



- 7.1 2024-2028 Financial Plan – Engagement Phase #2 Results
Community priorities and feedback from second phase of public engagement.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the staff report dated April 2, 2024, titled “2024-2028 Financial Plan – Engagement Phase #2 Results” be forwarded to the next Regular Council Meeting.

TO: His Worship Mayor Dan Ruimy
and Members of Council
FROM: Chief Administrative Officer

MEETING DATE: April 2, 2024
FILE NO: 01-0620-02
MEETING: CoW

SUBJECT: 2024-2028 Financial Plan – Engagement Phase #2 Results

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The 2024-2028 business planning process, initiated in December 2023, sought community input through two phases of public engagement. The initial phase focused on setting priorities for the upcoming budget and culminated in a draft financial plan. The second phase of engagement, which lasted from February 16 to March 22, sought the community's input on the draft budget and resulted in 174 participants providing feedback. Key concerns identified included affordability, support for emergency services, increased infrastructure and public safety investments, and calls for greater arts, culture, and commercial tax base support. Feedback was divided among support for the budget, opposition based on tax increases, and specific endorsements of service enhancements without supporting the resultant tax increases.

Analysis of the feedback highlighted a general preference for investments in arts, culture, and infrastructure, with affordability being a significant concern among those opposed to the budget. This engagement process sets the stage for the Council's final decision on adopting the 2024-2028 Financial Plan and Tax Rate Bylaw at the April 9, 2024 meeting, reflecting community priorities and feedback.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information

DISCUSSION:

a) Background Context:

The 2024-2028 business planning process was initiated with Council in December 2023. Since that time, the public participated in an engagement campaign to set the priorities for the 2024 budget (Financial Plan), Council considered budget proposals, and staff were given direction on projects and service enhancements to include in the Financial Plan.

A second engagement period was held from February 16 through March 22, asking the public for feedback on the draft budget. The public was provided with a budget highlights document, Attachment A, which summarizes key projects and new services included in the budget, the resulting property tax increase, and impact to the average home to inform their commentary. Aside from demographic questions, only one question was asked in the survey: Please share your comments and feedback on the City's 2024 draft budget.

Engagement Results

The second round of community engagement saw a decrease in public participation from the first, yet participation remained strong relative to budget engagements in prior years. Over the course of the engagement period, 174 respondents submitted the survey with only one response coming in hardcopy and the rest by way of the City's Engage Maple Ridge platform.

Public comments were themed into five categories:

- In support of draft budget
- Not in support
- In support of the service enhancements, but not the tax increase
- General comments
- Multiple comments by the same respondent or blank submissions

Table 1 breaks down responses by each of the categories.

Category	# of Responses
In support of draft budget	17
Not in support	75
In support of the service enhancements, but not the tax increase	4
General comments	69
Multiple comments by same respondent or blank	9
Total	174

Table 1 - Public Engagement Feedback

Engagement Analysis

To gain a better understanding of the rationale behind the responses, additional analysis was undertaken to categorize the commentary and extract themes. Six additional themes were identified in the analysis:

- Affordability
- Support for Fire and Police services
- Increase Infrastructure
- Increase Public Safety
- Increase Arts & Culture funding
- Increase Business/Commercial tax base

Generally, participants who are not in-support of the budget cite affordability (31 comments), a desire for an increase in infrastructure (6 comments), transportation improvements specifically, or public safety supports (2 comments) or to shift to a stronger commercial tax base (2 comments) in their feedback.

Those in support of the budget note that increases in arts and culture funding and strengthening municipal infrastructure (3 comments respectively) are preferred investments. Additionally, general support for Fire and RCMP services, strengthening the commercial tax base and challenges to affordability are also noted (1 comment respectively).

Respondents who support the service enhancements but not the overall tax increase identified that the investment in infrastructure projects, public safety and efforts to shift the commercial tax base as being important investments. One comment was received for each category.

Overall, a large portion of feedback was general commentary. The category itself is heavily represented, 47 of 65 total comments, by responses seeking an increase to funding for arts and culture programs. Specifically, for funding related to Arts Centre Theatre (ACT) operations. During the last week of budget engagement, the ACT distributed a request for the public to voice their support for arts funding through the City budget engagement process. As a result of the call to action, a significant influx of commentary was received.

b) Business Plan/Financial Implications:

The second phase of engagement is the final step prior to the Council's decision on adopting the 2024-2028 Financial Plan. Council will receive the Financial Plan for consideration at the Regular Council meeting of April 9, 2024. Also being considered at the meeting will be the 2024 Tax Rate Bylaw that will set this year's tax rate, which is a direct result of the funding approved in the Financial Plan.

CONCLUSION:

The community has participated in a second phase of public engagement pertaining to the 2024-2028 Business Plan, and the resulting information is being presented to Council. Subsequent steps in the Business Planning process will include adoption of the Financial Plan and Tax Rate bylaws.


Prepared by:

Dan Olivieri
Manager of Corporate Planning & Consultation


Approved by:

Zvi Lifshiz
Director of Strategic Development, Communications
and Public Engagement

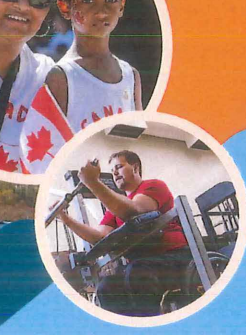

Concurrence:

Scott Hartman
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

(A) 2024 Budget Highlights

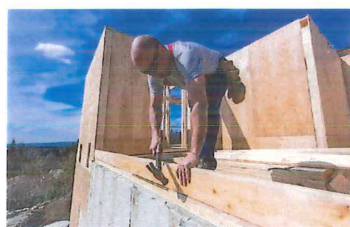
2024 Budget Highlights



KEY BUDGET PRIORITIES



Public Safety



Housing



Capital Projects



Economic Development

Message from Council

Maple Ridge's 2024 draft budget addresses the rising service demand in our fast-growing community with significant investments to enhance public safety, create more housing options, diversify our local economy, and meet other needs. Council is taking bold steps to deliver what our community needs to move forward.

At the same time, we recognize these are challenging financial times and have taken steps to limit the impact on taxpayers. We feel the draft budget achieves the right balance between affordability and addressing our critical priorities. We invite our residents to learn more and share their thoughts until March 22 by visiting engage.mapleridge.ca/budget2024.



**Learn more and
give feedback
Feb. 16-March 22**

From left: Councillor Onyeka Dozie, Councillor Sunny Schiller, Councillor Judy Dueck, Mayor Dan Ruimy, Councillor Jenny Tan, Councillor Ahmed Yousef, Councillor Korleen Carreras

[ENGAGE.MAPLERIDGE.CA/BUDGET2024](https://engage.mapleridge.ca/budget2024)



2024 Operating Budget

\$160 M

The City's \$160-million operating budget for 2024 is framed around maintaining core municipal services and delivering on community priorities and needs reflected in the 2023-2026 Council Strategic Plan and the budget public engagement in January.

While the City is facing a variety of costs beyond its control in 2024, it also took steps to reduce the impact on taxpayers, including deferring projects, spreading out some costs over multiple years, and actively seeking grant funding.

Enhancement Highlights

Learn more at mapleridge.ca/budget2024.

FUNDING SOURCES:

Taxes

Grants / Reserves

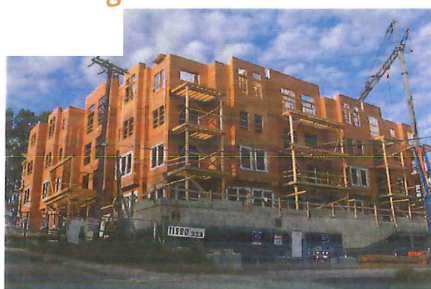
Public Safety



To enhance public safety and meet growing demand:

- 16 front-line firefighters
- 12 RCMP officers
- Victim Services Case Worker
- Increased downtown overnight security

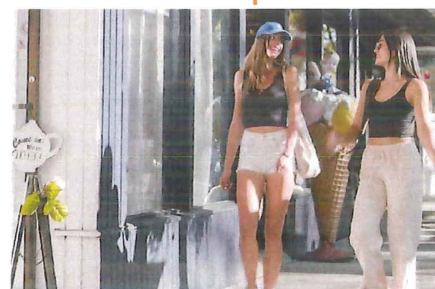
Housing



To address requirements of provincial housing legislation:

- 4 staff to support housing creation
- Update Official Community Plan
- Update Zoning Bylaw
- Update Development Cost Charges
- Update Density Bonus Program
- Create pre-approved site plans

Economic Development



To support employment, tourism and business growth:

- Business attraction/retention plan
- Event attraction plan
- Investment attraction plan
- Local labour market analysis
- Albion Industrial land analysis
- Create employment area plan

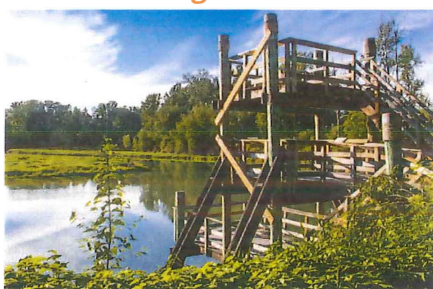
Liveability



To enhance community engagement and liveability:

- Toolkit to increase public engagement
- Participatory budget exercise
- Mobile stage for City's 150th birthday
- Temporary fleet coordinator

Climate Change



To address the impacts of climate change on services and residents:

- Countertop food waste pilot
- McKenney Creek management plan
- Inventory/assessment of biodiversity
- Update green infrastructure standards

City Assets and Services



To protect City assets and enhance citizen services and governance:

- Additional cybersecurity funding
- Customer experience strategy
- Intergovernmental relations strategy
- Archeological management plan
- Continuous improvement plan

Tax Impact

2024 Proposed Property Tax Impact for Average Home Assessed at \$985,700

	2023	\$ Change	% Change	2024
TOTAL MUNICIPAL TAXES*	\$ 2,303.48	\$149.73	6.50%	\$2,453.21

* 6.50% increase includes:

3.95%: Existing services and cost increases
0.40%: City infrastructure replacement

1.35%: Protective services (Fire, Police)
0.80%: Other improvements and priorities

2024 Utility User Fees

	2023	\$ Change	% Change	2024
Recycling	\$ 83.10	\$2.29	2.76%	\$85.39
Water	752.95	33.90	4.50%	786.85
Sewer	537.05	42.65	7.94%	579.70
TOTAL UTILITIES	\$1,373.10	\$78.84	5.74%	\$1,451.94

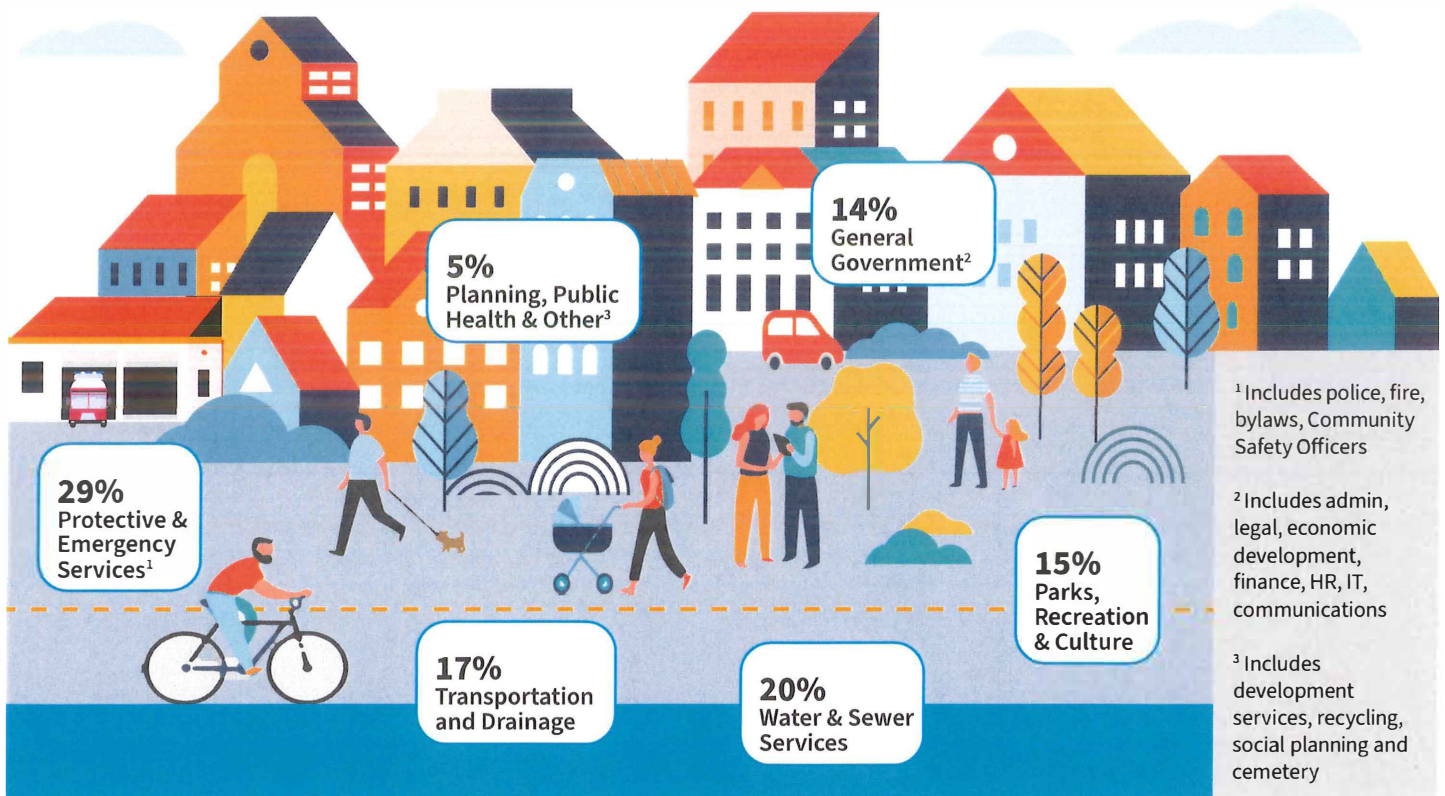
How Do We Compare?*

Coquitlam	8.92%
Pitt Meadows	7.79%
New Westminster	7.70%
Vancouver	7.50%
Langley (Town.)	6.88%
MAPLE RIDGE	6.50%
Mission	6.19%
Port Coquitlam	5.58%

* Based on reported
2024 increases

How Tax Dollars Are Invested

Taxes help pay for a wide variety of civic services. This example is based on the approved 2023 budget.



2024 Capital Budget

\$112 M

The approved 2024–2028 capital plan will invest \$112 million in 2024 in the buildings, roads, equipment and other assets that are critical to the delivery of services in Maple Ridge.

Capital projects for 2024 are funded through development fees, reserve accounts and grants, including the provincial Growing Communities Grant.

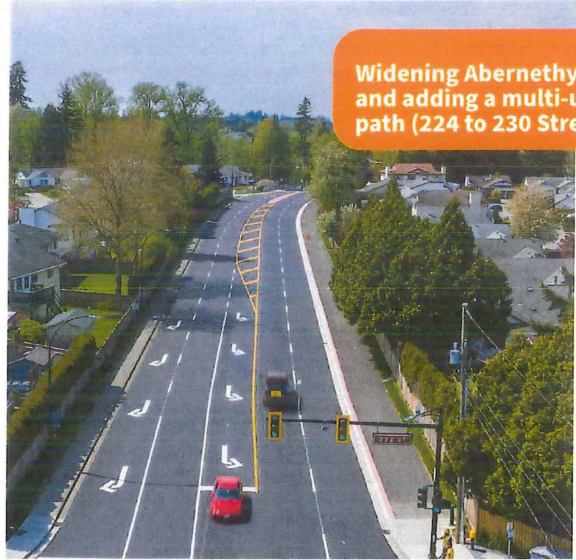
Capital Program Highlights

Learn more at mapleridge.ca/budget2024.

Continue the process to plan, design and deliver a new recreation facility



Widening Abernethy Way and adding a multi-use path (224 to 230 Street)



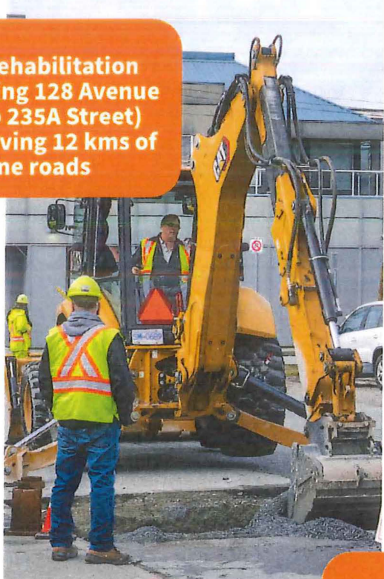
Upgrades to Port Haney Waterfront Park and Maple Ridge Park



Adding a multi-use path on Thorne Avenue



Road rehabilitation including 128 Avenue (232 to 235A Street) and paving 12 kms of two-lane roads



Improving technology to enhance efficiency, cybersecurity and service-delivery



Planning a second access to Silver Valley, a 240 Street bridge and multi-use path

Increasing capacity of Lower Hammond Drainage Pump Station to improve flood protection

