of collection of finances, need for finances and allocation. Not enough long term inclusive planning - political decisions made e.g. wastage on consultations for election time promises. Property taxes should be better assigned (big business/fancy condos/etc.) the city is responsible as subsidiarity identifies it as being closest to the people and therefore the most responsible.”

“Given the lack of revenues the City collects, City staff seem to manage alright. However, politicians often commit huge amounts of spending to projects of little to no merit (e.g. Gardiner East and Scarborough Subway).”

d) Respondents who believe the City does a good job of managing its finances rarely

Respondents who answered “rarely” were very critical of Council’s financial decision-making. These respondents suggested that members of City Council both refuse to accept increased taxes and choose to support large projects instead of smaller, more efficient projects for political reasons.

Some respondents criticized the City’s relationship with the private sector, calling for greater control of cost-overrun and criticizing “breaks” given to corporations over citizens.

Many respondents suggested Council is focused on cuts to services and budgets rather than increasing revenues.

Quotes from participants:

"City is always putting unfunded projects forward, refuses to increase property taxes for political reasons even though that's obviously the best option for increasing revenue."

"When the city gives away contracts it is given an estimate and usually the project goes over budget. The city must be very strict and act as though it is their own money. For example Union Station revitalization (Toronto owned areas) it was supposed to be complete for 2016, then was update to 2017, and now is supposed to be finished end of 2018. That costs extra and no one cares. The company that was given the contract should be penalized as a private corporation would do."

"Every year every area of a growing, booming city is asked to cut costs, which leads to reduced services, on the fallacy that "waste" is rampant. Instead, we need the city to push for new sources of revenue so we can maintain and improve the city properly."

e) Respondents who believe the City does a good job of managing its finances never

Finally, those respondents who chose "never" echoed some of the complaints of previous sections, criticizing Council for changing priorities and suggesting that property taxes aren't high enough.

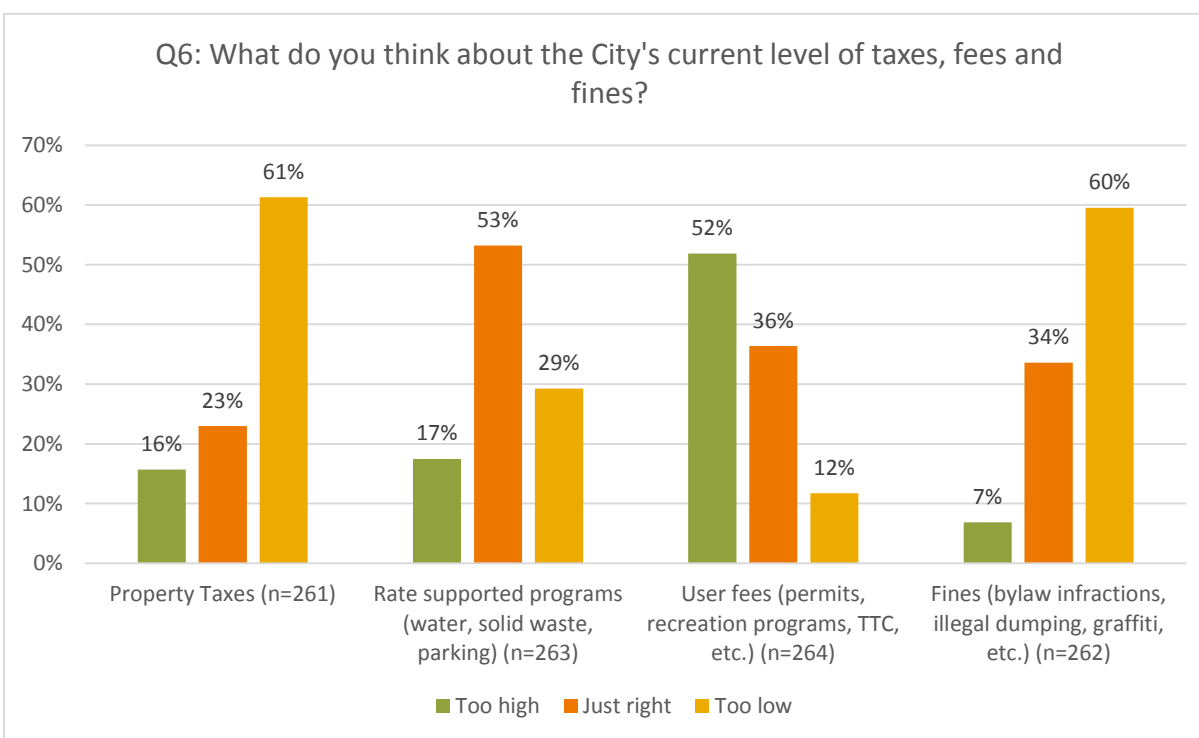
Quotes from participants:

"Council constantly changing priorities short-sightedly and assigns funds without assessing the true value of programs (a la transit, TCHC, parks etc.)"

"Property taxes are not high enough. It's immature and reckless."

Opinions on the current level of taxes, fees, and fines

Respondents were asked their opinion on the current level of the City's property taxes, rate supported programs, user fees and fines. Of the responses received, 61% believed property taxes are too low (n=261). Fifty-three per cent believe that rate supported programs are just right, while 29% believe they are too low (n=263). When it comes to user fees, 52% believe they are too high and 36% believe they are just right (n=264). Fifty-nine per cent of respondents believe that fines are too low (n=262).



Emerging themes: Property taxes, rate supported programs, user fees and fines

Respondent opinions on the current level of property taxes

a) Property taxes are too high

A number of respondents felt that the cost of living in Toronto is already high, and an increase in property taxes would continue to put financial pressure on residents. Further, some respondents believe that property tax revenue is generally being mismanaged, or that users (and not homeowners) should pay for the services they use.

b) Property taxes are too low

The majority of respondents pointed out that property taxes have risen slower than inflation and that Toronto's property taxes are the lowest in the GTHA. An issue that was repeatedly mentioned was that low property tax leads to higher user fees, which could be alleviated if property taxes were raised. Many respondents suggested that a rise in property taxes is necessary to pay for infrastructure upgrades, transit and other services.

Quotes from participants:

"Because the cost of living in this city is astronomical. Heated housing markets will not be cooled by higher property taxes. The impact will instead burden already indebted / house poor citizens of this city, who pay huge amounts as is."

"Property taxes are extremely high for the tiny condos we have, it's not even property - it's air tax"

"Our property tax is among the lowest in the GTHA, and it goes down every year, since it increases lower than the inflation rate. Why is something priced so low if demand is so high? Meanwhile, user fees increase at a much higher rate than inflation every year, which hurts the poor disproportionately. "

"I would be willing to pay higher property tax to properly fund things such as recreation programs, parks maintenance, and TTC fares. Fines should be higher, even much higher for certain infractions, to encourage greater compliance."

Respondent opinions on the current level of rate supported programs

a) Rate support programs are too high

There was only one comment about rate supported programs by a respondent who believes they are too high. This respondent indicated that the cost of utilities is too high, but did not offer specifics.

b) Rate supporting programs are too low

Some respondents pointed out that the cost of parking was too low, especially in the downtown core. There is a sense that parking rates could rise in high demand areas, and this could create incentives to use public transit.

Quotes from participants:

“Water and solid waste rates feel appropriate, however parking in the Downtown is not priced appropriately relative to transit. It is almost always cheaper to drive and pay park if two or more people are travelling. Parking rates in the Downtown should be increased to reduce traffic congestion and promote transit and alternative transportation within the Downtown core (cycling, walking). Case in point, it is cheaper for an individual to drive and park at City Hall on the weekend than taking a two way TTC trip.”

“Water and solid waste have seen usage rates climb well above inflation for about a decade, and the public appetite for more is low. Water capital funding would be better served by a fixed (non-usage) fee. Permit and on-street parking charges are the exception, in this category, they should be higher. It’s very clear both are well below market value. As a driver, my concern is less with the price of these than with availability of a space when I want one. Balancing supply with demand suggests permit rates in high-demand areas should come at extra cost. Likewise, retail parking, on-street is for the customer, not the owner staff. If spaces are occupied, prices should rise. On-street rates are well below Vancouver, Calgary and Chicago, suggesting room to raise some revenue here.”

Respondent opinions on the current level of user fees*a) Fees are too high*

Many respondents believe user fees are too high, and they raise a number of issues. First, respondents believe user fees are a consequence of low property taxes resulting in underfunded services. These respondents generally wish to see user fees lowered accompanied by property taxes increases. Second, respondents feel that high user fees have a disproportionate effect on low income residents who rely on transit, recreation programs, and other services. And third, many respondents either directly say that TTC fares are too high, or use TTC fares as one of their examples of high user fees.

b) Fees are too low

A small minority responded that user fees are too low. No respondents that selected this option offered an explanation for their choice. One respondent who believes that user fees are “just right” mentioned that fees could be raised on special event permits or construction that blocks traffic.

Quotes from participants:

"User fees are getting too high - this is a challenge for low income families in Toronto. Especially given that most residents pay the same fees regardless of their income. Property taxes should be slightly increased to catch up for years with below-inflation increases."

"Common programs should be supported by taxation and not user fees. It is much easier for more wealthy people (like me) to pay user fees than those less fortunate but it's not the way to build community. We have the highest child poverty rate in the country. High user fees also contributes to unwanted behaviour like trash dumping along Commissioners Rd. and other places."

"High user fees, particularly for transit, have unfairly applied the cost to the riders while neglecting the business owners, developers, and road users who all benefit (directly and indirectly) from transit access."

Respondent opinions on the current level of fines

a) Fines are too high

A very small minority believe fines are too high. Only one respondent who believed fines are too high provided an explanation, raising the issue of the City's inability to enforce fines. This respondent is quoted below. No other explanations were given by any respondent who believe fines are too high.

b) Fines are too low

The majority of respondents believe fines are too low. The overall sense is that fines are a slap on the wrist, but are insufficiently high to deter illegal behaviour. Another theme that emerged was that it is difficult to enforce bylaws and other fineable offences. Additionally, many respondents specifically mentioned the need to raise fines for illegal dumping and tree protection fines.

Quotes from participants:

"Fines are silly unless they can be enforced in a meaningful way on people outside of the city as well."

"Fines to protect our environment/city should be high enough to really discourage violations not "just the cost of doing business" the way some view them."

"Additionally, Toronto is becoming a city where many bylaw infractions occur daily without legitimate change in behaviour. These cause social harms to a city that is growing at a rapid rate and increasing its density. Those violating by-laws should pay tougher penalties that more accurately reflect their whole cost to society and support city initiatives to curb further violations from happening."

"Fines are generally seen as a slap on the wrist or a cost of doing business and thus are ignored. Increase fees particularly where a business benefits by ignoring them (e.g., couriers blocking bicycle lanes, parking illegally, or developers cutting or damaging trees without proper permits)."

City priorities and goals

In this section of the survey, respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions about the City's strengths and weaknesses in achieving its aspirations and goals. Highlights include:

- When asked, the majority responded that Toronto's residents are the City's strength. Respondents also said the strong economy and sophisticated municipal government are strengths.
- When asked the greatest challenge for the City in achieving its goals, most respondents cited political will to make necessary changes.
- When asked what would make respondents more confident in the City's financial management, respondents indicated that the City needs to raise revenue, follow through on commitments and be more transparent.

The City's greatest strength in achieving its goals

When asked what they felt was the City's greatest strength that will help it achieve its aspirations and goals, respondents indicated that the City's greatest strengths are its people, its strong economy and its municipal government.

Toronto's people

The most prominent theme in the responses was Toronto's diverse population and social cohesion. The majority of respondents believe diversity, tolerance, multiculturalism and openness to new people and ideas is Toronto's strongest asset.

Other key themes in the responses included ideas of citizen engagement, civic pride and sense of

community. Many respondents believe that Toronto residents are engaged in their communities, care to vote and are well-informed. A number of respondents believe that citizens generally care about Toronto and are willing to work together to maintain and build it.

Many respondents also see Toronto's growing population as a source of strength for the future.

Quotes from participants:

"It's home to a tremendous number of talented, motivated people. There's a wealth of public and private sector talent for the City to draw on. And Toronto is wealthy! It should be possible for the City to access that wealth to ensure it continues to thrive."

"Population size and diversity. The sheer size of Toronto gives it the ability to draw on its people to be creative and innovative problem solvers."

"An engaged citizenry; Toronto people are really wonderful and have positive energy for unity and creativity for problem solving; engage them in city task forces, in challenges, in dialogue, invite initiatives - and then also provide some funding to leverage that volunteer capacity, for example have a coordinator for green neighbours groups across the city; this will achieve multiple benefits."

"We have strong, diverse neighbourhoods and communities of people who truly care about the well-being of the city."

Toronto's economy

Toronto's economic strength was another key theme in the responses. Respondents generally believe Toronto has a robust and growing economy, bolstered by a growing population. A number of respondents believe, given the desirability of doing business in Toronto, that raising revenue through new and existing taxes is possible.

Some respondents believe Toronto is a wealthy city with wealthy individuals and businesses that can contribute more. Two respondents believe that the City should leverage the high level of development taking place to raise funds. One respondent believes the City could seek private investment in some of the City's housing and transit projects.

Quotes from participants:

"Strong municipal economy and economic 'gravity' make it possible to raise revenue sources."

"Our economy should be leveraged to balance our books (while some may be hurt by a residential tax increase, most can absorb the cost with little or no impact on their quality of life). Our economic strength and role in the Province and Country should be leveraged to get guaranteed funding from other levels of government for transit and community housing so that our City can continue to be a key economic player nation-wide."

"I believe that Toronto's greatest strength is that it's a hub of economic activity across multiple industries. Finance, telecommunications, technology, medicine, academics, culture."

Toronto's municipal government

Many respondents believe Toronto's municipal government is a source of strength. A common theme among responses is that the municipal government should have stable leadership, make long-term plans, have a strong relationship with the province and have a vision for what the city can become.

Respondents also believe evidence-based decision-making and professional City staff could be an asset for Toronto in the future. Some respondents added that they would like to see greater information sharing and government transparency.

Quotes from participants:

"The committees and boards dedicated to the success of our city paired with passionate elected individuals executing those goals."

"There are some amazing Council members who do understand that great services and great value makes an entire city great - that bang for the buck is important. They generally support each other as a group despite coming from wards all over. If everyone could remember that Council serves the whole city, that would be an asset in demanding proper provincial funding."

"Consistent and steady leadership. Keeping the long-term best interests of the city and its residents at heart. Avoiding the political shifts of too many small interest groups. Setting a plan and sticking with it."

"Big city with experienced and sophisticated public service that has good idea of what needs to be done if given the resources"

Greatest challenge to the City achieving its goals

When asked what they felt was the City's greatest challenge in achieving its aspirations and goals, respondents indicated that the City's greatest challenges are lack of political will and setting the right priorities.

Lack of political will

The majority of respondents believe there is no political will to fix the City's financial situation. Respondents believed that politics gets in the way – that raising taxes or introducing new revenue sources is politically risky. Numerous respondents mentioned that City Councillors often support their constituents at the detriment of the city as a whole. Other respondents believe that decisions are often politically motivated. The most common theme is that the municipal government is afraid to raise property and other taxes because it is fearful of voter repercussion.

Quotes from participants:

"The notion that "tax" is a dirty word."

"The strength of a political class of mobilized property-paying homeowners. Politicians do not want to gamble their futures on facing up to those who do not want to see a rise in property taxes. Political leadership to shift this conversation is needed, yet in the post-Ford area the new consensus seems to be that property taxes must not rise."

"Actually having the [courage] to realise that 'Yes, this is the good and right thing to do, even if it requires raising taxes/costs for the public - it will be better in the long run.'"

"Our politicians are reluctant to increase taxes to fund future needs."

"The greatest challenge would be that Toronto has not gotten serious about the size of mega city it is and in return created significant new revenue streams to support billions of dollars of investments needed today."

Setting the right priorities

Throughout the responses, a common theme emerged about how to balance competing agendas to set the right priorities for the City. Many respondents focused on specific issues, while others mentioned political divisiveness and balancing political agendas more broadly. Some of the specific issues mentioned include the competing needs of downtown and suburban residents, the political strength of homeowners, issues surrounding densification and community opposition, and setting climate change preparation as a priority.

Setting public infrastructure and transit priorities was another common thread in the responses; many respondents believe that avoiding necessary infrastructure and public transit investments will hinder the city's growth in the future.

Quotes from participants:

"More plans and strategies than funding allows and no clarity on a framework that prioritizes which ones to fund. Priorities shouldn't just be set by politics but by the needs of our city."

"Unity. The transit debate has highlighted the divide between the boroughs."

"Inability to determine city-wide priorities (too much focus on downtown versus suburbs, or ward-centric thinking), a continuous culture of fiscal restraint, and fear of political persecution for advocating an expansion of current revenue tools or the introduction of new ones."

"Funding and vision. With the right funding, we can build the public infrastructure we need to meet the growth and development of the city. With the right vision we can rebalance the city for more sustainable living and continue to reverse the suburban development mentality of the last century."

I would have greater confidence in the City if...

When asked what would give respondents greater confidence in the City's ability to manage its finances and achieve its goals, the majority of respondents indicated that they would have greater confidence if the City raised revenue, followed through with commitments and increased transparency.

Raising revenue

The majority of respondents would have greater confidence in the City if it made the difficult decision to raise revenues. Many respondents mentioned property taxes, some offered solutions like congestion charges and road fees. Overall, most respondents expressed the desire for the City to have a stable source of revenue from a range of revenue options so that it can fund the projects it announces.

There were a small number of comments that asked for no tax increase or new revenue options. These respondents were concerned about the high cost of living in the city.

Quotes from participants:

"[If] they would at least entertain the idea of bringing property taxes in line with our neighbours in the GTA, and to fully embrace the reality we're in by introducing sensible revenue tools, such as congestion charges, toll roads, as well as properly funding the TTC, although this will require an admission that transit is not a money maker - it's a service that requires governmental input."

"[If] we stopped having every budget conversation start with a massive hole that has to be filled by extreme measures like closing libraries or selling hydro."

"[If] the City had increased, reliable, revenue tools (e.g. sales tax) and if City Hall decision making was de-politicized."

"[If] we were a little braver in finding the money to pay for what we want from the City, rather than always cutting back."

Following through with commitments

A common theme throughout the responses was frustration with the City announcing new projects without a plan to fund them, or backtracking on existing plans. Many respondents said that they would have more confidence in the City if they could see announced projects receive adequate funding, and if these projects were completed quickly.

Many respondents expressed a desire to see City government make more long-term decisions that withstand changes in politics. Respondents recognize the long-term nature of capital and other projects, and would have more confidence in the City if plans were depoliticized. As an example, many believe that essential public transit investments are overly politicized, which hinders progress.

Quotes from participants:

"[If] the city would commit and follow through. Constant debate and waffling on projects like the Scarborough Subway/RT/LRT erodes confidence that projects will ever be completed."

"[If] City Council stopped making grand plans without deciding to raise revenue to pay for them."

"[If] Council reflected on the cost (social, financial, environment) of every approval or decision, rather than approving but then wanting to cut budgets afterwards, which sacrifices ... items already approved and considered."

"[If] Council committed to long-term planning instead of always taking the short-term political view. Council need to think past what will get them re-elected to what's good for the city"

"[If] Council could decide and stick with, key city-wide priorities."

Increased transparency

A number of respondents believe the City needs to make its budgeting process more transparent. These respondents believe that increased transparency in setting priorities, operating budgets and in the budgeting process would insulate plans and projects from changing politics and narrow interest groups. Some respondents believe budgeting and agenda-setting could also be opened up to greater public participation. They also feel that more open data would support this.

Quotes from participants:

"[If] there were a transparent and long-term set of priorities with no interference from politicians."

"[If] there were participatory budgeting and politicians didn't derail expensive and lengthy planning processes"

"[If] they opened up their data and tools as a base platform for citizens/businesses to build upon, since citizens can build things for citizens better than the City can."

"[If] it has a modern system of open data and open government"

"[If] the voice of neighbourhoods was given more weight (i.e., decisions were made somewhat more locally) and if there didn't seem to be such hesitance to consider all parts of the budget (including, e.g., policing)."

Revenues, Expenses and Assets

This section of the survey asked respondents what the City should consider when making decisions about expenditure, revenue, and asset options.

- When asked to rank what the City should consider when prioritizing expenses, the most frequently selected consideration was the impact the expenses would have on Torontonians in need.
- When asked how the City could cut costs and manage expenses, the majority of respondents indicated that they would rather see the City explore new revenue options before making service cuts.
- Participants indicated that they would like information on the long-term impact of any proposed option, especially in social, economic and environmental terms before providing feedback on new revenue options.
- When asked what the City should consider when making the decision to buy, maintain or sell assets, the majority of respondents expressed opposition to selling assets.

Opinions on what the City should ask itself when prioritizing expenses

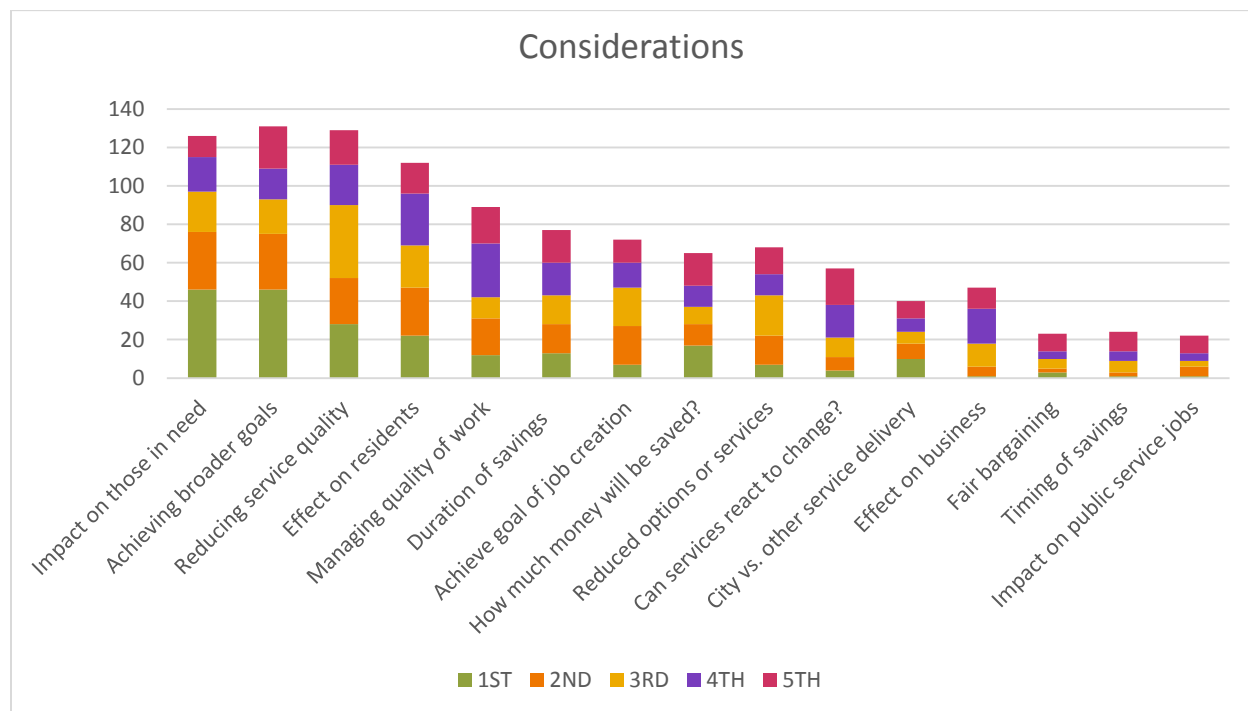
Participants were given a list of 15 considerations for the City to prioritize when managing expenses, and were asked to rank their top 5 choices.

The five most popular considerations were:

1. Impact on those in need
2. Achieving broader goals
3. Reducing service quality
4. Effect on residents
5. Managing quality of work

Respondents ranked the remaining considerations as follows:

6. Duration of savings
7. Achieving the City's goal of creating stable jobs
8. Amount of money saved
9. Reduction in number or options of services
10. Can services react to change
11. City vs other service delivery
12. Effect on business
13. Fair bargaining
14. Timing of savings
15. Impact on public service jobs



Opinions on how the City could manage expenses

The overwhelming response was that the City should explore revenue options before contemplating any cuts to services. Several respondents challenged the question, suggesting that revenue and other options needed to be explored rather than just cutting costs.

There were also many comments focused on the need for more efficiencies in government. Many specific significant capital projects were singled out for review and possible cancellation. There were a handful of respondents who proposed contracting out services, and a few more cuts to staff, salaries and services. The police budget drew repeated, specific attention as a possible place to manage expenses.

Innovation and changes to business practices were repeatedly raised. This includes moving more services to digital and online, as well as allowing employees to work remotely.

Other specific recommended actions include:

- Avoid public-private partnerships.
- Be more aggressive on parking fines.
- Evaluate energy efficiency of buildings and levy taxes on those that fall below standards.
- Follow Vancouver's example by taxing non-resident property owners.
- Charge more for lane obstructions during construction.
- Devolve control over City services to the public or arm's-length non-profits.
- Ensure there is the correct ratio of managers to front-line staff.
- Examine internal barriers to innovation in service delivery and make better use of technology.
- Explore leasing, rather than selling assets.
- Improve coordination of capital projects to avoid conflict.
- It was suggested that changes to the purchasing policy, such as balancing quality with price, could yield savings.
- Open up to receive ideas from the public. Provide more feedback mechanisms to existing City workers and departments on productivity and global best practices.
- Use participatory budgeting for all City budgets.
- Reduce the number of Councillors, and their salaries.
- Re-examine committed, but unfunded, capital projects.
- Remove the property tax reduction for empty properties.
- Request provincial uploading of services.

Quotes from participants:

"Do not do everything. Do not do a new strategic policy unless it comes with new money and/or fundamental change."

"Costs and expenses have been 'managed' for over five years; there is not much left to cut without removing services."

Information respondents need to consider revenue options

The most common request is for information on the long-term impact of any proposed revenue option, especially in social, economic and environmental terms. Specific areas mentioned include: How does it affect the poorest and most vulnerable? How does it affect the environment and carbon emissions? Does it lead to greater social and environmental justice? Will the new revenue be dedicated to transit, or housing and will we see a difference there? Or is it to replace current revenue sources?

The other theme that emerged was a call for a detailed comparison of City of Toronto revenue sources with other cities. This includes revenue options used by comparable North American and European cities, and comparisons with other GTHA municipalities, including property tax rates illustrating where Toronto stands relative to others.

Other specific information requested include:

- The impact on union contracts/agreements.
- Access to the underlying calculations.
- Examples of successful implementation in other jurisdictions.
- The cost of implementing and managing new revenue options as a function of revenue generated.
- Independent, third party analysis of the City's proposals.
- Detail on legislative changes necessary to implement a potential option.
- Explanation of the level of Municipal Bonds/borrowing that the City is permitted.
- The baseline staffing level in each service area.

Opinions on what the City should consider when it decides to buy, maintain or sell its assets

There was widespread opposition expressed to selling assets. Overwhelmingly, respondents want the City to retain control over assets, especially where they provide revenue or contribute to social, economic, and environmental policy objectives. Toronto Community Housing was mentioned, for example, with the possibility that any sales require inclusionary zoning in future development. The TTC and Toronto Hydro were also singled out as assets that can contribute to the City's environmental goals, specifically in achieving climate change objectives. In general, respondents want detailed information on any proposed change, and assurances that any sale will meet long-term strategic goals rather than just a short-term revenue windfall. Libraries, for example, were mentioned as a case where immediate, tangible costs supported abstract, but very real long-term benefits.

Specific considerations include:

- Will the City be able to maintain service levels in the future?
- Are there opportunities to partner with third parties to use the assets without selling them?
- Can assets be commercialized by selling naming rights?
- Consider the future and not short-term balancing of books.
- Does it have the potential to negatively impact the vulnerable?
- Could revenue be generated through fees or rent rather than sale of an asset?
- Explore selling and replacing older, inaccessible buildings rather than renovating them.
- How about acquiring assets?

- How does the revenue from a sale compare to the borrowing costs of incurring new debt?
- What are the environmental and social, as well as financial, impacts of any proposed sale?
- What are the downsides in terms of accountability and transparency to have a public asset go to private hands?
- What impact will any sale have on the local community?
- What is the cost and benefit of any option?
- What is the opportunity cost of a sale?
- Who can deliver these services and manage these assets most efficiently?
- Will a private owner offer the same level of social benefit?
- Will it impact the aging population?
- Will local landmarks, historical buildings be protected?
- Will prices or fees for use of a sold asset be controlled by the City?
- Will selling the asset create safety issues, decrease jobs or the quality of the asset?
- Will the asset bring in revenue? Does the asset fulfill a social need? Would the City be able to provide it at a less costly rate than the private and non-profit sector? What is the public's stance? Would the City ever be able to repurchase the asset?
- Will the City ever wish to buy back an asset? If so, what would it cost?
- Will there be public consultation?

Quotes from participants:

"Figure out what lines of business the City needs to be in and where it plans to be in 10 years. Consolidate where it makes sense and sell the difference."

"Fight the urge to believe you govern in special times. Every other council before you has made hard public decisions to build a city without resorting to auctioning off public assets. Make hard decisions and stand ready to be judged for them."

Opinions on selling assets

Most of the suggestions were for more detailed information, presented in many different ways. Specific examples include:

Graphics

- Graphs that show how spending or cuts will impact the city's GHG emissions.
- Interactive graphics that allow residents to participate in building the budget may be helpful to build understanding of the trade-offs.

More details

- Open data sets of City financial information to allow the public to perform independent reviews.
- Any long-term data related to growth, costs, revenue and potential impacts of implementing the asset sale.
- Resources available through other public sources.
- Revenue projections for tax and user fee increases.
- A list of City assets up for sale, current operational budgets for them as well as revenue etc.

- Amount of taxes/fees paid by residents by income; equity impact of new revenue options.
- Details about the long-term goals and priorities of the City.
- Details on the impact of existing and future revenues options on people, not just property.
- City's climate plan and potential impacts of a sudden economic down turn.
- Models on what certain revenue options would yield (e.g. tolls, municipal sales tax, etc.)

Comparators over time and with other jurisdictions

- Property tax and services provided compared to other major Canadian/international cities.
- Comparison of taxes paid by Torontonians compared to other comparable cities.
- Historical property tax rates and inflation-adjusted changes.
- I would like to see multiple financial scenarios that show the difference between options.
- Info about creative revenue options used in other jurisdictions.
- Information comparing the Toronto budget to other cities of a similar size.
- The level of fines issued by the City, including the multiyear trend.

Information and Communication

This section asked what further information respondents desire from the City. Highlights includes:

- When asked what one question they would ask City staff, most respondents asked about how decisions are made, about specific issues and equity, and about revenue options.
- When asked what additional information would help respondents prepare for consultations, they asked for more detailed information about the City's options, for as much data as possible, and for information on the impact of new revenue options.
- When asked where respondents get their information on the City's finances, services and programs, 55% indicated they get their information from news media.
- Respondents also offered a wide range of suggestions for improving the website and the City's communications surrounding the long-term financial plan consultations.

If respondents could ask City staff one question...

Decision-making

- What are the core values used to make budget allocation decisions?
- Are long-term financial consequences taken into account when approving spending? How does the balance of spending across expense categories map onto the long-term goals and priorities of the City?
- Why do we invest so much in childcare and social housing?
- Why do we not engage in multi-year budgeting?
- Why are infrastructure decisions and their financial impact so often considered separately?
- Why does it seem that there is money for big things like subways and new roads and not the things I depend on, like programs for my kids?

Issues and equity

- Can you provide information on how much is invested on a ward-by-ward basis for all City investment?
- What percentage of income do property owners and renters pay in property tax?
- Does the City have the power to tax businesses or homeowners in a way that reflects their ability to pay?
- Do you commit to viewing every decision through the lens of climate change? How can we use our resources wisely to support those most in need in our city?
- How can we ensure reliable long term revenue to the City in an age of increasing environmental, social and economic uncertainty? Do we have our surplus funds invested in ethical investments?
- How will a carbon tax affect the City finances, negatively or positively?

Revenue options

- Why do property taxes increase yet City budget still has to decrease? This is a wealthy city, and yet we can't scrape the money together to invest in our future and each other. What can we do bridge the gap between those two facts?
- Do other cities of our size rely so heavily on property taxes? Or do they have a more diverse set of revenue options?
- What new sources of revenue are you pursuing, and if you are not, why?
- What existing revenue options are the most under-utilized and have the most potential for growth?
- Is financing to maintain existing infrastructure identified and committed? How much revenue increase is needed just for state of good repair?
- What property tax rate increase (either one-time or annual) would be required to fully close the operating budget gap and fund the critical unfunded capital needs over the next 10 years?
- What's the gap between operating costs and reasonable increase in taxation/revenue?

Additional information respondents require for future consultations

Respondents to this survey had many suggestions on the types of additional information that would help them prepare for future consultation. Responses indicated a definite desire to dig into as much data as possible.

The overall theme of most responses was a desire for more detailed information on anything the City could provide. Several respondents asked whether the City's financial information could be shared through open data so that they could review it in the way they wished to do so. Another respondent asked for a clear break down of every line item in the budget. One respondent asked for more data on the City's current major sources of revenues and expenditures.

Some respondents asked to see the City's existing strategy for financial management, including a breakdown of the City's long-term goals and priorities. Others asked for information on the rationale for each financial consideration that the City is entertaining, to make informed decisions.

A few respondents wanted a clear comparison between the City's current plans, compared to the money that is available for those plans.

Many respondents are unclear on what the expected impacts of the proposed revenue options would

be, and asked for further information on each option. They also wanted information on who would pay for these revenue options, estimates for how much cash will be raised long-term and details on what services could be provided with these options.

There was a definite desire not only for long-term historical data, but also for long-term future projections for the different considerations.

A final major theme that arose from many respondents was a wish to see comparisons between Toronto's financial situation and its financial plans compared to other major cities in North America and around the world.

Finally, some respondents listed specific materials, such as fact sheets, raw data, videos and infographics on topics such as what happens if City assets (e.g. Toronto Hydro) are sold or not sold and revenue options the City currently use or don't use.

Quotes from participants:

"Comparisons of revenue tools for reasonably comparable cities. This must also include what kinds of things cities fund in order for a fair comparison."

"Detailed decision tree on how we got to the above mentioned projects, and who thought this was the better way to go and why."

"I think simple videos that are short and clearly explain to a wide audience will go a long way."

"Long-term financial implications of both selling assets, as well as sources of revenue generation. Also, what services could be provided with the money generated from additional revenue?"

"More helpful than graphs or charts, for the interested, would be making greater budget detail available publicly. The capital budget is typically clearer (more detailed) than the operating, but both omit a great deal of information in their public formats."

"Projections of Toronto's fiscal future, and bar graphs showing the total cost for taxpayers at different income levels (i.e. after accounting for rate supported services, the TTC, fees, and property taxes, what percentage of income does someone making \$25k a year pay to the city, \$50k, \$100k, \$250k)? I would be interested to know after accounting for the astronomical growth in fees and rate-supported services whether lower income taxpayers are footing a higher bill than expected."

"Show us what increased property taxes can pay for. Give examples of other cities (such as Los Angeles voting for \$120 billion for transit over 40 years). Help us dream of a better city!"

How respondents find out about City programs, services and finances

Respondents currently learn about City programs, services and finances in similar ways. The main source of information for respondents is the news media, which currently 53% of those who responded listed as a source. Another major source is the City of Toronto/City Budget websites, which 29% listed.

Other sources include:

- Social media (Twitter and Facebook), listed by 24% of respondents;
- Online searches, listed by 12% of respondents;
- Colleagues/friends word of mouth, listed by 7% of respondents;
- Councillor newsletters, listed by 5% of respondents;
- Watching Council meetings (online or on television), listed by 3% of respondents.

Information respondents would like to see on the website

Overall, the majority of respondents found the information on the website to be confusing or missing certain information, but were candid in ways that the information can be improved and supplemented.

Information respondents found helpful

Some respondents found the information provided to be “adequate.” One respondent highlighted the iceberg graphic as particularly helpful, and recommended it always be at the forefront of presentations and more.

Quotes from participants:

“The infographics are a good way to telegraph a general understanding, the Budget summary tables will be useful, once I have consulted a professional and know how to interpret them.”

“The snapshots of the services like Toronto Parking Authority was helpful as was most of the other info.”

“Generally I find the city fairly transparent in this regard, as long as someone has the time to pore over many pages of information.”

Information respondents felt was missing

Several respondents shared information they would like to see included:

- How property taxes are spent.
- What percentage of the total budget goes to salaries and benefits to City staff?
- Make more raw data available at budget launch.
- Impact of lack of revenue on City services and marginalized populations.

- Justification for decisions.
- How service spending varies across the City.

Quotes from participants:

"I'd like the City to make more raw data on the budget available right at the budget launch so media can do a deep dive and community members (ex. BetterBudgetTO, CivicTech) can create community-led solutions."

"Impact of lack of revenue on City services and marginalized populations - e.g. poorer TTC service, insufficient parkland, insufficient maintenance of TCHC."

"It is generally the 30,000 foot view. I would like to know, for example, how the police budget is broken specifically for my Ward, my neighbourhood. All detail should be open and transparent with no exception."

"We need detailed explanations for city expenditures and why we need to send this amount of money, is there an alternative, and how much is the final amount."

"Publish greater detail in the budgets, both operating and capital. Many costs are shown only at their high-level (i.e. a capital program reads as 'minor improvements' which is really a list of 20 or more small projects.)"

Information respondents found confusing

There were many comments about information that respondents found confusing. Suggested improvements include:

- Desire for a simpler breakdown of the budget cycle, and clearer definitions of each type of budget.
- Numeric data in consistent formats.
- Details of the overall budget difficult to find.
- Easier to read financial documents, which clearly explain sources of revenue, funding gaps and unfunded obligations.
- Issues with site navigation.
- Eliminate jargon.
- Budget notes too long.
- ROI [Return on Investment] and forecasting.

Quotes from participants:

"All numeric data should be released in consistent formats through open data portal. Financial reports should be structured to refer to specific s.m.a.r.t. goals."

"Details of the overall city budget are difficult to find and/or not available. There should be public access to the present budget, including any updates to it, as well as some form of metric or display indicating budget/spending progress to date."

"It is all too confusing. Too much verbiage & jargon. Confusing website. Overly complex."

"Navigating the site to go from one piece of information to another was very difficult."

"The way the website is divided is so internally facing--members of the public, for example, won't know what committee is discussing what budget-related issue."

Respondent suggestions and specific issues

There were some suggestions of other types of information that respondents would like to see. These include:

- "How many new ratepayers (new condos, office buildings) were added in the previous year? How did this impact the final mill rate?"
- "More breakdown about what specific projects bubble up to each category. I was shocked to see the Gardiner is almost 50% of our transportation services budget!"
- "There doesn't appear to be one specific message to take away. It would be easier for busy Torontonians to have a one-page summary from the City Manager, briefly discussing his view on the state (and projected future state) of Toronto's budget and finances."
- "Why are we not spending to help avert climate change?"

Respondent suggestions for the City's communications

Participants volunteered a wide range of suggestions for ways that the City can better reach Torontonians about the Long-Term Financial Plan consultation. Many expressed disappointment that they hadn't heard about this stage of the consultation until late, and some suggested they hadn't heard about it through official channels (i.e. they heard about it from their Councillor's Twitter rather than from City run accounts).

While there were many suggestions and some repetitions of the same ideas, we've included here a representative list of what Torontonians shared:

- Telephone calls.
- Advertise (in newspapers, on the TTC, in public libraries, at educational institutions).
- Email blasts from Councillors to constituents.
- Use Toronto Public Library contact info to reach out.
- City-run social media channels.

- Make surveys and online consultations available in different languages like Farsi and Hindi.
- Facebook ads.
- Circulate to community organizations.
- Engage businesses to get their employees to participate.
- Get all Councillors to do town hall meetings in their respective wards on the same day.
- Give people more time to organize their communities around the consultation.
- An app that displays City finances as though they were your finances (e.g. Mint money app).
- [Reddit.com/r/Toronto](https://www.reddit.com/r/Toronto).

Quotes from participants:

"Allowing for total self-selection through online and in-person meetings is inappropriate. The City should strive to balance the conversation about revenue tools by actively seeking out input from groups that are often absent from these conversations. This also means prioritizing the input from tenants, youth, recent immigrants, and persons on low-income, who tend to be underrepresented in our political process. This under-representation may be heightened in this case due to the technical nature of long-term financial planning."

"Buy Facebook ad space alerting the younger generation of Torontonians that the budget is under discussion and that this poll exists. Many younger Torontonians are eager to get involved, but if it isn't on Facebook then it doesn't exist. The ad space isn't expensive. If you aren't actively on that site, that shows that you truly don't care what people under 35 think about the city or you don't want them involved."

"Get councillors to all have to do a town hall in their respective wards, on the same day, and the city will advertise it, and it will be billed as people's chance to have their say in how their tax dollars are spent."

"I don't believe you since even my councillor got short notice. Mail out to everyone. You have our names from city elections records. How about you publicize it on the news, incentivize participation with a \$10 tax rebate? Make sure it's available in many languages. Why is this only in English? At minimum it should also be in French. "

"This survey needed more multiple choice! I am highly educated and informed and found it much too long and hard to finish."

"This was a really frustrating survey. It feels like the decisions have been made."

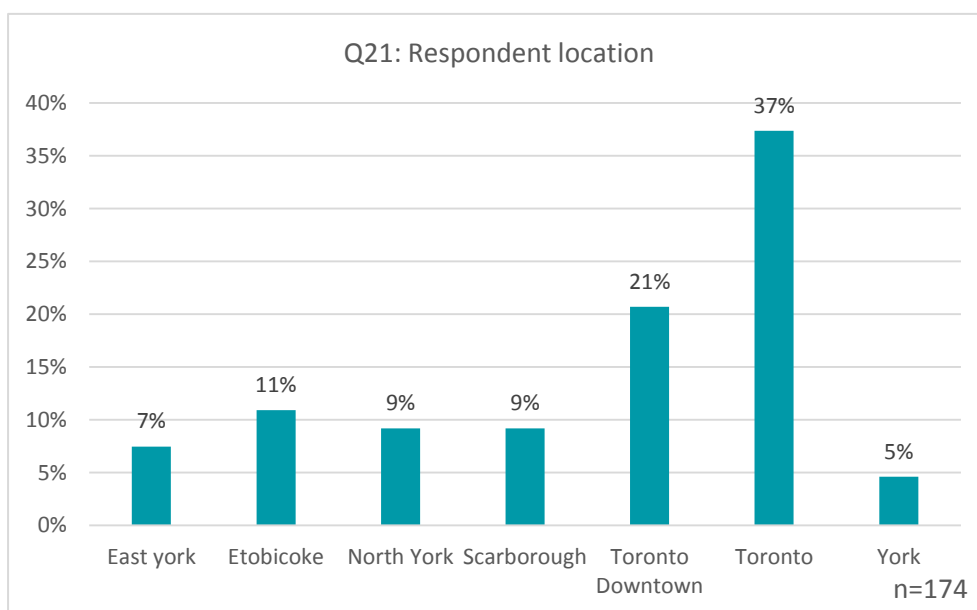
Demographics

The survey asked a series of optional demographic questions.

- Sixty per cent of respondents shared the first three digits of their area code. Categorized by the six former municipalities, the 58% of respondents (n=174) live in the former municipality of Toronto.
- Respondent ages (n=195)
 - 32% of respondents were between 15 and 34 years old.
 - 44% of respondents were between 35 and 54 years old.
 - 26% of respondents were 55+.
- Fifty-two per cent of respondents own homes and 45% rent (n=197).
- Respondent household income levels were nearly equally distributed, with the largest group being 22% of respondents with household incomes over 140,000 (n=194).
- Twenty-nine respondents are business owners.

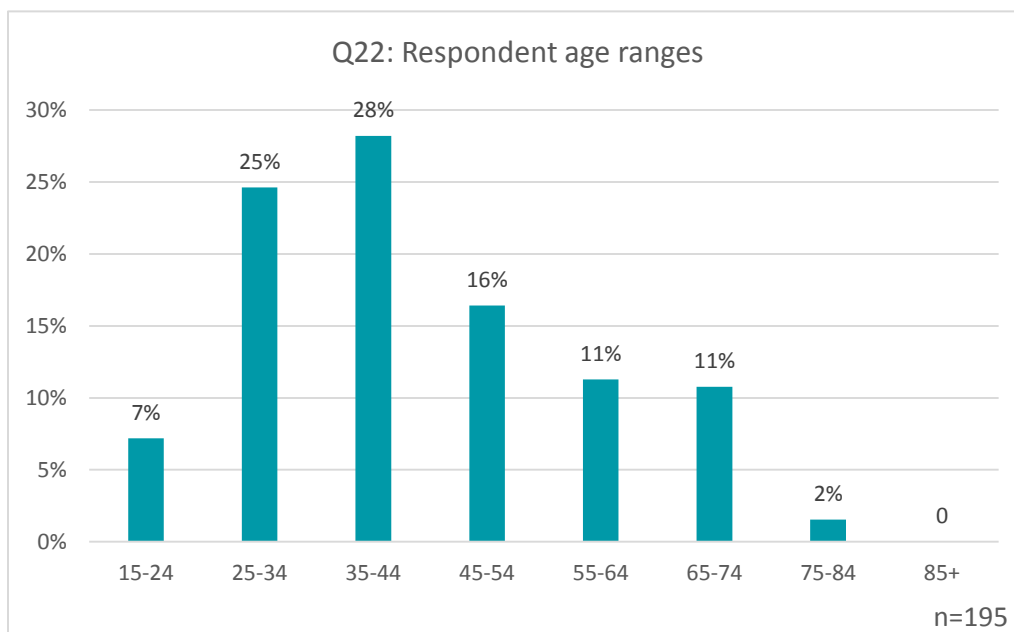
Respondent location

Sixty per cent of total respondents (n=290) chose to share the first 3 characters in their postal code. The below graph shows the geographic distribution of respondents across Toronto's former municipalities (Downtown is separated from the rest of the former City of Toronto and included as well) (n=174).



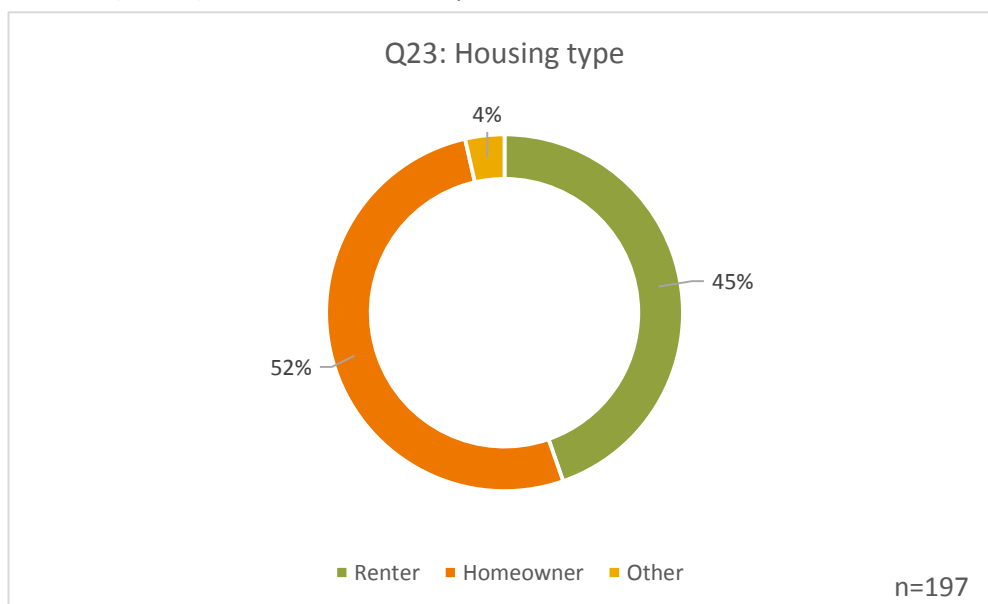
Ages

Of 290 respondents, 195 (67%) indicated their age. Respondent age ranges are given in the graph below. Thirty-two per cent of respondents (n=195) were between 15 and 34 years old. Forty-four per cent of respondents were between 35 and 54 years old.



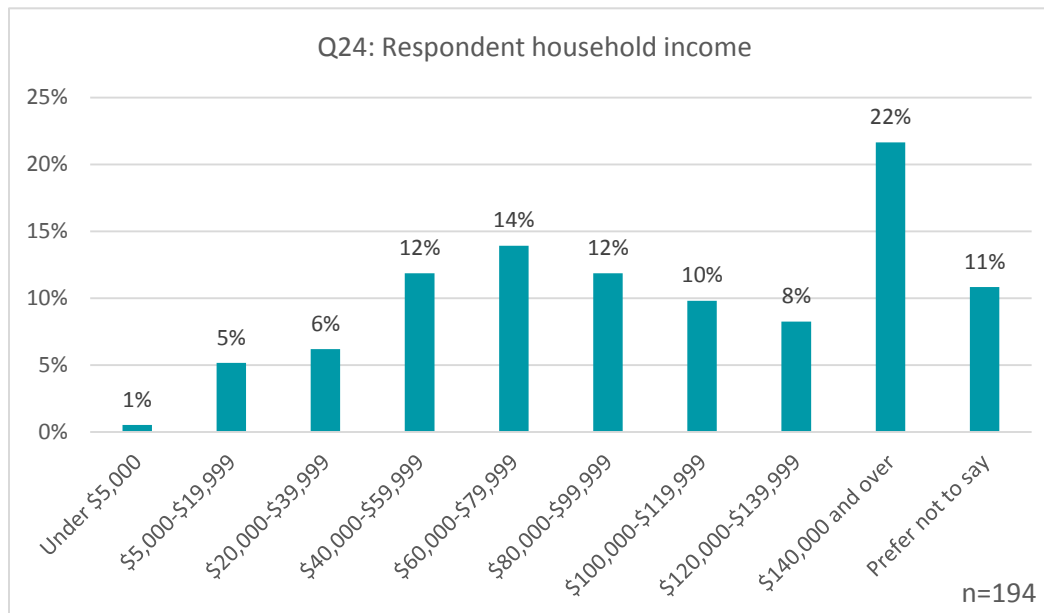
Housing type

Of respondents who indicated whether they own a home, rent or have some other type of housing (n=197) there was an even distribution between renters and homeowners (n=197). However a third of total respondents (n=290) did not answer this question.



Annual household income

Of 290 respondents, 194 indicated their household income or their preference not to share this information. Respondent household income distribution is shown in the graph below. There was a relatively even spread of respondents across income categories, with the largest group being 22% with household incomes over \$140,000 (n=194).



Respondent business owners

Twenty-nine respondents indicated that they own their own business. Fifteen of these businesses have only one employee (the respondent), while nine have under 10 employees.

One respondent owns a business with 300 employees, two respondents own businesses employing approximately 60 people, and one respondent owns a business of 20 employees.

One hundred sixty-eight respondents indicated that they do not own a business, and 68 respondents did not answer this question.

Appendix: November Survey - Investing in Toronto's Future: Public Consultation on the City's Long-Term Financial Plan



Investing in Toronto's Future: Public Consultation on the City's Long-Term Financial Plan

City Council has asked the City Manager to consult the public on Toronto's long-term financial plan. There will be three opportunities for you to provide input:

November 9-20, 2016	Online survey	<i>Tell us about your general views on the City's financial health and goals, your information needs, and the best ways to communicate and consult with you on this critical plan.</i>
December 2016	Online survey, public meetings and downloadable workbooks	<i>The December survey, webcast and in-person public meetings will explore the City's expenses, revenues and assets in greater detail, and ask for your specific advice on each.</i>
Spring 2017	Consultation continues	<i>In the Spring, the consultation will focus on the City's financial management, decision making and oversight of public services.</i>

In December, additional information and details about the City of Toronto's finances, including the 2017 preliminary budget, possible revenue options, asset management and expenditures will be presented to Budget Committee, Executive Committee and City Council.

The questions in this survey will help the City to understand the public's information needs, and your opinion of the City's ability to manage expenses and revenues and to achieve its goals.

The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete and includes questions on:

- The City's financial goals and priorities
- Expense management
- Revenue options
- Asset optimization
- Information and communication needs

To give your feedback by mail, please return this completed survey to Argyle PR, attention: Ashley O'Connor at 175 Bloor Street East, South Tower, Suite 1007, Toronto, ON, M4W 3R8.



Investing in Toronto's Future: Public Consultation on the City's Long-Term Financial Plan

The City's financial goals and priorities

1. What is your opinion of the City's financial health?

- ☐ Very healthy and stable
- ☐ Mostly healthy and stable
- ☐ Neither healthy/unhealthy nor stable/unstable
- ☐ Somewhat unhealthy and unstable
- ☐ Very unhealthy and unstable

2. Compared to 5 years ago, do you think the City's finances are:

- ☐ Much better
- ☐ Somewhat better
- ☐ The same
- ☐ Somewhat worse
- ☐ Much worse

3. Why do you feel that way?

The City has to constantly and carefully balance expenses and revenues, services for now and the future, and the needs of each neighbourhood and the City as a whole.

4. How would you would complete the following sentence?

I believe the City does a good job of managing its finances...

- ☐ All the time
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

5. Why do you feel that way?

6. What do you think about the City's current level of taxes, fees, and fines?

	Too high	Just right	Too low
Property taxes			
Rate supported programs (water, solid waste, parking)			
User fees (permits, recreation programs, TTC, etc.)			
Fines (bylaw infractions, illegal dumping, graffiti, etc.)			

7. Why do you feel that way?

City Priorities and Goals

Long-term planning is needed to ensure the City of Toronto runs well, spends public money wisely and delivers the programs and services residents need and want over the long term. The City has several strategies to help Toronto achieve its environmental, social and economic goals.

8. What do you think is the City's greatest strength that will help it achieve its aspirations and goals?

9. What do you think will be City's greatest challenge to achieving its aspirations and goals?

10. How would you complete the following sentence?

I would have greater confidence in the City's ability to manage its finances and achieve its goals if...

Revenues, Expenses and Assets

The City continues to find ways to manage expenses. There are several ways that governments try to reduce or contain expenses, including:

1. Reducing or eliminating services
2. Changing the way services are delivered
3. Delivering services with non-City staff (contracting out)
4. Cutting labour costs and benefits

11. What should the City consider when it looks at options for managing expenses?

Choose the **five most important questions** the City should consider when managing expenses. You can choose one question as your "Most Important", and then one under each of the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th columns for a total of five choices.

	Most Important	2 nd Choice	3 rd Choice	4 th Choice	5 th Choice
How much money will be saved?					
How long will the City benefit from the savings?					
How quickly will the City start to save money?					
Can the City effectively monitor and guarantee the quality of the work?					
Can services be flexible and react quickly to change?					
Should the City be the one to deliver this service or could someone else?					
Will it reduce service quality?					
Will it reduce the number of options or services to the public?					
How will it impact Torontonians most in need?					
How will businesses be affected?					
How will residents be affected?					
Will public service jobs (City employees) be impacted?					
Will the City meet its goal to create stable jobs with living wages for Torontonians?					
Does the decision support fair negotiations with unions and bargaining agents?					
Will the City be able to achieve its social, economic or environmental goals?					

Other question the City should consider:

12. Please tell us about any other ways you believe the City could cut costs or manage expenses.

Revenues

The City will present a detailed economic and social analysis on a range of possible revenue options to City Council in December. At that time a second survey will be launched and we will be asking for your detailed feedback on each revenue option.

We will be providing the following information on **revenue generation**:

- How much money it would raise each year.
- How long it would take before the City would fully implement and start to collect money.
- Is it a stable source of money, with the City getting the same amount each year and not influenced by economic cycles.
- Who would benefit most from the revenue option.
- Who would be negatively affected by the option.
- Who is best able to bear the tax increase.
- Economic and social impact on residents.
- Economic and social impact on businesses.

We will be providing the following information on **legislation and administration** issues:

- Is it currently being used by the City.
- Is it allowed under current laws.
- Would it require significant change in provincial or federal laws.
- Could the City start collecting money right away.
- Would the City need to put new administrative systems into place.
- Would the cost to collect the revenue still make it worthwhile.
- If implemented, will it conflict with the City's social and environmental goals.

13. Please let us know what information would help you prepare for your feedback on each option.

Is there anything we have missed? What other information will be helpful to you?

City Assets

City assets support service delivery. They include transit, roads, bridges, public buildings such as libraries, community centres and fire stations, water and sewer facilities, parks and other major infrastructure.

The City must consider the benefits, costs and consequences to Torontonians before deciding which assets to buy, maintain or sell.

14. What would you like the City consider as part of its decisions to buy, maintain or sell its assets?

City Council has directed staff to explore which assets with commercial potential could be sold in part or totally to the private sector to generate revenue.

These assets include selling all or part of major land holdings (Real Estate Review), Toronto Hydro Corporation or the Toronto Parking Authority.

15. What are your opinions about this?

Information and Communication

16. If you could ask City staff one question about the City's finances, what would it be?

17. What additional information (graphs, factsheets, data etc.) would help you to prepare to participate in the next phase of this consultation?

18. How do you currently find out about City programs, services and finances?

19. Looking over the City's budget and financial information, what information was helpful, missing, confusing, something you would like to see more of, or you would share with others?

20. We want to encourage everyone to participate in this consultation. Do you have any suggestions for ways the City can reach out to Torontonians about this important issue?

A little information about you - all questions are voluntary

21. First three characters of your postal code: _____

22. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 15
- ☐ 15-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65-74
- ☐ 75-84
- ☐ 85+

23. Housing type - please indicate if you rent or if you own your home, and an estimate of your mortgage or rent costs each month.

- ☐ Homeowner \$ _____
- ☐ Renter \$ _____
- ☐ Other: please specify _____ \$ _____
- ☐ I don't live in the City of Toronto

24. What is your annual household income before taxes?

- ☐ Under \$5,000
- ☐ \$5,000 - \$19,000
- ☐ \$20,000 - \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 - \$59,999
- ☐ \$60,000 - \$79,999
- ☐ \$80,000 - \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 - \$119,999
- ☐ \$120,000 - \$139,999
- ☐ \$140,000 and over
- ☐ Prefer not to say

25. Do you own a business in Toronto?

- ☐ Yes – please indicate how many employees: _____
- ☐ No

Join a Public Consultation Meeting

Dec 5 @ 6 p.m.
 Etobicoke Olympium
 590 Rathburn Road, Etobicoke

Dec 6 @ 6 p.m.
 Chinese Cultural Centre
 5183 Sheppard Avenue East, Scarborough

Dec 7 @ 6 p.m.

Mitchell Field Community Centre
 89 Church Avenue, North York

Dec 8 @ 6 p.m.
 Toronto Reference Library
 789 Yonge Street, Toronto

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