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CITY OF STRATFORD  
JAN 03 2022  
DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE  
SERVICES OFFICE

# 2023 Budget Survey

The City of Stratford has begun its 2023 budget process, and we want to hear from you through our preliminary budget survey. Please return the survey to the City Hall main floor reception desk or to the Clerk's Office on the ground floor.

Feedback from the budget survey will be provided to City Council, and will assist Councillors in making important budget decisions for our community.

**1. I participate in the City's annual budget process:**

- Always
- Never
- Sometimes
- Only when something interests me
- Other (please specify) *Keep track of issue by newspaper.*

**2. I would be interested in participating or engaging in the following activities related to the annual budget process (select all that apply):**

- Completing surveys
- Submitting questions
- Watching budget-related meetings
- Appearing as a delegation at budget-related meetings
- Attending open houses/public information sessions related to the budget process
- Other (please specify)

**3. I would describe my knowledge of the municipal budget process as:**

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- I don't really understand it
- I am not interested

**4. I would like to know more about or better understand:**

*The actual breakdown of each budget item.*

5. **The City is required by law to balance the budget. A number of strategies are available to accomplish this. Of the following, which would you prefer the City use to balance its annual budget? (select all that apply)**

- Reduce the level of services (e.g. reduced hours, frequency) *based on need of the community.*
- Increase property taxes
- Increase user fees (e.g. ice, room and facility rentals, transit, bag tags) *decrease some of these fees especially*
- Introduce new user fees for some City services that currently have no fees *garbage tags.*
- I have an idea or strategy not listed above (please specify)

6. **Property taxes pay for the delivery of municipal services. This includes maintaining and replacing the assets used to deliver those services. Please choose one of the following statements that you most agree with:**

- I support additional tax increases if it means we can take care of our existing assets and keep service levels the same.
- I want my taxes to stay the same and I am *not* prepared to accept a reduced service level when taxes cannot keep up with asset deterioration.
- I support decreasing taxes, even if it means reduced service levels

7. **Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with the services that your tax dollars currently support:**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Other (please specify)

8. **What municipal services, if any, would you like to see enhanced, or where would you like to see the City dedicate more resources? (Assuming that this could potentially result in a modest tax increase):**

*better snow removal services for streets.  
More side walks - less bike routes.*

9. **What municipal services, if any, would you like to see reduced, or where would you like to see the City dedicate fewer resources? (Assuming that this could potentially result in a modest tax decrease):**

*fewer handouts or deals with industry in regards to <sup>increase</sup> taxes for the people of Stratford.*



**10. What municipal services, if any, should be maintained at the current level, or where does the City dedicate the right amount of resources?**

*- This question is difficult to answer since we don't know the cost of the services provided. Also there should be a list of services attached to this survey in order to comment.*

**11. Thinking about the part of your taxes that go to Stratford (not including the education portion), how would you rate the overall value you receive for your tax dollars?**

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very poor

**12. Some services are paid partially by user fees and partially from taxation, such as recreational facility rentals, transit, and waste management. Do you think this combination approach is appropriate?**

- No. I think all services that have a user fee should be fully user-pay to reduce property taxation subsidization
- No, I think all services should be paid by taxation, and user fees reduced or eliminated, which would result in the tax levy increasing further
- Yes, I think some subsidization from the tax levy is appropriate, like how it is done now
- Other (please specify)

**13. The City provides subsidized rates for certain community services, user groups and offers community grants to qualifying organizations. Do you support the use of taxation dollars for this type of community subsidy even though it may mean higher fees or taxes for others?**

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

14. To maintain levels of service the City has generally increased property taxes at or less than the rate of inflation. With Canada's current 31-year inflation rate high of 7.6%, costs for standard operations have increased. There is an even greater increase in inflation for infrastructure and maintenance at around 17%. Based on your expectations for service levels, what is your acceptable level of tax increase in 2023? Please note this is for illustrative purposes and does not reflect actual property tax changes. For a residential property assessed at \$350,000 (2022 median assessed value), a 1% rate increase equates to approximately \$50.06 per year.

- Decrease Property taxes or 0% increase
- Up to 2% increase (\$100.12 for the average home)
- 3% increase (\$150.18 for the average home)

Other (please specify) *Assessments of homes are not accurate and should be lowered.*

15. Do you support increasing your local taxes to fund identified strategic priorities, such as affordable housing, climate change or accessibility initiatives?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe/Unsure
- Other (please specify)

16. If there is any other feedback you would like to provide us on the City of Stratford's 2023 budget, please include it below:

*The City needs to better plan for current projects <sup>that are</sup> really needed in the city such as road maintenance, snow removal. The City needs to stop jumping on the latest fads and ideas before anyone else. so that we don't waste money on projects such as lights Stratford. etc. Too much computer of information and not enough print information about Councils. proceedings. and what is going on in Stratford.*

**Thank you for completing our 2023 budget survey. Your feedback matters.**

The personal information you may choose to provide on this form to the City of Stratford is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001 and will be used by City staff for the purposes of informing the 2023 budget. Questions regarding the collection and use of this information may be made to the City Clerk, P.O. Box 818, Stratford, ON, N5A 6W1 or by telephone 519-271-0250 extension 5329 during business hours.

**From:** [Karmen Krueger](#)  
**To:** [Engage Stratford](#)  
**Subject:** RE: 2023 Budget questions for The City of Stratford.  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 4, 2023 2:40:49 PM

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Good afternoon,

Thank you for your email. I am sorry you had difficulties accessing the electronic survey. I am happy to try and answer your questions below, with **responses in red**.

I will be providing your email and the responses in a report for the Finance and Labour Relations Committee next week. The intent is that the questions help Council understand what is important to residents and because you were unable to complete the survey, I hope this is okay with you. I will ensure that all personal references are removed/redacted, and your questions and comments will be anonymous.

Thank you for taking the time to provide some feedback and I hope the responses provided are helpful.

***My working day may not be your working day. Please do not feel obliged to reply to this email outside of your normal working hours.***

**Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA (she, her)**  
**Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer**  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Engage Stratford <engage@stratford.ca>  
**Sent:** January 4, 2023 8:54 AM  
**To:** Karmen Krueger [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: 2023 Budget questions for The City of Stratford.

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 3, 2023 11:05 PM  
**To:** Engage Stratford <engage@stratford.ca>  
**Subject:** 2023 Budget questions for The City of Stratford.

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello

I am not able to get into your engage stratford program on my MacBook Pro because of having an older operating system. This is unfortunate.

I guess there is no other way to do the 2023 Budget Survey. ( paper copy ) ????? I think this was forwarded to you, and was available during the survey period.

I do have some budget questions and I wonder if someone can answer them.

1. Gallery Stratford is a city owned building and I can only find two items. Under Community Services C 3.6 HVAC Replacement \$ 300,000.00 and 2026 Art Gallery Parking Lot \$ 110,000.00. Why are there no other items or expenses for Gallery Stratford showing up on the budget sheets since it is a building owned by the city. Items like snow removal, Utilities and General Maintenance. **The City owns the building and is responsible for the capital and upkeep, but the tenant (Gallery Stratford) is responsible for the day-to-day operating expenses and maintenance through their agreement with the City.**

2. 2023 Capital Budget Summary item D - 5.7 - WPCP investigation and design of a Biogas Facility on page 4 \$ 150,000.00. I thought that this project was cancelled, Please explain if possible. **There was a previous project several years ago that was cancelled. This proposed project is to explore a smaller and less complex design option and will be funded from existing reserve funds. If you refer to page 72/137 of the capital budget document located here, you will find some additional information**

<https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/resources/2023-Budget/MASTER-Draft-2023-Capital-Budget-binder-section.pdf>

3. 2023 Capital Budget Summary page 5 D.7 Fleet carryover of various items from 2019, 2020, and 2022. Why is this happening? The Covid-19 pandemic created some significant supply chain delays for many products and industries. Hybrid fleet vehicles was impacted and there was significant uncertainties around whether restrictions were going to be lifted and when. There has been a 12-24 month delay in being able to order and receive these pieces. They are included again in the 2023 capital plan as these documents represent not only the budget, but the workplan showing all the things that are still planned. If you refer to page 82/137 here there are additional details for each piece: <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/resources/2023-Budget/MASTER-Draft-2023-Capital-Budget-binder-section.pdf>. These carried forward items are funded from existing reserve funds.

4. item G-711-7100 -4050 Contractors - Goose Management \$ 50,000.00. Feel this is a very dangerous program for all the wild life on the river, especially the fact that there are many different species on the river at all times. There is equipment to clean the sidewalks and I am sure summer staff to do it.

5. I think you would get more response if you had an in house meeting to explain the budget to residence who would like to take more interest and have many questions about the budget and how to understand it. You could put the items on overhead screens and residence could answer questions.

6. Cannot find out how much the city spends on lawyers fees. Where is that information? Several divisions carry a legal expense budget line. If you refer to the operating budget document here: <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/resources/2023-Budget/MASTER-Draft-2023-Operating-Budget-binder-section.pdf>, and word search 'legal' it shows up in a number of areas. Most divisional legal expenses are minor, and relate to their specific departmental needs, such as building permitting matters, policing matters, etc, to best match the expense with the division. The largest legal line shows in division 139 General Government, under 'Other Financial Services' with \$80,000 projected for 2023 which represents those legal fees more corporate or general in nature. The total amount budgeted for legal fees in 2023 is \$288,245, spread over 15 divisions. This is in comparison to the \$273,063 budgeted in 2022, and \$279,591 in 2021.

7. The new E - V Charging stations should not be located in a regular parking spot. This will mean a car that needs to be charged could stay there longer than expected. The new charging stations are very quick and you would not want to use a regular parking spot for E - V charging. I suggest that you locate the E - V charging stations at all the EMPTY GAS STATIONS SITTING AT MANY CORNERS on STRATFORD STREETS. Go in and out very quickly.

8. If there is surplus money in some departments, does that money go into a general fund called SURPLUS for the entire city? Some surpluses are legislatively required to be directed to a separate reserve or reserve fund (such as building inspection/permit division or water/wastewater divisions. Others have been directed to a specific reserve by Council resolution or by the City's reserve and reserve fund policy approved by Council, such as reserves established for Winter Maintenance or Election purposes. In 2022, Council approved an amendment relating to police and library reserves to be directed to their capital reserve funds respectively. Those departments and divisions that are not explicitly directed to a specific reserve end up in the City's Tax Stabilization Reserve. This is used to mitigate tax increases, by using prior year surpluses to offset the effects of increasing costs. In 2022, the increase to the budget was reduced by \$1 million, and in 2023, there is a planned use of this reserve to reduce the increases experienced from higher inflation and other pressures of \$1.5 million. Both years were utilizing prior year surpluses.

9. Glad to see that the City Asset Management Plan is up and running. It certainly will be an asset at budget time.





**From:** [Karmen Krueger](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Goose management  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 4, 2023 3:03:30 PM

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Good afternoon,

We are in receipt of all the emails sent. I am sorry you had difficulties accessing the electronic survey.

I will be providing this email in a report for the Finance and Labour Relations Committee next week (minus the external links). The intent is that the questions and feedback help Council understand what is important to residents and because you were unable to complete the survey, I hope this is okay with you. I will ensure that all personal references are removed/redacted, and your questions and comments will be anonymous.

Thank you for taking the time to provide some feedback.

***My working day may not be your working day. Please do not feel obliged to reply to this email outside of your normal working hours.***

**Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA (she, her)**  
**Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 4, 2023 11:25 AM  
**To:** City Clerks <[clerks@stratford.ca](mailto:clerks@stratford.ca)>  
**Subject:** FW: Goose management

-----Original Message-----

From: [noreply@stratford.ca](mailto:noreply@stratford.ca) <[noreply@stratford.ca](mailto:noreply@stratford.ca)> [REDACTED]  
Sent: Friday, December 30, 2022 12:17 PM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Goose management

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Stratford Budget,

I tried filling out the survey, but was unable to do so. Here is my feedback on the 2023 Budget via email. Please add this email to the feedback.

I noticed that Goose Management and Swan Care are part of the budget. Who is contracted to manage geese and swans? Does Stratford consult humane organizations regarding which methods are used? Why is there no information on geese or the wildlife feeding ban on the Animal Control page on Stratford's website? Please add the Goose Management Strategy and other humane information on a variety of wildlife on Stratford.ca.

Thank you for using habitat modifications and for not using culls and egg addling (shaking eggs) to control waterfowl. Culls and egg addling are cruel and ineffective. However, egg oiling is also questionable, as it destroys the unhatched chicks, and may put the parents at risk. According to Environment Canada, egg destruction and sterilization is considered "lethal" and requires a special permit.

Please do not harm the Canada Geese. Please refrain from culls and lethal removal. Please leave the eggs alone too. Please stick to education and coexistence. Here is a generic petition I created against any destructive methods.

Some options on egg addling contradict, but the consensus is that lethal removal of adults or viable chicks is inhumane. If egg control is used, the only humane method is sterilization by oiling eggs before 14 days gestation, using the float test recommended by both PETA and HSUS. Other humane methods of goose management include repellents and herding dogs.

I hope that humane, no kill methods are also used at the Stratford Airport, and throughout Stratford.

Toronto used to only have a feeding ban in parks under its Parks Bylaws. This still allowed feeding and thus conflicts outside of parks. As a result, Toronto will be bringing in a city wildlife feeding ban under its Animal Bylaws in April.

I noticed that Animal Control funding is under Roads. Please create a separate budget category for Animal Services.

I noticed that a Police Canine Vehicle is on the budget. I understand that human police officers rightfully see their animal partners as family, but I am concerned that the police corporation sees them as weapons and equipment. It says on the Toronto Police Board "on average, one dog a year is lost to illness or injury". Dogs are exposed to dangerous people, and are even taught to bite and attack suspects.

Why does Stratford Police "shop" rather than adopt? What happens to the dogs once they retire? Are there checkpoints in place to ensure the retired dogs are either adopted by the handler, adopted out to other loving homes, or go to a sanctuary? Are the Stratford Police looking into non animal alternatives to dogs?

Adoption rather than buying police dogs.

Sanctuaries for dogs.

A retirement and mental health program for retired dogs.

I noticed that Stratford Police run 911 services, and want to have 911 services run by Waterloo Police. Toronto is looking into having a non police outside agency run 911 services. A pilot project through the Gerstien Centre is very effective.

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