

Town of Lamont

2021 Budget Survey Report



What 'We Heard' Report

Lamont.ca | September 2020 | Prepared by Morcomm PR & Events



THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

2021 Budget Survey

Survey Overview

Council requested that Administration host a Budget Survey campaign to gather information and feedback regarding services to support municipal budget planning for 2021. The Town contracted a third-party vendor to design, conduct and report on the survey data.

The survey was available (online and in paper form) from July 17, 2020 to September 11, 2020. 72 submissions were received, all online; 63 residents and nine business owners.

Both residents and business owners were encouraged to participate in the survey and provide feedback about priorities, service levels, and funding. And also to learn more the costs of municipal goods and infrastructure and where their tax dollars are allocated.

Based on the data collected, ratepayers emphasized most importance on *Road & Sidewalk Maintenance, Economic Development and Protective Services.*

Respondent Demographics

While responses were kept strictly confidential and the results of the survey will not be used in any way that will allow anyone to be identified, the Town asked for some basic demographic information as part of the survey. For example, **95.2%** of respondents indicated they own their home and the following shows the ages of the participants.

AGE	SURVEY RESPONSE
18 - 24	1.6%
25 - 34	30.2%
35 - 44	20.6%
45 - 54	12.7%
55 - 64	27%
65 +	7.9%

Survey Promotion

Traditional and digital advertising methods were used to promote awareness of the survey and inform residents and business owners. These methods included the following:

Social Media • Facebook • Twitter

Website • Lamont.ca • Utility Inserts

Media Relations - Lamont Leader
• Newspaper Advertisement • Media Release

Road Signs • Sandwich Board Messaging

Service Areas: Level of Importance & Funding

The survey asked about the level of importance and the level of funding ratepayers supported in a number of service areas including:

- Economic Development
- Garbage & Recycling
- Government & Administration
- Parks & Green Spaces
- Protective Services
- Recreational Services
- Road & Sidewalk Maintenance
- Community Services
- Water & Wastewater Services
- Land Development Services



Open-Ended Survey Questions

The survey concluded by asking participants for their thoughts and any additional comments. Overall the comments were constructive or neutral in nature, with the majority of the comments following the themes of Road & Sidewalk Maintenance, Economic Development, and Protective Services.

Business owners were asked to rank their top three priorities where they would like to see the Town invest more tax dollars. The identified theme was for the Town to engage in a higher level of marketing, promotion, and branding in order to attract new residents and businesses. This aligns with their desire for an increase in service levels and a high priority ranking for Economic Development.

Throughout this report, a more in-depth analysis of the survey data is provided including an appendix where data charts can be referenced and comments can be reviewed.

Rate the Importance

Respondents were asked to rate the Town's service levels and their level of importance

- Economic Development
- Garbage & Recycling
- Government & Administration
- Parks & Green Spaces
- Protective Services
- Recreational Services
- Road & Sidewalk Maintenance
- Community Services
- Water & Wastewater Services
- Land Development Services

Level of Importance: Key Findings

Through the survey it is understood that participants value the following service areas in order from highest to lowest:

1. Economic Development
2. Protective Services
3. Road & Sidewalk Maintenance
4. Water & Wastewater Management
5. Community Services
6. Land Development
7. Recreational Services
8. Parks & Green Spaces
9. Garbage & Recycling
10. Government Administration



Participants were asked to consider each of the following services and priorities, and if they should be funded more, funded less, or are receiving an adequate amount of funding.

The 2020 Budget figures were posted with each category, as shown below, and a pie chart was included as part of the survey for reference.

2020 Budget Figures

Economic Development \$10,500

Garbage & Recycling \$388,511

Government & Administration \$831,522

Parks & Green Spaces \$96,688

Protective Services \$53,495

Recreational Services \$637,308

Road & Sidewalk Maintenance \$1,464,790

Community Services \$1,228,049

Water & Wastewater Services \$864,000

Land Development Services \$163,350

Funding: Key Findings

Based on current service levels and feedback, participants would like to see the following service level adjustments:

Increase Service Levels in:

- Road & Sidewalk Maintenance
- Protective Services
- Economic Development

Decrease Service Levels in:

- Government & Administration
- Garbage & Recycling

Maintain Service Levels in:

- Land Development
- Water & Wastewater Management
- Community Services
- Recreational Services
- Parks & Green Spaces



Survey Highlights :

Residents (63 Responses)

73% Chose to maintain service levels with no increase to taxes.

47.6% Of the respondents chose to spend on infrastructure maintenance now, while the other **47.6%** chose 'Not sure or need to know more before deciding.'

71.4% Do not feel they are getting fair value for their property taxes.

42.9% Do not support using tax dollars for community organizations and special events, while **33.3%** do support it.

83.9% Would like to be involved in the 2021 budget process through online surveys, questionnaires or access to budget tools.

Business Owners (9 Responses)

66.7% Support increasing service levels towards economic development services while **33.3%** support maintaining service levels.

77.8% Do not feel they are getting fair value for their property taxes.

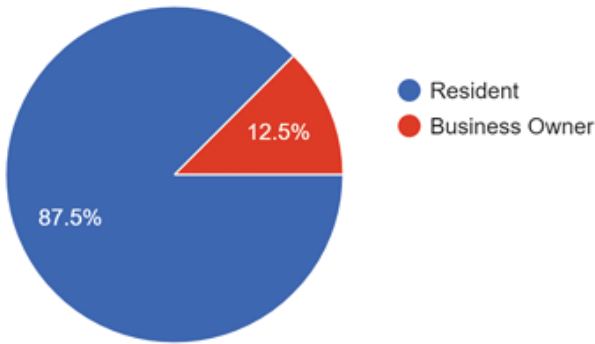
100% Chose to maintain service levels with no increase to taxes.

55.6% Would like to be involved in the 2021 budget process through online surveys, questionnaires or access to budget tools.

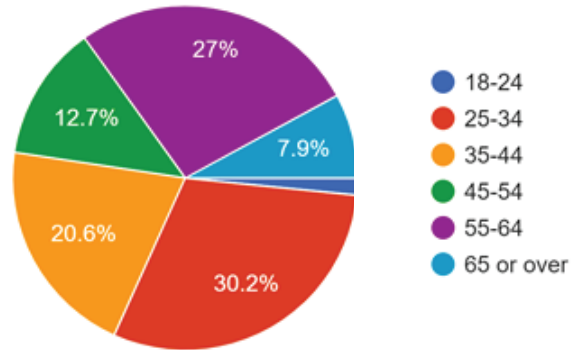
Appendix

Survey Responses

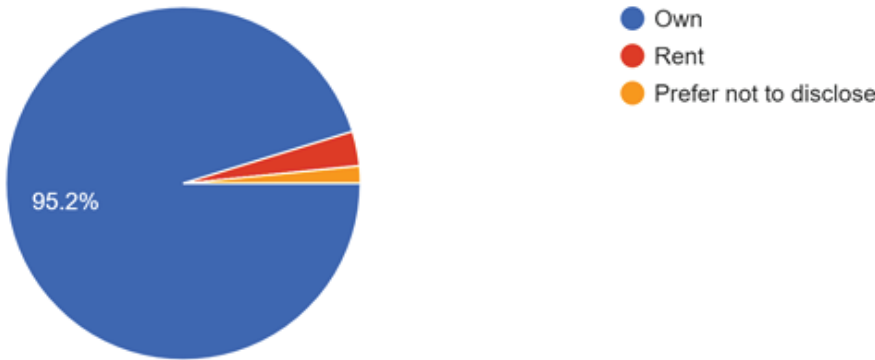
Are you a Resident or Business Owner?



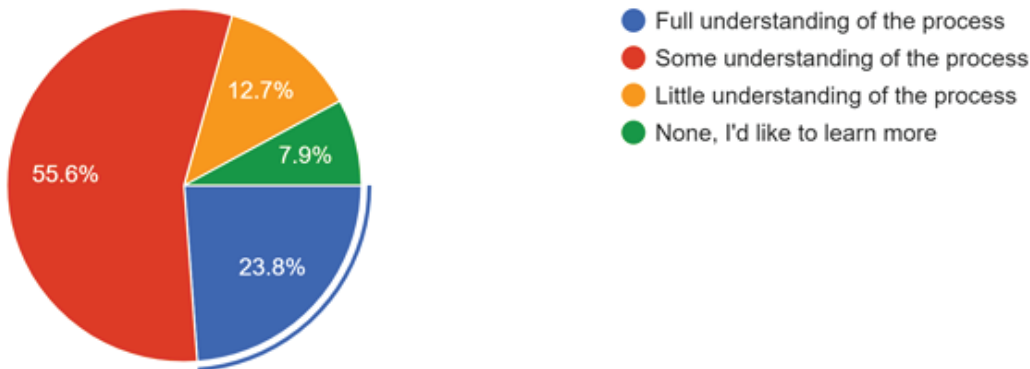
In which age category do you fall?



Do you own or rent your primary Town of Lamont residence?



Please describe your understanding of how municipal budgets are prepared and applied.

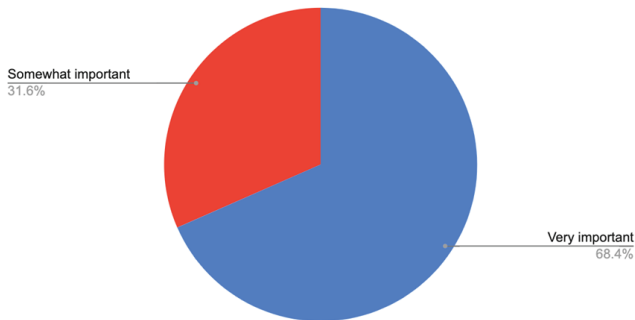


Appendix

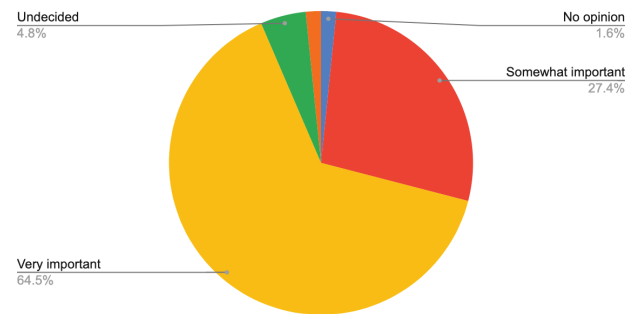


According to survey respondents, the most important services to the community, are as follows ranked from most important to least important:

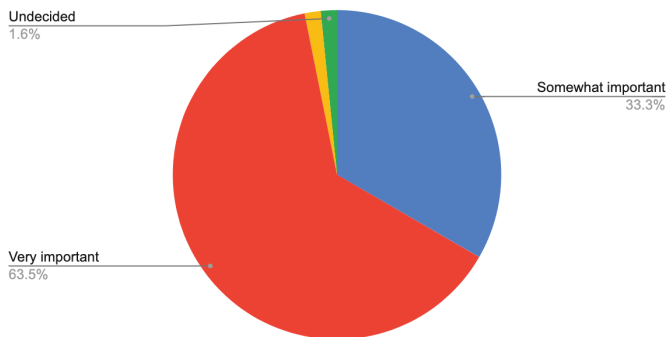
1. Economic Development



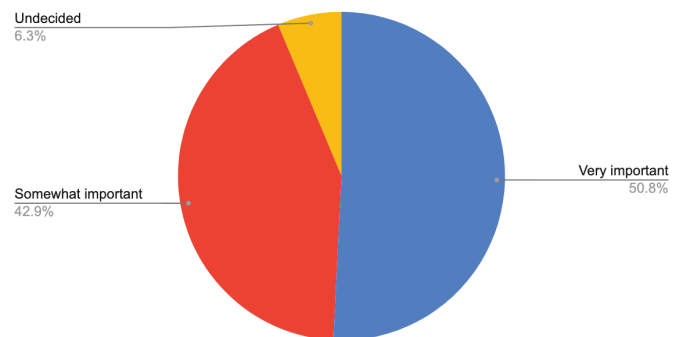
2. Protective Services



3. Road & Sidewalk Maintenance



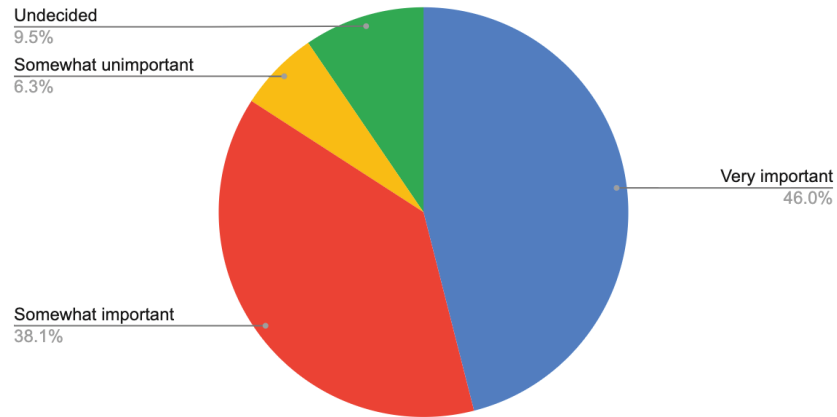
4. Water & Wastewater Management



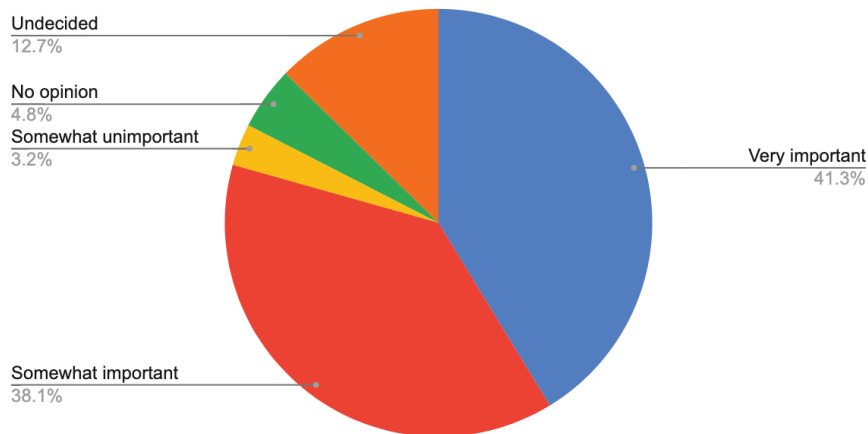
Appendix



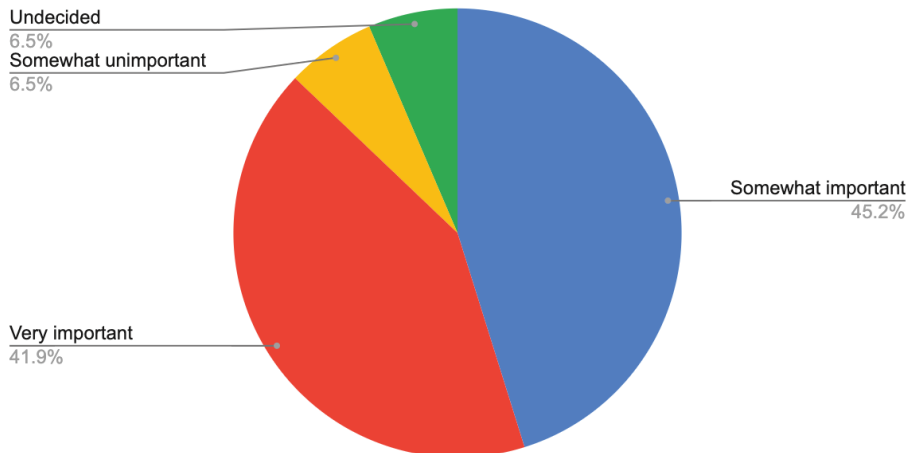
5. Community Services



6. Land Development



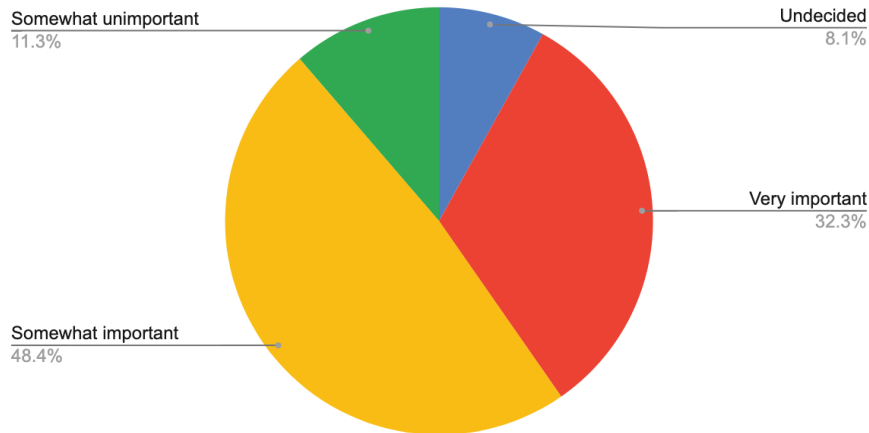
7. Recreational Services



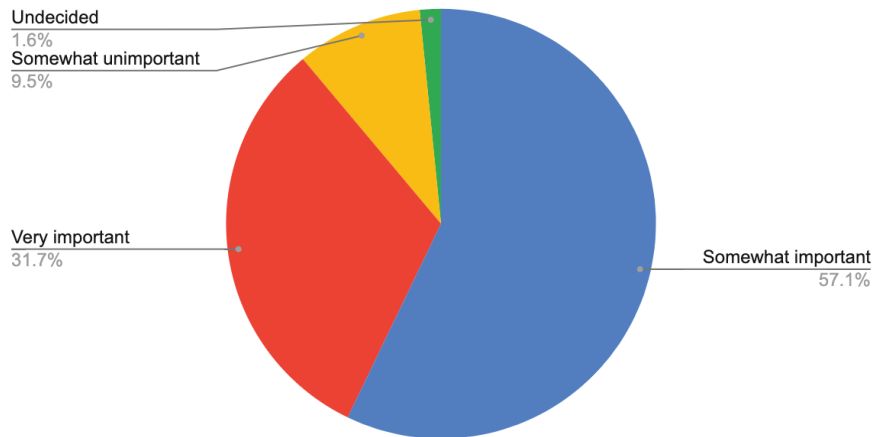
Appendix



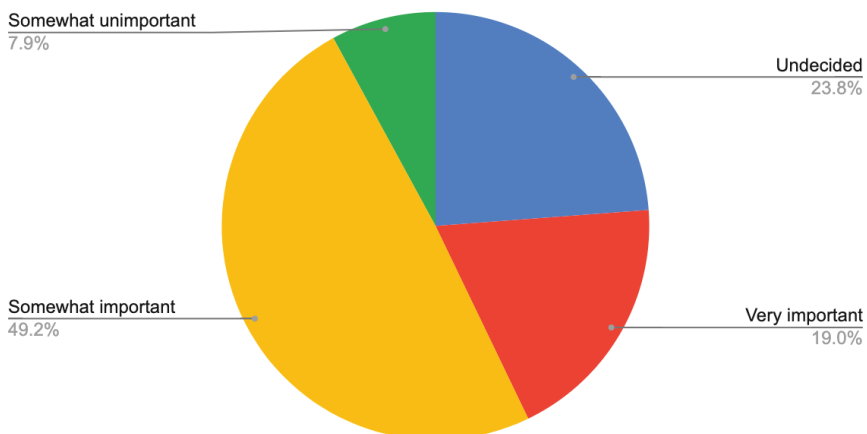
8. Parks & Green Spaces



9. Garbage & Recycling



10. Government & Administration

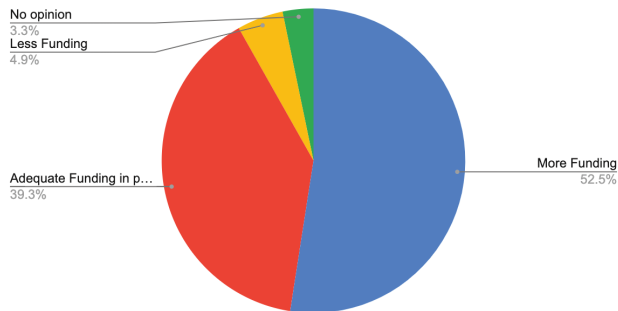


Appendix

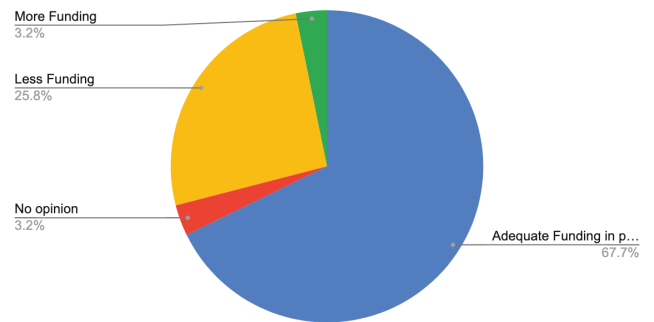


Please consider each of the following services and priorities. The 2020 Budget figures were posted with each category and on the pie chart below for reference. Do you think they should be funded more, funded less, or are receiving an adequate amount of funding?

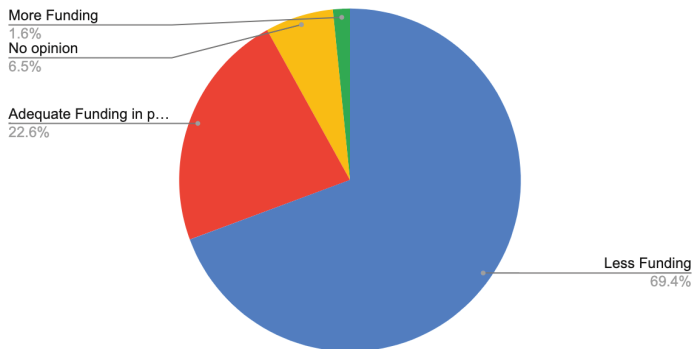
Economic Development \$10,500



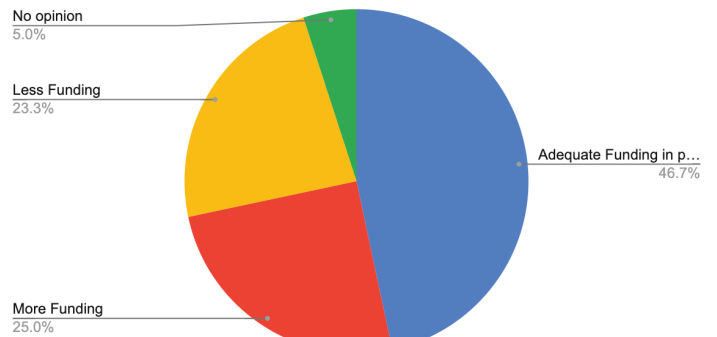
Garbage & Recycling \$388,511



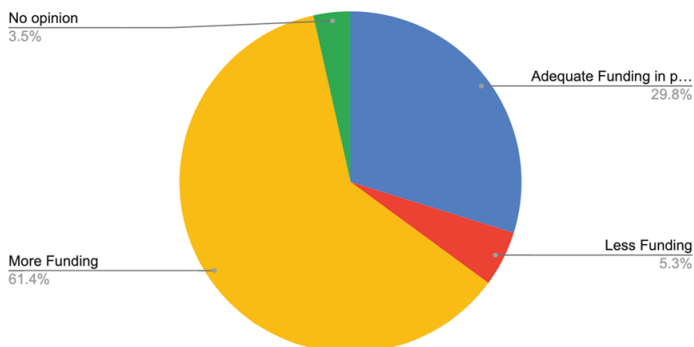
Government & Administration \$831,522



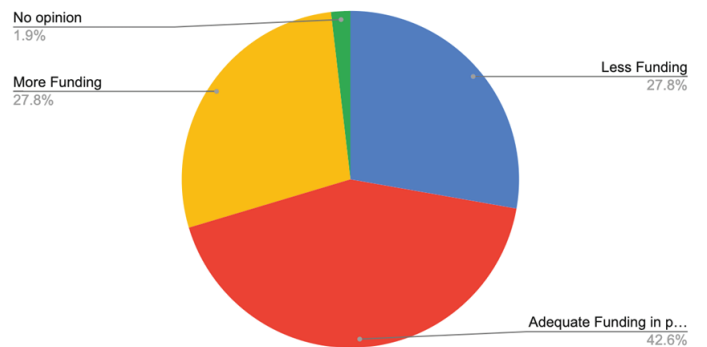
Parks & Green Spaces \$96,688



Protective Services \$53,495



Recreational Services \$637,308

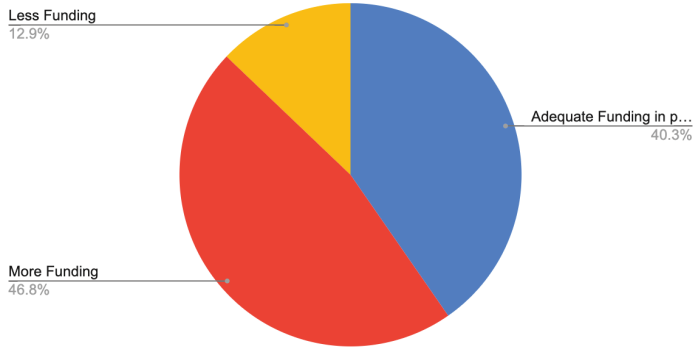


Appendix

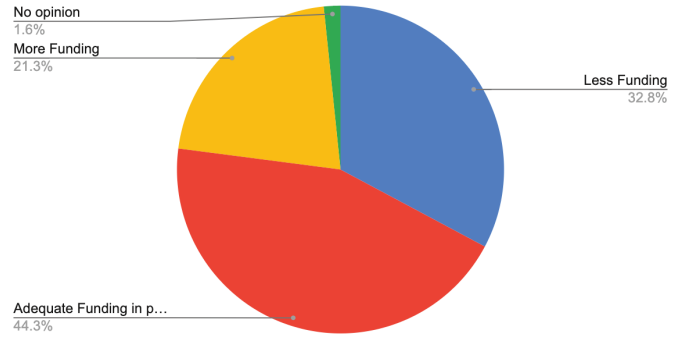
Funding Continued...



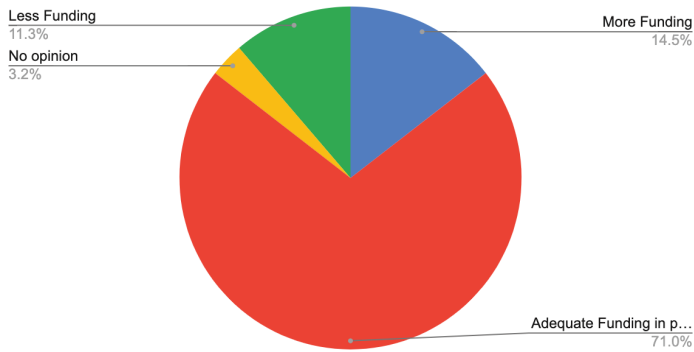
Road & Sidewalk Maintenance \$1,464,790



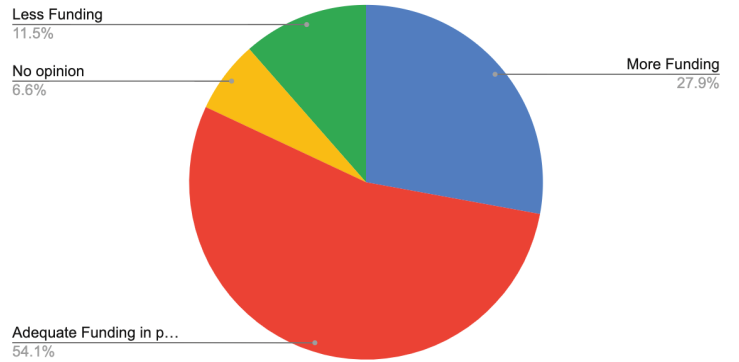
Community Services \$1,228,049



Water & Wastewater Services \$864,000



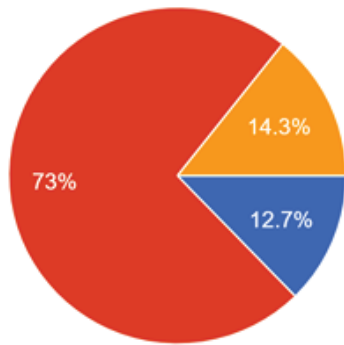
Land Development Services \$163,350



Appendix

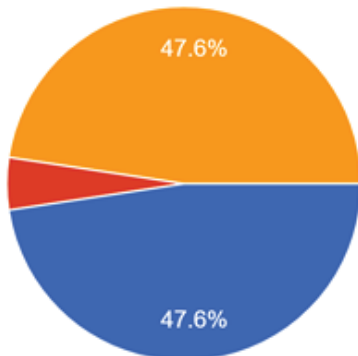


Property taxes collected from residential and non-residential properties are one of the revenue sources available to the Town to pay for municipal services. Please choose one of the following options you would like the Town to consider.



- Increase taxes to enhance or expand municipal services
- Maintain service levels with no increase to taxes
- Cut service levels to reduce taxes

Municipal Infrastructure refers to assets such as roads, water, wastewater, sewer systems and parks. Do you feel we should consider investing more infrastructure dollars now to work towards improving our infrastructure condition and level of service, or prioritize reduced municipal taxes at the expense of immediate infrastructure improvements and a greater future cost?

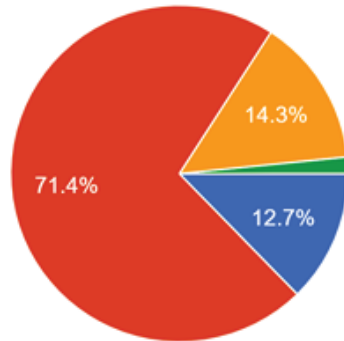


- Spend on infrastructure maintenance now
- Defer maintenance
- Not sure or need to know more before deciding
- Does not matter to me

Appendix

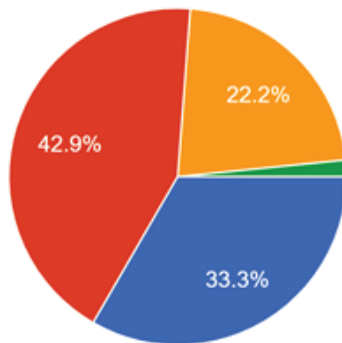


Do you feel you are getting fair value for your property taxes?



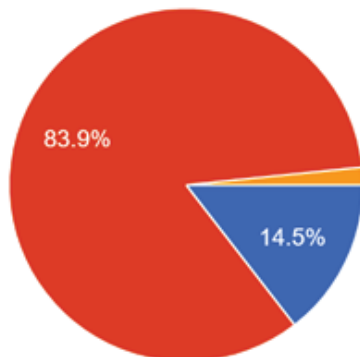
- Yes
- No
- Not sure or needed to know more before deciding
- Does not matter to me

Should the Town use tax dollars to support community organizations and special events?



- Yes
- No
- Not sure or needed to know more before deciding
- Does not matter to me

How would you like to be involved in the 2021 budget process?

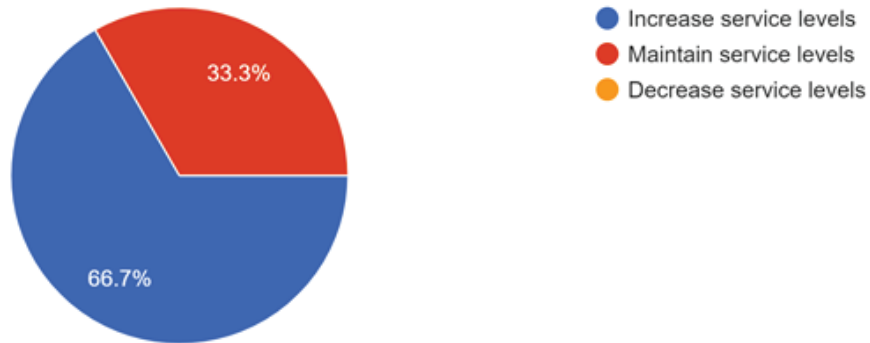


- Attend public budget meetings
- Fill out online surveys, questionnaires, or access to budget tools
- I don't want to be involved

Appendix

Business Owner Survey Questions ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

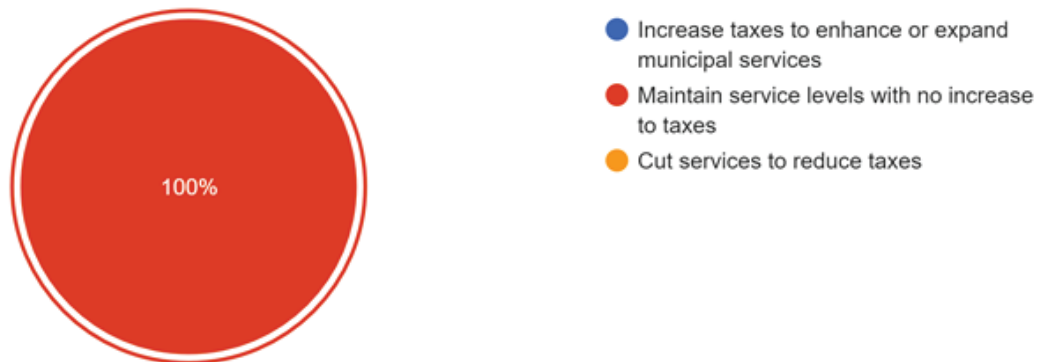
Thinking about the economic development services (investment attraction, event attraction, business supports, etc.), would you increase, maintain, or decrease service levels?



Do you feel you are getting good value for your business taxes?



Property taxes collected from residential and non-residential properties are one of the revenue sources available to the Town to pay for municipal services. Please choose one of the following options you would like the Town to consider?



Appendix

Business Owner Survey Questions *Con't*

Participants were asked to rank their top three priorities where they would like to see the Town invest more tax dollars.

Main Street incentives/ Tax incentives for new business or homes/ rebate for new bornsbrings younger families in and help the school enrolment...

More services for visitors that come from elk island national park ex. Washrooms, andrew Duck idea?? Advertising out of scope to increase population

Development, bring more businesses and residents to town

Building up and promoting businesses in our town

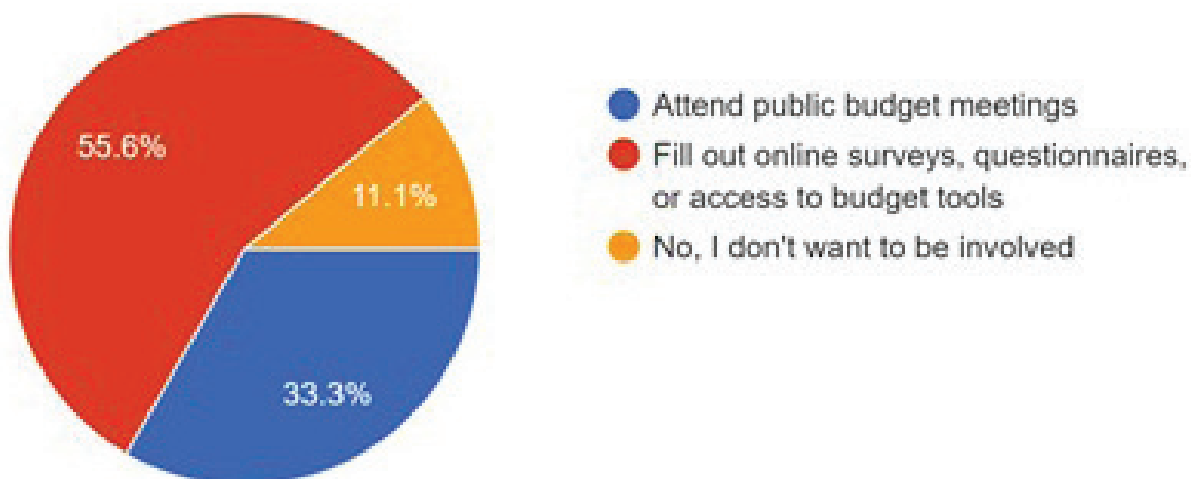
Attraction events and branding

Advertising the town to attract more people, snow removal, and maintain the back allies

Promotion, advertising, local events- carnival, sports day, summer events

Infrastructure maintenance (roads, drainage), Aesthetic appeal to residents/visitors, Tourist draw/ incentive for new residents/business

How would you like to be involved in the 2021 budget process?



Appendix

Open-Ended Survey Questions

Are there any additional budget-related issue(s) you would like to share with us?

More road maintenance on back alleys. Consider paving so many per year. Most of the time, due to weather, it is impossible to get access to back yard garages.
At this time Lamont should be a welcoming, safe, and comfortable place for its current residents, HOWEVER the main goal should always be to attract more residents to the town from which in the long run WE WILL ALL benefit.
Would like to see spending on community supports, activities and recreation for children maintained. Now more than ever it's needed.
Why should the town (me) pay to maintain the curling rink when 90% of the people who use it do not live in town . You should do more research on cost effective methods eg- \$7500 to remove
The dirt roads are in horrible condition and need more maintenance and work done.
Start spending money better. So far its wasteful use of funds for a whole lot of nothing. This town offers zero incentives to bring business, new residents or keep old residents & business
The section of this survey on prioritizing budget categories is almost impossible to complete without know how the money allotted is actually being spent. Would it be possible to add links to an accounting record of how the money was spent last year?
Special events need to be self financed. If having a rodeo and selling tickets, food and beer doesn't cover the cost of putting on the event, then cancel the event. Tax payers shouldn't have to foot the bill for every special interest group that applies for funding. User fees must be increased so that those attending an event are paying for the event. If that means a 1000% increase in entry fees, so be it. That way, events that are not popular will be forced to find another venue and popular events will be worth the increase in cost to attendees. In the end, the tax payer should not shoulder the costs. Home owners do not have an endless supply of money. Tks
Lower our taxes or step up your game. The taxes in this town are outrageous and we live with the worst roads and poor planning and maintenance. Promote new business to get more new blood in this town and stop being so cheap.
Smart choices for major projects. Or better planning.
Does the water and waste water budget not come from the water /sewage/garbage bill. And not taxes
Maybe we could actually follow thru with the bylaws that are in place.
Lora needs to be done before something really bad happens in this town.
Would like to see town expand and more stores allowed to open up, the hotel and new gas station was great. Also roads need to repaired better. 47th Ave should be paved, people visit and stay in that hotel, driving on the horrible gravel road doesn't show the nice side of our town, plus it's right beside the highway for all to see.
This town is rapidly declining. For what I pay in taxes. There is absolutely nothing to show for it. Come winter, it's weeks before we see a snow plow. And in summer. We can't even mow our back alley grass because it hasn't seen a grader in 2yrs so the road is beat up and doesn't drain. Our biggest regret was moving here. No one cares. And the town is a run down dive.

Appendix

Open-Ended Survey Questions *Con't* ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Are there any additional budget-related issue(s) you would like to share with us?

<p>It should not cost what it does to operate a small town such as this. There desperately needs to be a shake up and clear transparency as to where our tax dollars are actually going. We are definitely NOT getting our moneys worth. This needs to become a place that families want to move to. There is so much that could be done to improve this town but that would require some forward thinking instead of having people making our decisions and spending our hard earned money on the wrong things. I keep hearing talk of how corrupt this small town is with too many people in each other's back pockets. Need fresh ideas. And full transparency is a big one that is desperately needed. This town needs to grow not stagnate.</p>
<p>what's our gas consumption on town vehicles and equipment</p>
<p>Lower taxes. We do not get enough support and resources for the taxes we pay in this community. Start finding ways to get more business here instead of pushing them out of town, and build a larger corporate tax base instead of taxing your residents super high, and providing nothing of value in return.</p>
<p>Actually spend money on community organizations. Get more youth programs. Incentives for businesses & community growth. Better spent money on roads & sidewalks instead of wasting it (hwy 831...wasteful 2019)</p>
<p>The back alleys are atrocious.</p>
<p>Income/revenue up if homes \$\$ built on empty lots. Need incentives compatible to Bruderheim to encourage. Your tax base is declining. Need to reverse trend</p>
<p>While I fully appreciate the need for senior services, I am not happy as a tax payer, that I automatically have to pay for Lamont County Housing Foundation. This should not be up to the municipality to decide where my hard earned dollars are spent. Further, the Town of Lamont really needs to focus on economic development and bringing in new tax dollars. At the current rate of taxes, the average person cannot afford almost \$300/month for municipal taxes. We simply will not be able to keep residents at this amount.</p>
<p>Infrastructure has to be kept up...if you are working in the area you should live in the vacinity ...then you have a better understanding of the on goings....</p>
<p>Consider cutting bureaucracy by amalgamating governments. One Lamont County with one government not all the Towns and Villages. Do we need 6 governments for 10,000 people ? 6 Town managers, 6 public works foreman etc etc.</p>
<p>When hiring contractors maybe don't go with the lowest bid. Maybe get someone that can get the job done faster and works weekends.</p>
<p>Town and street beautification</p>
<p>Not certain at this time.</p>



RESIDENTS &
BUSINESS OWNERS

Thank you!

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

2021 Budget Survey: 'WHAT WE HEARD' REPORT

