

Budget 2026 Public Engagement

What We
Heard
Report

September 2025



Contents

About the Project	3
Key Insights.....	4
What We Asked.....	5
About this Engagement	6
What We Did	6
Who We Heard From	7
What We Heard	9
Next Steps	20

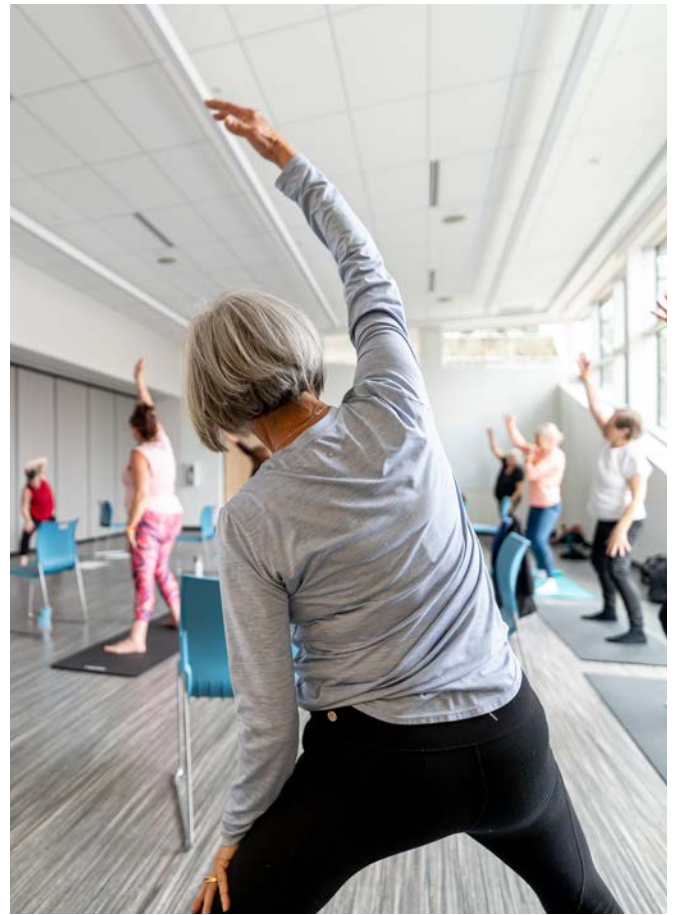
About the Project

Each year, the City of Coquitlam prepares a Five-Year Financial Plan and Budget, as required by the [Community Charter](#). This plan helps manage the City's finances in a responsible way, ensuring we align with the community's needs. It also outlines how money will be spent on key priorities and provides clear direction for City staff to deliver municipal services to residents.

Community input is a vital part of Coquitlam's budget planning process. It helps to:

- Align the budget with the community's current needs and priorities
- Educate residents on how budgets are developed and tax dollars are spent
- Balance individual needs with those of a growing community, even during economic uncertainty

From August 29 to September 14, 2025, the City engaged the public in an online survey to inform the 2026 budget. The goals of the engagement are two-fold: to educate residents about the City's budget planning process and to seek input from the community on how the City might make budget choices.



New This Year

In recognition of the changing landscape of City budgeting and navigating the effects of rising costs, the standard question wording from previous budget surveys was updated this year to give participants more clarity. The new questions and answers were aimed to help communicate that a funding increase is required to maintain existing service levels.



Key Insights

On average across all service areas, participants equally prioritized maintaining funding levels and maintaining service levels.

When averaged across all service levels, most participants supported either maintaining funding by moderately cutting services (37%) or increasing funding to maintain services at current levels (37%). Smaller groups preferred reducing funding by significantly cutting services (12%) or increasing funding to enhance or expand services (12%). Responses on individual service areas tended to vary.

Core and essential services were a priority.

Participants spoke to reducing spending by prioritizing core services and essentials over projects perceived as “nice-to-have”. Overall, Fire and Rescue, Police (RCMP), Roads and Transportation, and Water, Sewer and Drainage were the service areas where most participants wanted to invest to maintain or increase service levels. This sentiment was expressed through service area feedback in both closed and open-ended responses. More detail is available on page 10.

Participants highlighted the importance of investing in community infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing community.

Participants (31% of those who commented / 13% of total participants) mentioned or called for the importance of investing in infrastructure. Many highlighted the need to keep up with growth, especially given the pressures from provincial housing legislation to add more housing. Feedback highlighted roads, transit and utilities as critical to prevent bottlenecks, improve safety and ensure livability.

Affordability was a key concern for residents.

Affordability pressures were a recurring theme in the open-ended feedback. A notable segment (25% of those who commented / 11% of total participants) expressed concern about the rising costs of living.

Participants voiced demand for quality services and amenities that keep pace with growth.

Participants (28% of those who commented / 12% of total) focused on public services in open-ended feedback. As the community grows, participants emphasized the importance of maintaining (and where possible, enhancing) services to ensure a growing number of people have access without compromising quality standards.

There was concern about spending efficiency.

In the open-ended feedback, some participants (38% of those who commented / 17% of total participants) mentioned wanting the City to tighten their belt and ensure tax dollars are spent efficiently.

Some residents indicated a desire for long-term, strategic planning.

Several respondents urged the City to take a long-term, holistic lens rather than focus narrowly on short-term cost savings. In the open-ended feedback, participants (24% of those who commented / 10% of total participants) called for forward-looking budget decisions that consider growth projections, climate resilience and future generations. However, opinions were divided between those wanting to grow or maintain investments in City services and infrastructure versus those seeking greater restraint.

What We Asked

Survey participants were asked for feedback on how to balance spending and provision of services for each specific City service area:

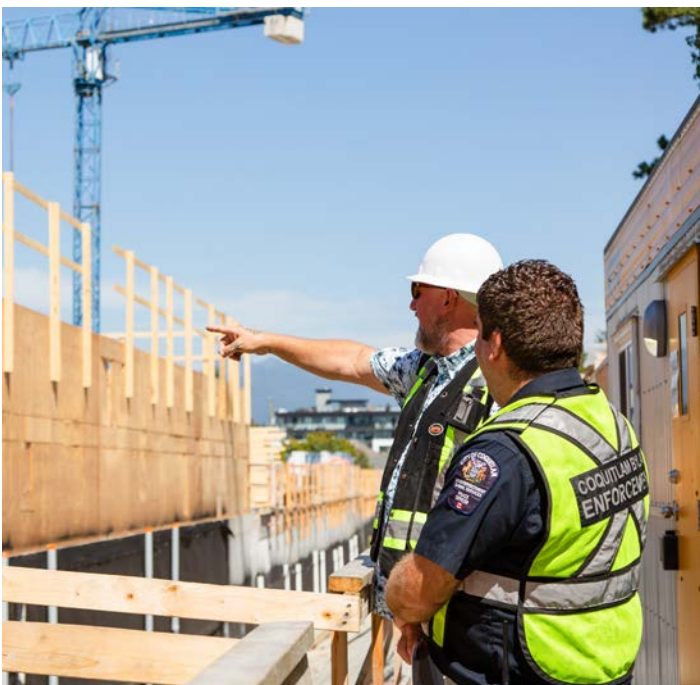
- Fire and Rescue
- Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities
- Road and Transportation
- Capital Construction
- Planning and Development
- Police (RCMP)
- Water, Sewer and Drainage
- Solid Waste

For each service area, participants were given the following multiple-choice options:

- Reduce funding by significantly cutting services
- Maintain funding by moderately cutting services
- Increase funding to maintain services at current levels
- Increase funding to enhance or expand services
- Unsure / I don't know

Survey participants also had the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback, consistent with previous years. Demographic questions including respondents' connection to Coquitlam helped to provide perspective and context with the feedback.

In recognition of the changing landscape of City budgeting and navigating the effects of rising costs, the standard question wording from previous budget surveys was updated this year to give participants more clarity. The new questions and answers were aimed to help communicate that a funding increase is required to maintain existing service levels.



About this Engagement

What We Did

The 2026 budget survey was live for public input on the City's engagement platform ([LetsTalkCoquitlam.ca](https://lets-talk-coquitlam.ca)) from August 29 to September 14, 2025. The survey was shared via an information bulletin, emailed out to the City's news subscribers and Let's Talk subscribers, posted on the front page of the City website, shared via the City's email newsletters (the Coquitlam Current and the PRC E-News), and shared via digital ads at City Hall and all recreation facilities. Printed posters were displayed at all civic buildings, including both staff-only and public areas.

A robust social media campaign including targeted paid ads as well as organic posting shared the survey opportunity across the City of Coquitlam's Facebook and Instagram.

Information and education about how the City budgets and past budget breakdowns was shared online, in the survey and via social media.

The survey included information on how current economic pressures are affecting the City's budget. Participants were given background information on the services provided in each area, along with explanations of what potential changes to service levels could mean.

Participation and Awareness



During the campaign, there were four Budget 2026 related social media posts on the City's social media channels (Facebook and Instagram).

- The posts appeared on users' feeds almost **180,000 times**.
- Close to **1,200 users** reacted, commented, shared or clicked through on the social posts.



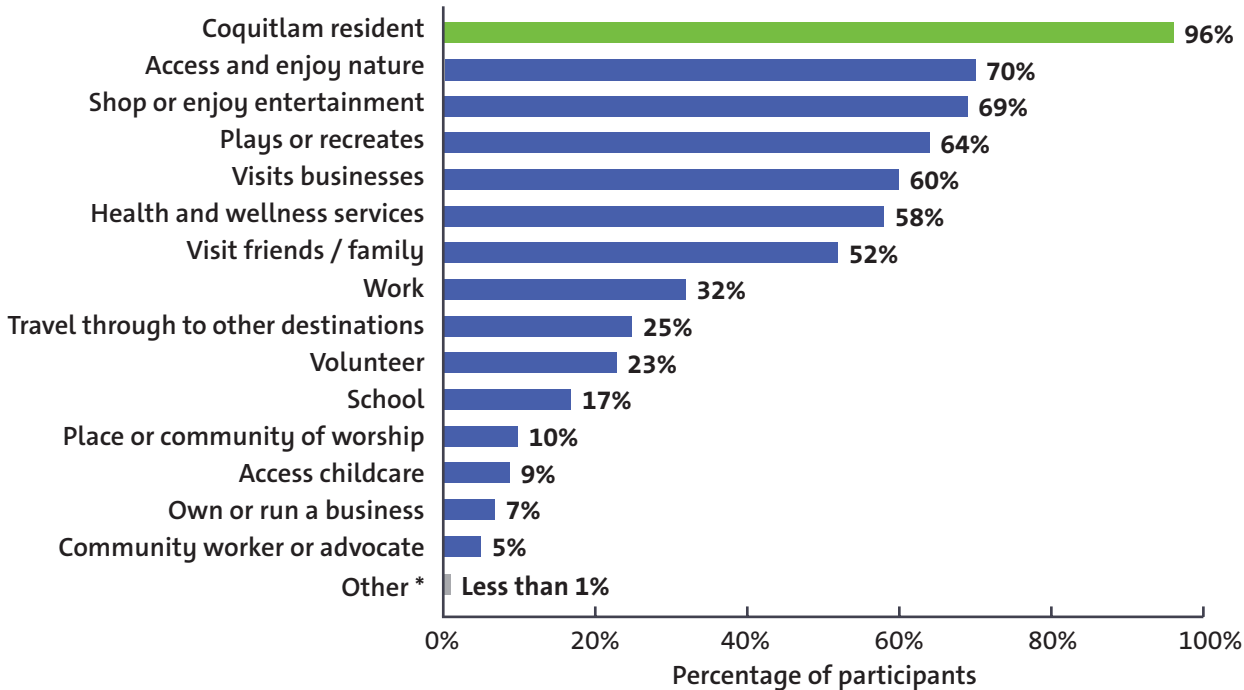
Who We Heard From

The following demographics represent survey respondents. Sharing demographic information was optional (participants were able to select that they ‘Prefer not to say’). Demographic data provides context for the survey findings by highlighting who participated in the survey and their experiences. Charts may not equal 100% due to rounding or because respondents were able to select all that apply.

We heard from a variety of participants (438 total), including:

- Individuals with various connections to Coquitlam, including:
 - Residents (96%)
 - Those who work in Coquitlam (32%)
 - Those who own or run a Coquitlam business (7%)
- Individuals across a wide range of ages (18 to 75 and older) and income levels, with the largest share reporting a gross household income of \$150,000 or more (29%).
- Residents from all over Coquitlam, with the most represented neighbourhoods being:
 - Burquitlam Lougheed (16%)
 - City Centre (14%)
 - Central Coquitlam (14%)
 - Northeast Coquitlam / Burke Mountain (12%)
 - Westwood Plateau (10%)
- Residents who are new to Coquitlam as well as those who have lived here for many years. The majority of residents reported living in Coquitlam for 10 or more years (69%).
- Individuals with a variety of characteristics, identities and experiences, including households with:
 - Children / youth (18 and under) (24%)
 - Single incomes (21%)
 - Those from racialized communities (19%)
 - The primary language spoken at home is a language other than English or French (11%)
 - Those living with a disability or who are neurodivergent (10%)

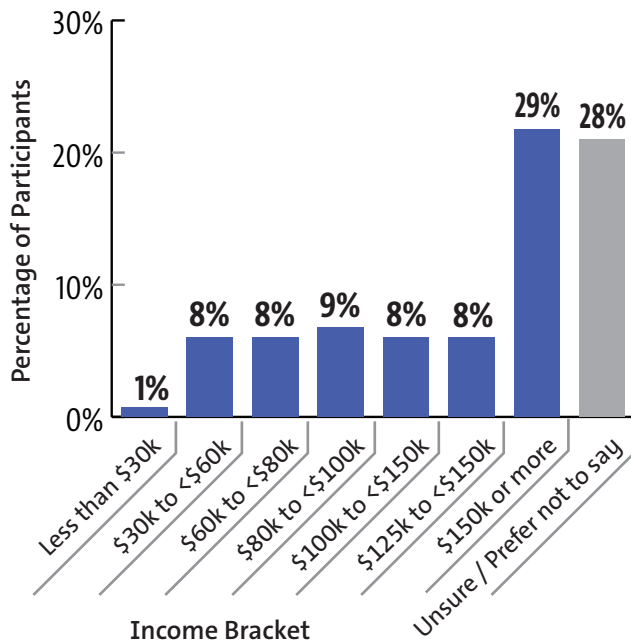
Participants’ Connection to Coquitlam



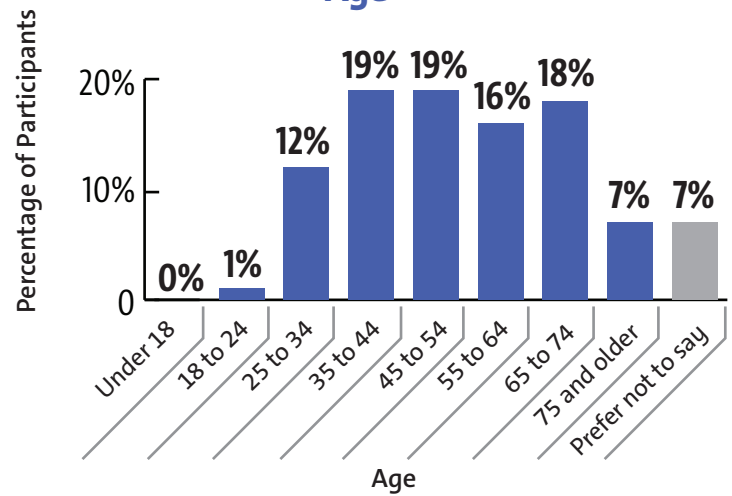
*Other includes retirees, households with young adult children living at home, those supporting older family members, individuals in multigenerational housing, people who came to Canada as refugees, those living alone and former Coquitlam residents who would like to move back.

Who We Heard From

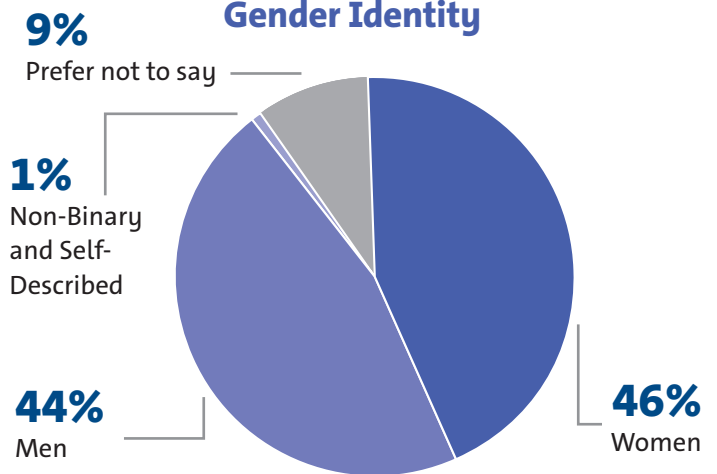
Gross Annual Household Income



Age

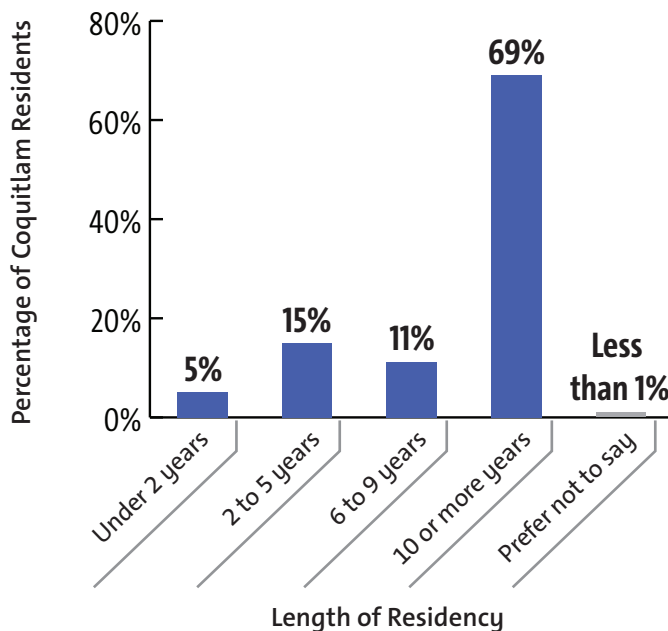


Gender Identity



Charts may not equal 100% due to rounding or because multiple selections were possible.

Length of Residency (Coquitlam Residents)



Housing Tenure of Residents

Homeowners (**86%**)
 Renters (**10%**)
 Neither rent nor own (e.g., live rent free with others) (**1%**)
 Other (**Less than 1%**)
 Prefer not to say (**2%**)

What We Heard

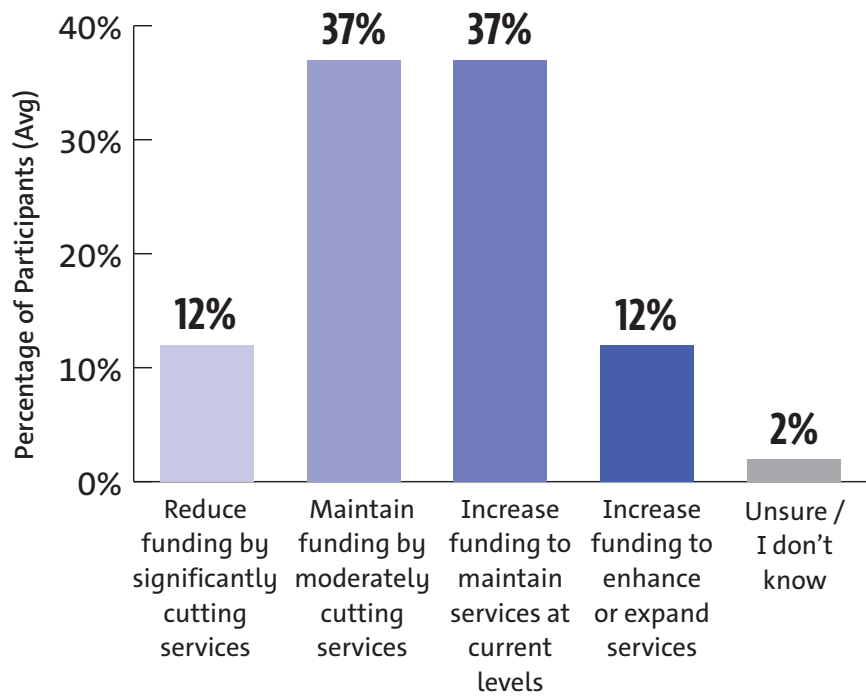
Across All Service Areas



Maintaining funding levels and maintaining service levels were the priority on average across all areas.

When asked how costs and services should be balanced, most participants supported either maintaining funding by moderately cutting services (37%) or increasing funding to maintain services at current levels (37%). Smaller groups preferred reducing funding by significantly cutting services (12%) or increasing funding to enhance or expand services (12%). While these averages show clear overall trends, responses varied notably across individual service areas.

Average Across All Service Areas

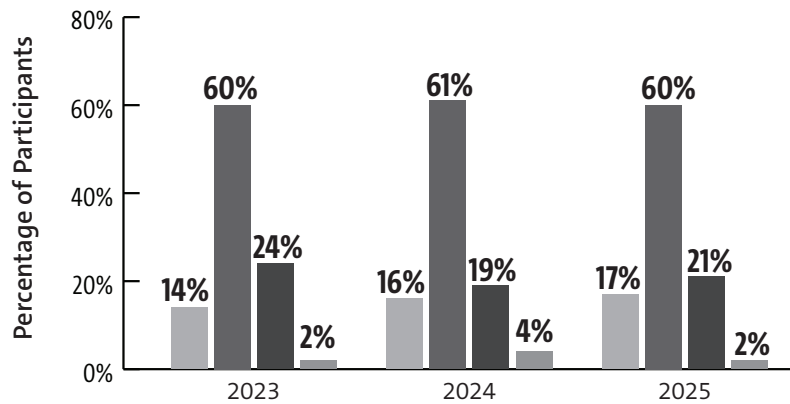


How the annual budget survey has changed this year:

In past years, survey participants were asked only if funding should be increased, decreased or maintained. Because the relationship between funding and service levels was not defined, a direct year-over-year comparison is not possible for 2026. However, past budget surveys show consistent trends with a majority of participants wanting to maintain funding levels (60% in 2023, 61% in 2024, 60% in 2025). By refining the questions for 2026, we can now better understand whether participants prioritize maintaining funding itself or the level of services provided.

Averages Year-Over-Year Comparison (2023, 2024, 2025)

- Decrease Funding
- Keep Funding
- Increase Funding
- Unsure



Charts may not equal 100% due to rounding or because multiple selections were possible.

What We Heard

Community priorities vary by service area.

Participants' views on funding vary depending on the type of service. Essential services such as **Water, Sewer and Drainage** and **Fire and Rescue** received the **strongest support to maintain service levels**, indicating a desire to protect core services and infrastructure.

In contrast, areas like **Planning and Development** and **Capital Construction** were selected most often for **funding cuts**. Services such as **Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities** and **Police (RCMP)** showed **mixed preferences** for balancing service levels and funding, reflecting nuanced community priorities.

Service areas by funding investment and service level:

Funding reduced by significantly cutting services:	Funding maintained by moderately cutting services:
• Planning and Development (22%) • Capital Construction (20%) • Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities (13%) • Police (RCMP) (12%) • Solid Waste (11%) • Water, Sewer and Drainage (8%) • Fire and Rescue (7%) • Roads and Transportation (7%)	• Capital Construction (42%) • Solid Waste (42%) • Planning and Development (41%) • Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities (40%) • Roads and Transportation (36%) • Police (RCMP) (32%) • Water, Sewer and Drainage (30%) • Fire and Rescue (30%)
Funding increased to maintain services at current levels:	Funding increased to enhance or expand services:
• Water, Sewer and Drainage (52%) • Fire and Rescue (48%) • Solid Waste (40%) • Roads and Transportation (38%) • Police (RCMP) (37%) • Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities (29%) • Planning and Development (25%) • Capital Construction (24%)	• Roads and Transportation (19%) • Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities (17%) • Police (RCMP) (17%) • Fire and Rescue (13%) • Capital Construction (12%) • Planning and Development (9%) • Water, Sewer and Drainage (8%) • Solid Waste (4%)

Where services areas are tied by percentage, the area with the higher number of responses comes first.

On average, priorities by service area were similar to past years, but varied individually.

The following pages show how survey participants want funding to be allocated for each City service area.

What We Heard

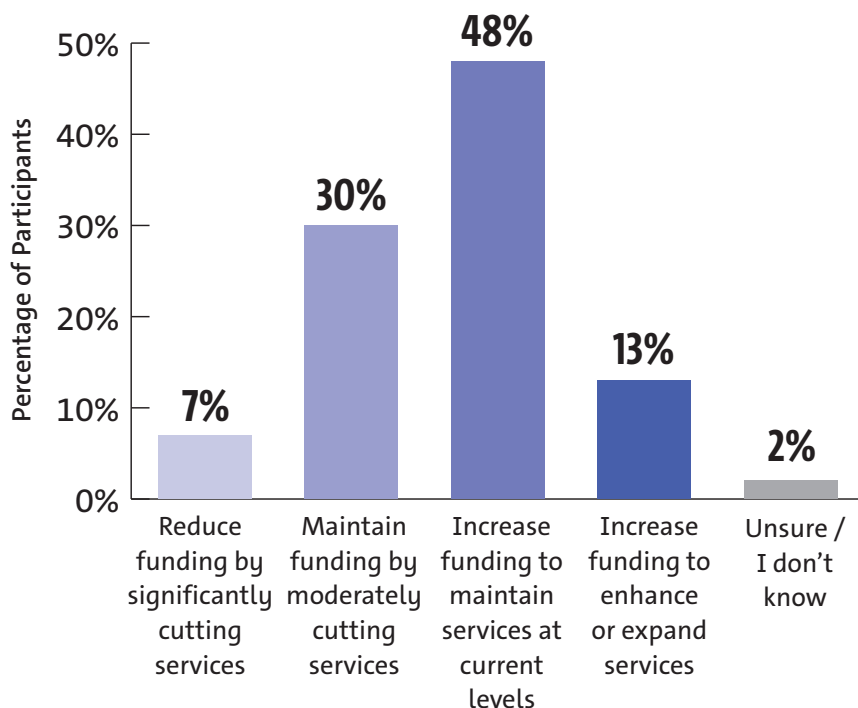
Fire and Rescue Services



An average of \$542 per household
(12% of one's property charges)

Fire and Rescue was among the top areas where participants want to see funding increased to maintain current service levels. The majority of participants (**48%**) wanted funding increased to maintain services, while **30%** wanted to maintain funding by moderately cutting services. **13%** wanted funding increased to enhance or expand services, **7%** wanted funding reduced by significantly cutting services and **2%** were unsure.

Compared to previous years and other service areas, there was stronger support for increasing funding to maintain current Fire and Rescue service levels. Participants emphasized the importance of preserving these services, with some also calling for expansion or enhancements. Emergency services remained one of the areas participants were least open to funding reductions, particularly when cuts could affect service levels.



Charts may not equal 100% due to rounding or because multiple selections were possible.



What We Heard

Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities Services

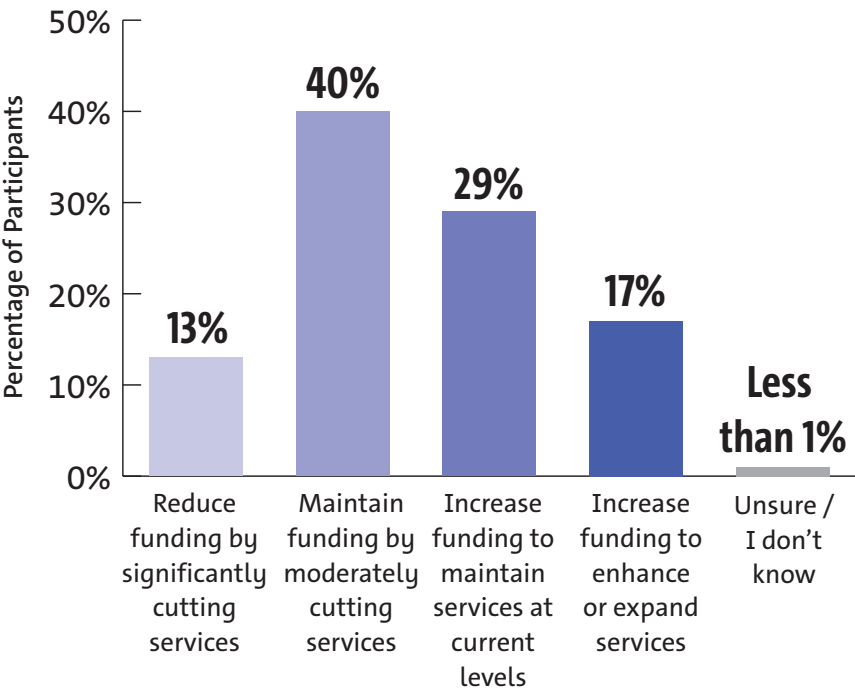


An average of \$745 per household
(17% of one’s property charges)

For Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities, many participants (40%) wanted funding maintained by moderately cutting services. 29% wanted funding increased to maintain services, while 17% wanted funding increased to enhance or expand services. 13% wanted funding reduced by significantly cutting services, and less than 1% were unsure.

While this area has traditionally seen high levels of support for maintaining funding, the open-ended feedback showed a growing divide. More people are weighing trade-offs, with some open to reductions in this area, and others wanting enhancements and/or growth-related increases.

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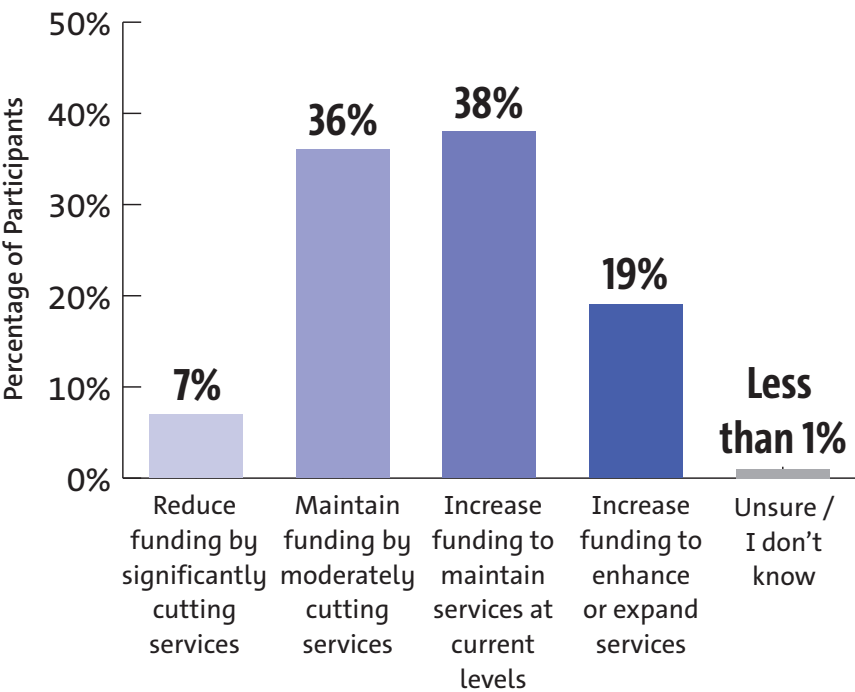
What We Heard

Roads and Transportation Services

A An average of \$239 per household (5% of one’s property charges)

Roads and Transportation was the top area where participants wanted funding increased to enhance or expand services (19%). The majority of participants were divided between increasing funding to maintain current service levels (38%) and maintaining funding by moderately cutting services (36%). 7% wanted funding reduced by significantly cutting services, and less than 1% were unsure.

Over the last three years, Roads and Transportation has been one of the service areas with the highest calls for increased investment — both to keep up with service demands and capacity concerns, and to expand to meet the needs of the growing population. This has been a consistent and growing topic throughout feedback across other City engagement projects.



Charts may not equal 100% due to rounding or because multiple selections were possible.



What We Heard

Capital Construction Services

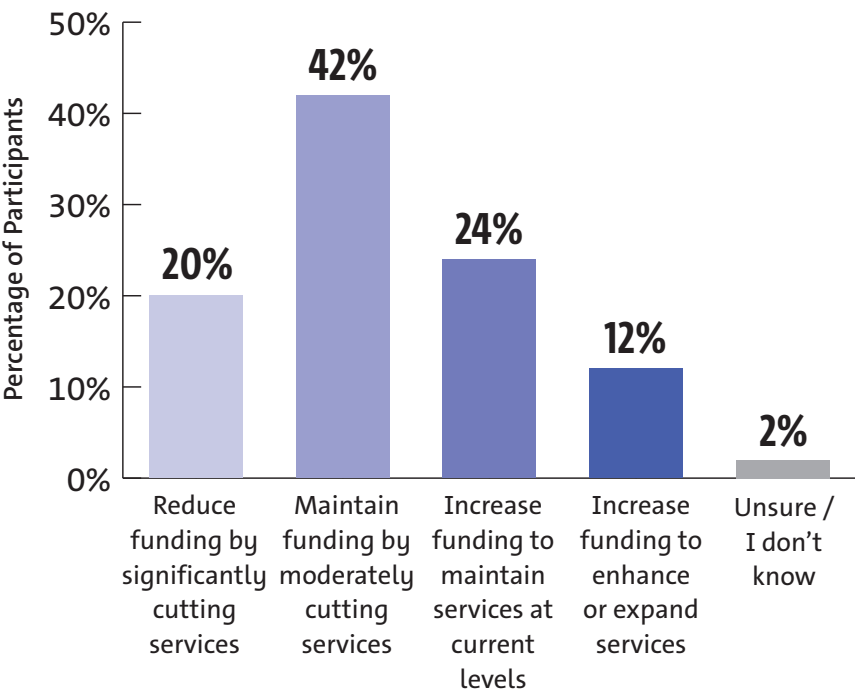


An average of \$482 per household (11% of one’s property charges)

Participants prioritized maintaining Capital Construction funding by moderately cutting services (42%). 24% wanted funding increased to maintain current services, 12% wanted funding increased to enhance or expand services, 20% wanted funding reduced by significantly cutting services and 2% were unsure.

This service area continues to be one where a notable share of participants are open to reductions (25% last year). Despite this, a significant portion of open-ended feedback discussed the need for improved and expanded infrastructure and amenities to keep pace with community growth.

Charts may not equal 100% due to rounding or because multiple selections were possible.



What We Heard

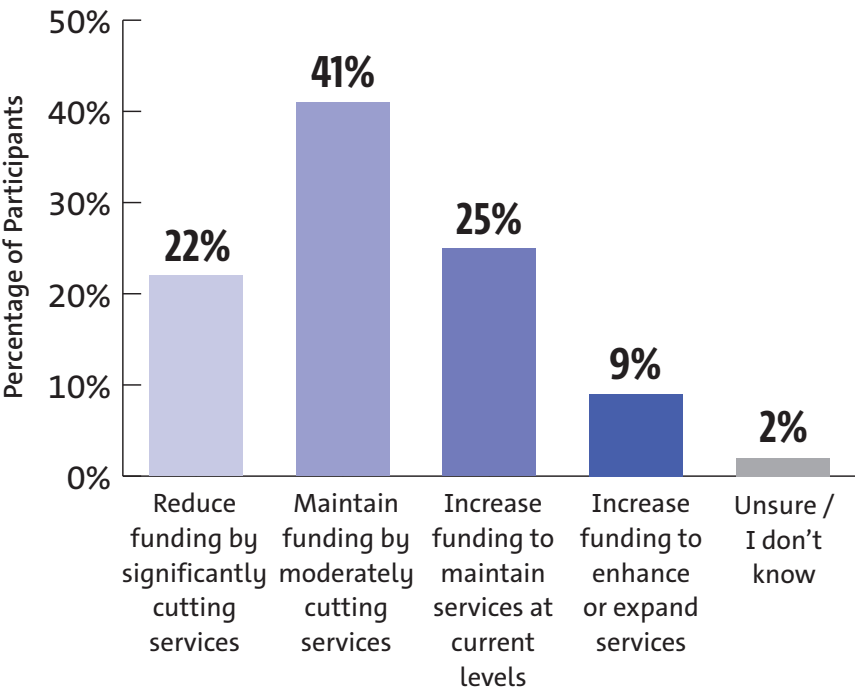
Planning and Development Services



An average of \$45 per household
(1% of one’s property charges)

Planning and Development was the service area with the highest proportion of participants wanting funding reduced by significantly cutting services (22%). 41% wanted funding maintained by moderately cutting services, 25% wanted funding increased to maintain services, 9% wanted funding increased to enhance or expand services, and 2% were unsure.

As seen last year, Planning and Development is one of the top service areas where participants would like to see a decrease in funding, and, in turn, services (25% selected 'decrease funding' last year). It's important to note that as our community grows, this funding is vital to help the City plan land use in line with it's ability to provide essential services like roads and utilities. This supports balanced growth, livability and financial sustainability.



Charts may not equal 100% due to rounding or because multiple selections were possible.



What We Heard

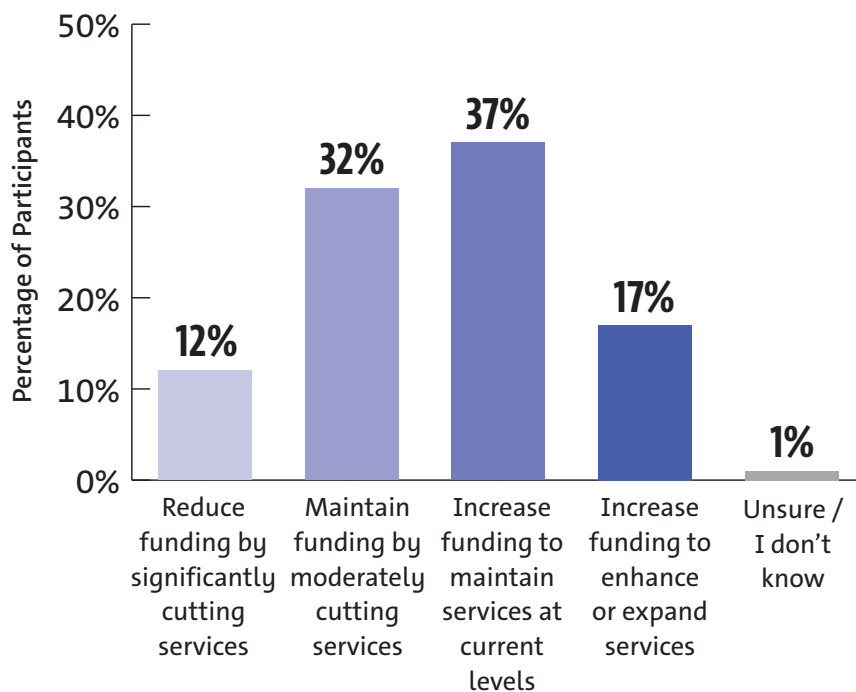
Police (RCMP) Services



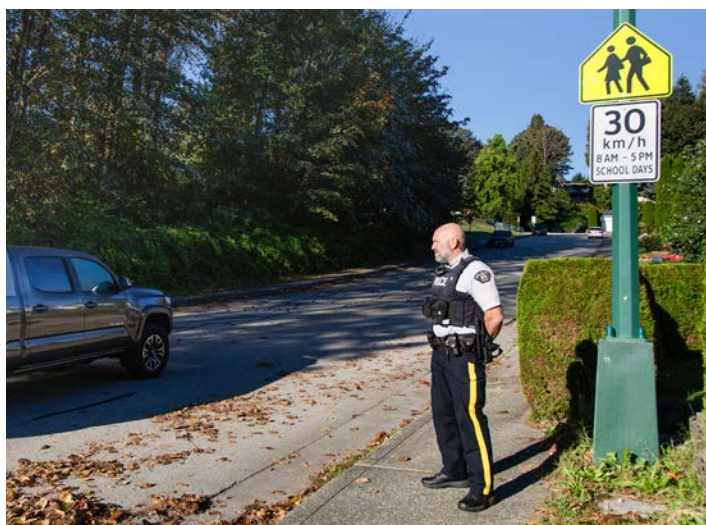
An average of \$705 per household
(16% of one's property charges)

Police (RCMP) was a top area where participants wanted funding increased, with **37%** wanting funding increased to maintain services and **17%** wanting funding increased to enhance or expand services. **32%** wanted funding maintained by moderately cutting services, **12%** wanted funding reduced by significantly cutting services and **1%** were unsure.

While reductions remain part of the conversation, more participants this year expressed interest in increasing investment (**compared to 27% last year**), either to maintain services in the face of rising costs or to expand service offerings. Similar to other emergency services, Police (RCMP) are seen as essential services, with open-ended feedback emphasizing safety concerns such as road safety and traffic enforcement.



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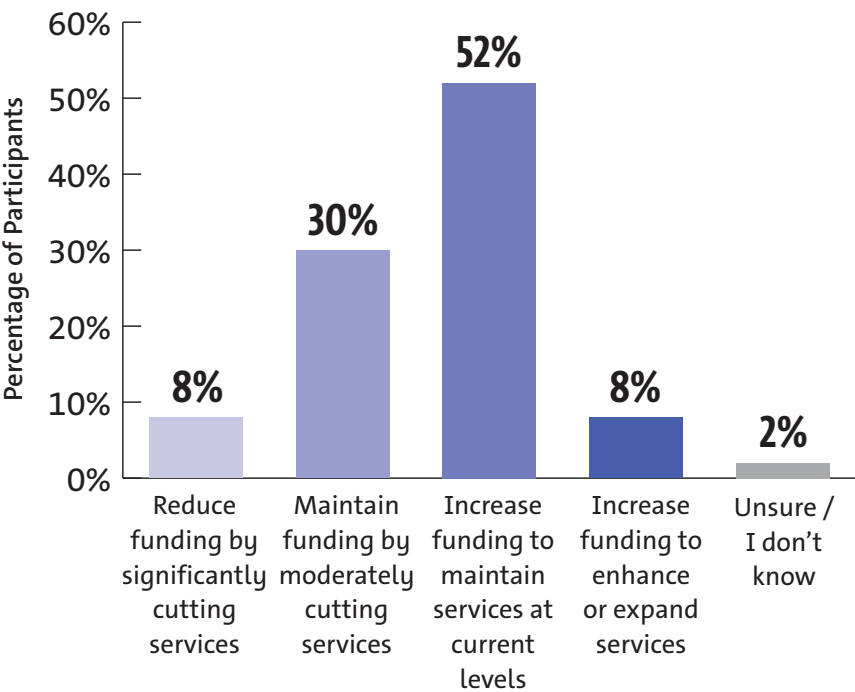
What We Heard

Water, Sewer and Drainage Services

 An average of \$1,288 per household (29% of one's property charges)

Water, Sewer and Drainage was the top service area where participants wanted to see funding increased to maintain current service levels (52%). Another 30% want funding maintained by moderately cutting services, 8% want funding increased for service enhancement/expansion, 8% want funding reduced by significantly cutting services while 2% were unsure.

This was the only area where over half of the participants agreed supported increasing funding to maintain current service levels, suggesting a recognition that flat funding is no longer enough to sustain essential infrastructure and service quality in today's economic climate. This builds off previous years responses, when maintaining funding for this service area was already a high priority (71% selected 'maintain funding' last year), and aligns with open-ended feedback highlighting capacity concerns as the City continues to densify and grow.



Charts may not equal 100% due to rounding or because multiple selections were possible.



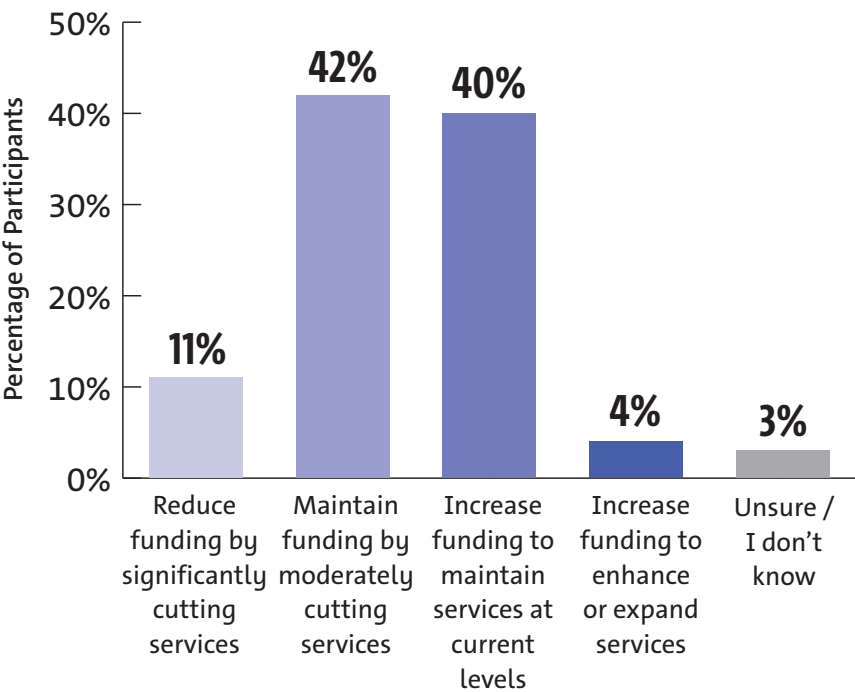
What We Heard

Solid Waste Services

 An average of \$375 per household (9% of one’s property charges)

For Solid Waste, participants primarily wanted funding maintained by moderately cutting services (42%) or increased to maintain services (40%). 11% wanted funding reduced by significantly cutting services, 4% wanted funding increased to enhance or expand services and 3% were unsure.

This aligns with the previous year’s findings where most participants wanted to see funding kept as proposed (74% last year). This year revealed more nuance about what was important to maintain, with participants being divided about whether to maintain the amount of funding or the level of service.



Charts may not equal 100% due to rounding or because multiple selections were possible.



What We Heard

Open-ended feedback covered a wide range of topics.

44% of participants provided open-ended feedback (**191 responses**). Most of this feedback (**62%**) mentioned multiple service areas. The responses focused on the following service areas:



Roads and Transportation (**50%**)



Parks, Recreation, Culture, and Facilities (**41%**)



Planning and Development (**39%**)



Capital Construction (**35%**)



Water, Sewer and Drainage (**25%**)



Police (RCMP) (**24%**)



Solid Waste (**22%**)



Fire and Rescue (**21%**)

In addition to these service areas, much of the open-ended feedback mentioned the following topics more generally:

- Efficiency and/or effectiveness (**38%**)
- Infrastructure (**31%**)
- Densification and growth (**26%**)
- Affordability, inflation and the state of the economy (**25%**)
- Public amenities and services (**14%**)
- Capacity concerns (**18%**)

58% mentioned the City's budget more generally, including the budget process.

Some feedback (**7%**) highlighted the need for services and amenities outside of the municipal scope such as hospitals, schools, highways and health services including long-term care. Similarly, there were calls for the City to advocate and collaborate with senior governments, regional bodies and neighbouring municipalities to secure funding and support for these vital community amenities.

Beyond infrastructure and services, participants (**16%**) voiced concern for broader community wellbeing — public safety and health, livability, green spaces and social connection. These residents called for the City to give greater support to low-income, unhoused and vulnerable residents, including seniors.

Some participants (**4%**) called for balanced access to services and investment across the City. These respondents felt that certain neighbourhoods have been underserved, such as those outside Transit-Oriented Areas, and called on the City to prioritize adding more services to these areas.

Next Steps

The City is in the process of developing its 2026 Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan. Community input is one of several factors that inform the budget. Insights gained from this engagement, alongside staff recommendations, will be shared with Council to support decision-making as part of the annual budget deliberation process.

The results will be presented during Finance Standing Committee Meetings on October 29 and 30, 2025, where City departments and cultural partners will deliver budget presentations.

The 2026 Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan, as well as utility rate changes for 2026, will be presented to Council for approval on Monday, December 8, 2025.

In 2026, a detailed Five-Year Financial Plan with a Budget Highlights section will be published on coquitlam.ca/budget.

