

To: Finance Services Committee

From: Stephanie Sinnott Commissioner, Finance Services

Report Number: FIN-22-42

Date of Report: April 13, 2022

Date of Meeting: April 19, 2022

Subject: Public Engagement Initiatives - 2023 Budget

Ward: All

File: 03-05

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline and receive approval on the public engagement activities for the 2023 City Budget.

Additionally, this report responds to FIN-21-87 direction as follows:

“The City of Oshawa investigate adopting the practice of other municipalities that have a consultative and survey process in the spring to receive input on the setting of guidelines for following year’s budget.”

Attachment 1 is an example of the Tax Receipt online tool.

Attachment 2 and 3 are examples of the Balancing Act online tool.

2.0 Recommendation

That the Finance Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That public engagement for the 2023 City Budget, as proposed in Report FIN-22-42 “Public Engagement Initiatives – 2023 Budget”, dated April 13, 2022, be approved in principle; and
2. That the matter related to Public Consultation and Survey Process on the Finance Committee Outstanding Items list be considered complete and the item removed.

3.0 Executive Summary

Not applicable.

4.0 Input From Other Sources

The following sources were consulted during the preparation of this report:

- Corporate Leadership Team
- Corporate Communications

5.0 Analysis

It is important that community members participate in the annual budget process as it assists municipalities in making decisions that are more informed and reflective of public priorities.

City staff recommend that the City of Oshawa introduce two new budget-focused online engagement tools, as well as reintroduce the Budget Telephone Open House (formerly referred to as the Telephone Town Hall) and continue to use Connect Oshawa for the 2023 City Budget engagement process.

5.1 Background

In past budget cycles, the City of Oshawa has hosted virtual or telephone-based open houses and provided the opportunity for residents and property owners to submit budget input and questions on Connect Oshawa. Participation and engagement in these phone- and online-based tools have exceeded any in-person engagement opportunity the City has offered as an aspect of budget engagement.

Online public engagement is a government best practice, as indicated by increased use by municipalities and provinces/states worldwide. Projects benefit from online public engagement because respondents can participate when and where it is convenient for them, resulting in an improved understanding of the project and an increase in both reach and informed responses.

An investigation of municipal budget public engagement practices in Ontario indicated that the majority of respondents launch public engagement in the fall and most are using an interactive online budget tool. The most common forms of interactive online budget public engagement were feedback forms, simulation-based tools, question & answer threads, polls and virtual town halls.

Simulation-based tools are becoming increasingly popular as they allow respondents to provide insightful feedback while simultaneously learning about the roles and functions of government and experiencing the challenges associated with municipal budgeting. The City of Barrie, City of Brantford, City of Burlington, Town of Innisfil, City of Mississauga, Town of Whitby and the City of Windsor all used simulation-based tools as part of a recent municipal budget cycle. In these instances, the municipalities asked residents to indicate how they would allocate budget dollars and/or explain their budget priorities.

5.2 2023 Public Engagement and Timing

City staff recommend a comprehensive engagement plan featuring four tools that will educate respondents and gather resident and property owner budget priorities: Tax Receipt, Balancing Act - a simulation-based tool, Budget Telephone Open House and Connect Oshawa. These tools will be available commencing in late spring of 2022 for the 2023 budget.

5.2.1 Tax Receipt

The first of two new online tools, Tax Receipt is a knowledge-sharing tool that informs and educates residents and property owners as to what their tax dollars buy in a familiar format – a receipt. Residents and property owners input data to generate a customized breakdown of how much City programs and services cost them individually. Attachment 1 is an example of the Tax Receipt online tool. Line items could also be included for the Region of Durham and Province of Ontario (Education).

This knowledge-sharing tool will educate residents and property owners as to:

- how much City services cost them individually (value for dollar);
- how their property taxes are divided (City / Region / Province for Education); and,
- the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government.

This tool will be available year-round, and updated to reflect the most recent City Budget data; for instance:

- the tool will launch late spring/summer with the approved 2022 City Budget information;
- be updated after the proposed 2023 City Budget has been presented to Council; and,
- updated once more to reflect the approved 2023 City Budget.

5.2.2 Balancing Act

Balancing Act, the second new online tool, is a simulation-based tool that will allow residents and property owners to share their City Budget priorities by attempting to balance “their” City budget. Participants will be able to increase and/or decrease spending in “their” City programs and services and apply the same adjustments to sources of revenue. Attachment 2 and 3 are examples of the Balancing Act online tool. Starting values will be based on the Council approved 2022 City Budget.

This simulation-based exercise will provide residents and property owners the opportunity to share their 2023 Budget priorities, as well as educate them on:

- challenges associated with addressing the demand for services while considering financial and other resource constraints;
- how their property taxes are allocated between the City, Region of Durham and the Province of Ontario (for Education purposes); and,
- educate participants on City Services.

This tool will be available for public engagement for a four-week period in fall 2022.

5.2.3 Budget Telephone Open House

The Budget Telephone Open House will invite Oshawa residents and property owners to join City staff on the phone to discuss the proposed 2023 City Budget. On the day of the Budget Telephone Open House, 40,000 Oshawa households and those that provided mobile numbers will receive a call inviting them to participate in a 60-minute conversation with City staff. Communications will have taken place to advise members of the public that they will be receiving a call and to encourage their participation in the Budget Telephone Open House.

Finance Services will begin the event with a brief overview of the proposed 2023 City Budget and Budget process and then respond to questions submitted prior to and during the Open House. Similar to the Region of Durham, the C.A.O. and Commissioners will participate and answer questions specific to their respective departments.

This information-sharing tool will educate residents and property owners on:

- the 2023 Budget process;
- how their property taxes are allocated between the City, Region of Durham and the Province of Ontario (for Education purposes);
- the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government; and,
- City programs and services.

The Open House will also provide residents and property owners the opportunity to ask questions about the proposed 2023 City Budget to the C.A.O. and Commissioners directly.

The Budget Telephone Open House will occur after the proposed 2023 City Budget has been presented to Council, but before Council deliberations begin.

A recording of the Budget Telephone Open House will be available on the City's website and YouTube channel.

5.2.4 Connect Oshawa

In addition to hosting web links to both the Tax Receipt and Balancing Act tools, Connect Oshawa will offer the Question & Answer tool, which allows residents and property owners to ask questions and receive responses from City staff about the 2023 Budget process and proposed 2023 City Budget.

This information-sharing tool will educate residents and property owners about:

- the 2023 Budget process;
- how their property taxes are allocated between the City, Region of Durham and the Province of Ontario (for Education purposes);
- the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government; and,
- City programs and services.

The Question & Answer tool will be available on Connect Oshawa year-round, answering questions about the 2022 City Budget, and when appropriate the proposed 2023 City Budget and approved 2023 City Budget, as well as acting as a support for the Tax Receipt and Balancing Act tools.

5.3 Promotion

Furthermore, to continue public education and input on the 2023 City Budget, City staff recommend the following communication items:

- City website – budget information prominently featured on www.oshawa.ca
- Connect Oshawa – budget engagement opportunities featured prominently on www.connectoshawa.ca
- Social media – a continued social media presence regarding budget input during the consultation period and educational messages year-round
- Advertising and promotions – newspaper advertisements and social media ads as well as boulevard signs (one in each ward) and outdoor signs at City facilities to promote budget engagement opportunities
- Public notices – budget information shared with local media and emailed to website newsfeed subscribers through the City’s news and alerts (www.oshawa.ca/subscribe)
- Enewsletters – opportunities for engagement on the budget emailed to online subscribers and shared with community partners

6.0 Financial Implications

If approved as recommended, the estimated cost for public engagement and promotion of the 2023 City Budget is not expected to exceed \$25,000 including H.S.T.:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| • Balancing Act and Tax Receipt bundle: | \$9,000 |
| • Budget Telephone Open House + Transcription: | \$7,799 |
| • Promotion: | \$7,000 |

Costs will be funded from Finance Services and Corporate Communications 2022 operating budgets.

7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

The recommendation advances the Oshawa Strategic Plan goal of Accountable Leadership, specifically the theme of Deliberate Community Engagement.



Stephanie Sinnott, Commissioner,
Finance Services

Here's your unofficial taxpayer receipt based on the information you entered.

Invite your friends and family to get their receipt:



YOUR CITY OF CORONA, CA (FISCAL YEAR 2022) TAX RECEIPT

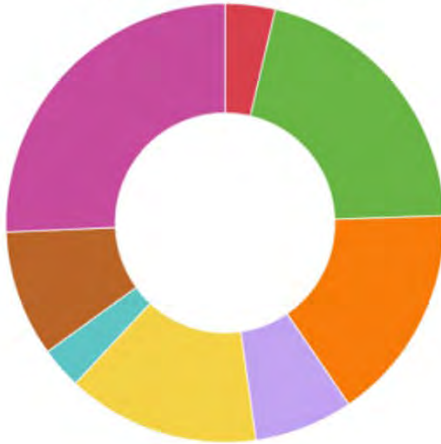
City Manager's Office	\$216.30
Communications ⓘ	\$29.36
City Manager's Office ⓘ	\$60.26
City Clerk ⓘ	\$26.12
Economic Development ⓘ	\$41.21
Community Services	\$496.26
Events and Programs ⓘ	\$82.15
Facilities and Project Management ⓘ	\$41.43
Library and Recreation Services Administration ⓘ	\$64.03
Library Services ⓘ	\$39.21
Programming and Outreach ⓘ	\$25.80
Parks and Trees Maintenance ⓘ	\$243.64
Community Development	\$228.76
Building Inspection ⓘ	\$45.40
Planning Administration ⓘ	\$18.15
Land Use Planning & Zoning ⓘ	\$42.57
Code Compliance ⓘ	\$31.60
Plan Check ⓘ	\$81.24
Property Management ⓘ	\$9.80
Elected Officials	\$6.38
City Council ⓘ	\$5.74
City Treasurer ⓘ	\$0.63
Finance	\$182.29
Finance Administration ⓘ	\$182.29
Fire Department	\$1,237.35
Emergency Medical Services ⓘ	\$32.73
Fire Facility Maintenance ⓘ	\$3.01
Emergency Services ⓘ	\$8.22

2022 Burlington Budget Simulation

You are in deficit.

-\$43,809

Where the Money Goes



Revenue

Corporate Revenues: \$254.0m

Spending

A City that Grows: \$9.4m

+	↺	Building Code Permits and Inspection: \$3.3m	ⓘ	\$3.2m
-	↻			\$96,574
				\$3.3m
+	↺	Community Design and Development Review: \$4.6m ⓘ	ⓘ	\$4.7m
-	↻			-\$94,525
				\$4.6m
+	↺	Business Economic Development Corporation: \$1.4m ⓘ	ⓘ	\$1.4m
-	↻			\$41,760
				\$1.4m

A City that Moves: \$52.8m

A Healthier and Greener City: \$40.6m

An Engaging City: \$18.5m

A Safe City: \$36.1m

Good Governance: \$7.8m

An Enabling Services: \$23.7m

Corporate Expenditures: \$65.2m

Submit

Reset all to start over

Save your progress and share with others

The City of Burlington is pleased to present the opportunity for you to provide feedback about the budget.

Show us how you would adjust the budget with our new, interactive tool. You can increase or decrease funding for different City Services to demonstrate where changes in investments should be made. For example, if you reduce spending in one area, think about where else those dollars could be spent.

The numbers presented are for demonstration and education purposes only and reflect the 2020 Approved Budget. Revenue and spending should be as close to balanced as possible.

For more information about the City of Burlington's budget process, please visit:

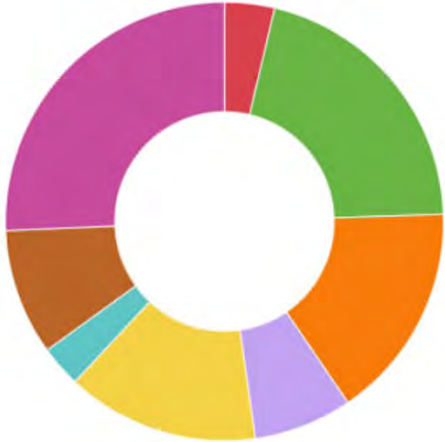
www.burlington.ca/budget

2022 Burlington Budget Simulation

You have a surplus.

\$258,523

Where the Money Goes



Spending

A City that Grows: \$9.4m	>
A City that Moves: \$52.8m	>
A Healthier and Greener City: \$40.6m	>
An Engaging City: \$18.5m	>
A Safe City: \$36.1m	>
Good Governance: \$7.8m	>
An Enabling Services: \$23.7m	>
Corporate Expenditures: \$65.2m	>

Revenue

Corporate Revenues: \$254.3m		
Taxes: \$181.2m	<i>+</i> \$179.4m <i>-</i> \$1.8m <i>+</i> \$181.2m	<i>+</i> \$179.4m <i>-</i> \$1.8m <i>+</i> \$181.2m
User Fees: \$29.5m	<i>+</i> \$30.1m <i>-</i> \$601,161 <i>+</i> \$29.5m	<i>+</i> \$30.1m <i>-</i> \$601,161 <i>+</i> \$29.5m
Other Revenues & Recoveries: \$43.6m	<i>+</i> \$44.5m <i>-</i> \$890,604 <i>+</i> \$43.6m	<i>+</i> \$44.5m <i>-</i> \$890,604 <i>+</i> \$43.6m

Submit

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