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Date	September 11, 2023
To	Finance Committee – September 20, 2023
From	Andy Grozelle, CAO
Report No.	FIN 23-23
Report Title	2024 Budget Survey

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## Recommendation

**That Report FIN 23-23, respecting the 2024 Budget Survey, be received as information.**

## Executive Summary

The 2024 Budget Survey represents the third year the Town has sought public input upon the upcoming budget. The Town received 325 responses to this survey which represents the highest response levels to date. Full comments are included in the attachment.

## Background

Council initiated the annual budget survey in 2021 as a method of gaining public input upon upcoming budgets. The annual exercise has had positive impacts beyond budgetary input. Councils' willingness to engage and residents in a responsive manner has built social capital and trust following a difficult period for the community. Continuing to work with residents and bring forward items in a responsive manner is important to building upon the positive relationship with Aylmer residents.

## **Analysis**

The level of satisfaction with Town Services grew over the last year. With 6% more respondents indicating services improved. There was a 7% decline in residents responding that services got worse over the last year and the amount of respondents indicating services got significantly worse was reduced to 1.85% from 3.55%.

A specific focus of the 2024 Budget was to gain insights into Parks and Recreation services. This focus came directly out of the results of the 2023 Budget Survey. The additional insight into Parks and Recreation is valuable in providing additional context to Aylmer's Parks and Recreation Master Plan exercise.

The 2024 Budget Survey results highlight the continued need to focus upon Parks and Recreation. The budget survey highlights trails, green spaces, and playgrounds as areas of high importance for residents. Following Council's adoption of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan individual projects and tasks will be developed to improve services to residents.

The comments upon the survey provide some interesting insights. A significant number highlighting affordability as a significant issue for residents. Taxation affordability will continue to be a challenge in 2024 for most Ontario municipalities. The impacts of inflation are still being felt upon municipal services. Interest rate hikes in 2023 created some uncertainty in the housing market that potentially resulted in less new builds starting in the spring of 2023 than could have occurred otherwise.

## **Conclusion**

The 2024 Budget Survey provides valuable insights into the perspectives of residents. It continues to serve as a useful tool for the informing the Town of areas that require planning and response.

## **Attachments**

Attachment A – 2024 Budget Survey Results

Respectfully,

Andy Grozelle  
Chief Administrative Officer