AGENDA ~ REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: **June 15, 2026**
TIME: **5:30 PM**
PLACE: **Council Chambers, Cochrane RancheHouse**

1 Call to Order

2 Adoption of Agenda

2a Adoption of Agenda

3 Consent Agenda

4 Adoption of Previous Minutes

4a Adoption of Minutes - Pdf

5 Public Hearings

6 Delegations

6a Delegation ~ Cochrane Public Library - Pdf

7 Business

7a Municipal Land Transfer Request ~ Homestead Property - Pdf

7b Captain Huw Jeffries Park - Pdf

7c 2027-2029 Budget Engagement - Pdf

7d Council Strategic Plan - Pdf

7e 2027 Budget ~ Draft Principles - Pdf

8 Notices of Motion

9 Mayor's Report

10 Councillors' Reports

11 Closed Session

11a Closed Session ~ Legal Privilege ~ Exception under Section 32(1)(a) of the Access to Information Act - Pdf

12 Adjournment

Town of Cochrane Council Report

Meeting:	Regular Council
Meeting Date:	June 15, 2026
Originated By:	David Singh, Manager, Legislative Services
Title:	Adoption of Minutes
Agenda Item:	4a

RECOMMENDED ACTION

That Council adopt the minutes of the June 8, 2026 Regular Council Meeting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

LEGISLATION/AUTHORITY

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

OPTIONS / IMPLICATIONS

ATTACHMENTS

Minutes, June 8, 2026 Regular Council Meeting

MINUTES ~ REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: **Monday, June 8, 2026**
TIME: **5:30 PM**
PLACE: **Council Chambers, Cochrane RancheHouse**

PRESENT:

Councillors:	**M. Fedeyko**
	M. Gale
	L. McDonald
	P. Wilson
ABSENT:	
	M. Nagel
	T. McFadden
	P. Singh
Chief Administrative Officer:	**D. Hyndman**
Executive Director, Infrastructure & Operations:	**S. Hubl**
Executive Director, Community Safety & Wellbeing:	**S. Loe**
Executive Director, People & Strategy:	**K. Blanchette**
Director, Legislative & Administrative Services:	**J. Robertson**
Manager, Legislative Services:	**D. Singh**

1 Call to Order

Deputy Mayor Gale called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

2 Adoption of Agenda

2a Adoption of Agenda

Deputy Mayor Gale requested that item 7b, Mandatory Capital Projects ~ Long-Term Infrastructure Planning Update, be deferred to a future Regular Council meeting and that the Cochrane Schools Status Report be pulled from the consent agenda and brought back to the June 15th Regular Council meeting.

RES # 170/06/26 Moved by Councillor McDonald that Council adopt the agenda as amended.

Carried Unanimously

3 Consent Agenda

3a Adoption of Minutes

RES # 171/06/26 Moved by Councillor Fedeyko that Council adopt the minutes of the June 1, 2026 Regular Council meeting.

Carried Unanimously

4 Adoption of Previous Minutes

5 Public Hearings

6 Delegations

6a Delegation ~ RCMP

RES # 172/06/26 Moved by Councillor McDonald that Council accept the RCMP presentation as information.

Carried Unanimously

7 Business

7a Privacy, Access and Security Policy

RES # 173/06/26 Moved by Councillor Fedeyko that Council approve the Privacy, Access and Security Policy as presented.

Carried Unanimously

8 Notices of Motion

9 Mayor's Report

10 Councillors' Reports

10a Councillors' Reports

RES # 174/06/26 Moved by Councillor Wilson that Council accept the Councillors' Reports as information.

Carried Unanimously

11 Closed Session

12 Adjournment

Deputy Mayor Gale adjourned the meeting at 7:04pm.

Manager, Legislative Services

Deputy Mayor

Town of Cochrane Council Report

Meeting:	Regular Council
Meeting Date:	June 15, 2026
Originated By:	David Singh, Manager, Legislative Services
Title:	Delegation ~ Cochrane Public Library
Agenda Item:	6a

RECOMMENDED ACTION

That Council accepts the presentation by the Cochrane Public Library as information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Christina Caouette, Vice Chair, and Melissa Legacy, Library Director, will provide an update to Council on several items including, Staffing, 2025 Highlights, and Priorities for 2026.

BACKGROUND

Accountability for Increased Funds

- Staffing was increased thanks to funding from a variety of sources, one of which was from the Town of Cochrane. The library will report on how this investment has enhanced operations. This includes a summary of changes implemented, outcomes achieved, and measurable benefits delivered to the community.

2025 Highlights

- Building on the successful completion of many goals from the current Plan of Service, the library will review key accomplishments and metrics and outline next steps to ensure services remain aligned with evolving community needs.

COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

LEGISLATION/AUTHORITY

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

OPTIONS / IMPLICATIONS

<u>Option 1 (Recommended):</u>

That Council accepts the presentation by the Cochrane Public Library as information.

ATTACHMENTS

Town of Cochrane Council Report

Meeting:	Regular Council
Meeting Date:	June 15, 2026
Originated By:	Matt Knox, Director, Social Development
Title:	Municipal Land Transfer Request ~ Homestead Property
Agenda Item:	7a

RECOMMENDED ACTION

That Council decline, at this time, the request to transfer ownership of the municipal lands associated with the Homestead property to the Cochrane Society for Housing Options (CSHO).

That Council direct Administration to continue working collaboratively with CSHO to explore alternative funding, financing, lease-based partnership, and project-specific approaches that support the long-term sustainability and expansion of affordable housing in the community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 2, 2026, Council received a delegation from the Cochrane Society for Housing Options (CSHO) requesting that the Town transfer ownership of the municipal lands associated with the Homestead property to support future affordable housing expansion. In response, Council directed Administration to explore all possible options, including transfer of the Homestead lands, and bring options back for Council's consideration.

Administration reviewed the current leasehold arrangement, potential fee simple transfer, lease-based alternatives, municipal financial support tools, partnership opportunities, and other funding and financing approaches. The purpose of this review was to determine whether permanent transfer of the municipal land asset is necessary, proportionate, and likely to generate measurable affordable housing outcomes that could not reasonably be achieved through less permanent mechanisms.

Through discussions with CSHO, Administration identified that transferring ownership of the lands would provide a moderate increase in the organizations borrowing and financial capacity. However, the practical benefit associated with this increase appears limited when considered against current affordable housing development costs. Based on the information available, the additional borrowing capacity may only support a modest increase of affordable housing inventory unless combined with grants, donated lands, partnership capital or other external funding opportunities.

At this time, Administration has not received a detailed development concept, capital plan, operating pro forma, confirmed funding stack, unit target, affordability commitment, or implementation timeline demonstrating that transfer of the lands is necessary to achieve additional affordable housing outcomes. The request appears primarily intended to improve organizational flexibility and borrowing capacity, rather than to advance a defined, funded, and time-bound affordable housing project.

Administration recognizes CSHO's important role in Cochrane's affordable housing system and the need to strengthen local affordable housing delivery capacity. However, municipal land transfer is one of the most permanent tools available to Council. Administration, therefore, recommends maintaining the existing leasehold structure while continuing to work collaboratively with CSHO and other housing partners to explore future affordable housing

initiatives within the community that better align municipal asset stewardship with affordable housing outcomes.

BACKGROUND

On March 2, 2026, Council received a delegation from the Cochrane Society for Housing Options (CSHO) requesting that the municipal lands associated with the Homestead property be transferred to the organization. CSHO indicated that ownership of the lands would improve its ability to leverage the property to support future financing opportunities and facilitate the expansion of affordable housing inventory within the community.

Currently, CSHO owns and operates the Homestead property under a 60-year land lease agreement with the Town at a nominal annual lease rate of $1.00. The Town retains ownership of the underlying municipal lands.

Following the delegation, Council proceeded in passing the motion:

> That Council direct Administration to explore all of the options, including the transfer of The Homestead lands, and bring back options to Council for their consideration by June 1, 2026.

In response, Administration reviewed the existing leasehold structure, potential fee simple ownership transfer, lease-based alternatives, municipal financial support mechanisms, and other funding and partnership approaches that could support affordable housing objectives. The review considered financial implications, borrowing capacity, municipal asset stewardship, public-interest protections, governance considerations, long-term flexibility, and the degree to which each option could reasonably be expected to generate additional affordable housing outcomes.

Value Assessment

Administration assessed the land transfer request against three primary considerations:

First, whether transfer of the lands would materially increase affordable housing outcomes in Cochrane.

Second, whether the public value created through the transfer would be proportionate to the municipal asset being transferred.

Third, whether the same or similar outcomes could reasonably be achieved through less permanent tools, such as lease amendments, project-specific funding, partnership models, social finance, philanthropic investment, or senior government grants.

Through discussions with CSHO, Administration identified that while transferring ownership of the land would moderately improve CSHO’s borrowing capacity, the practical benefit may be limited relative to the scale of affordable housing development costs. Based on current market conditions and construction pricing, the additional financing capacity may only support a small number of additional units — potentially in the range of three to four units — unless supplemented through

grants, partnerships, donated land, or senior government funding. More details regarding the comparison between ownership and leasehold are provided in Appendix A.

As a result, Administration does not believe the additional financing benefit is proportionate, at this time, to the permanent transfer of a municipal land asset assessed at approximately $4.724 million. The existing lease structure already enables CSHO to operate affordable housing at the site while allowing the Town to retain long-term ownership, public control, and strategic flexibility over the underlying lands.

Administration recognizes that land ownership may provide CSHO with additional flexibility. However, flexibility alone is not sufficient public-interest rationale for transferring a significant municipal asset for nominal consideration. In Administration's view, any future consideration of land transfer should be tied to a defined business case that identifies the number of net new affordable units, affordability depth, affordability duration, capital funding sources, debt-servicing approach, operating sustainability, delivery timeline, and enforceable protections for the Town.

Based on the information available, Administration concludes that the broader issue may be less about land ownership itself and more about strengthening the long-term financial, operational, and development capacity required to expand affordable housing in Cochrane. For that reason, Administration recommends maintaining the existing leasehold structure while continuing to explore other tools that may provide a stronger connection between municipal support and measurable affordable housing outcomes.

Alternative Financing and Collaboration Opportunities

Social Finance and Impact Investment

In addition to traditional mortgage financing through conventional banking institutions, CSHO may benefit from further exploration of social finance and impact investment models. A number of organizations and funding models exist within Alberta that are specifically designed to support community-benefit and affordable housing initiatives. These may provide access to flexible capital, lower-interest financing, patient capital, recoverable grants, or community-based investment models.

Examples include the Social Enterprise Fund in Edmonton, the Calgary Foundation's Impact Investing Program, Community Futures Centre West, the UCeed Social Impact Fund Program, the Alberta Real Estate Foundation, and Partners for Affordable Housing, among others. These organizations may provide access to flexible financing, lower-interest capital, social investment opportunities, or community-based funding models, such as those listed in Appendix B, that align more closely with affordable housing objectives.

Private and Non-Profit Housing Partnerships

There may also be opportunities to pursue partnership arrangements with private developers, other non-profit housing providers, philanthropic partners, or other community housing organizations. Under this type of model, development risk, capital requirements, operational responsibilities, or debt obligations may be shared across multiple partners. Such partnerships

may be particularly useful where affordable housing development requires a combination of land, capital, development expertise, operating capacity, and senior government funding.

Philanthropic Investment and Land Contributions

In addition, opportunities may continue to exist to secure lands at low or nominal cost through donations or collaborative development arrangements. These approaches may support future affordable housing projects without requiring the Town to permanently transfer existing municipal land assets in advance of a defined project. Additional details regarding these initiatives are anticipated through the forthcoming Housing Strategy and Action Plan.

COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Formal public engagement is not anticipated for the recommended action, as Administration is recommending that the Town retain ownership of the Homestead lands and continue working with CSHO and other housing partners on alternative approaches. Should Council wish to proceed with a land transfer, lease amendment, municipal financial contribution, loan, guarantee, or other formal transaction, Administration would complete further legal, financial, and procedural review to confirm applicable Municipal Government Act requirements, public notice requirements, title considerations, land-use implications, and any required Council approvals.
The proposal and associated implications would still be considered through a public Council process, ensuring transparency and opportunity for public awareness.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The primary financial implication to the Town associated with transferring the Homestead lands to the Cochrane Society for Housing Options (CSHO) would be the relinquishment of a municipal land interest tied to a property assessed at approximately **$4,724,700**. While the building itself is owned by CSHO, the Town would permanently forgo ownership, future appreciation value, and long-term strategic control of the underlying land asset through a nominal $1.00 transfer.

The recommended action does not create a new direct financial obligation for the Town.
However, continued work with CSHO and other housing partners may identify future funding, financing, lease-based, partnership, or project-specific options that could require future Council consideration through the appropriate budget, legal, or approval processes.

If Council chooses to pursue a land transfer, municipal contribution, loan, guarantee, or other financial support mechanism, further financial analysis would be required to assess municipal exposure, opportunity cost, debt implications, risk, and public benefit.

LEGISLATION/AUTHORITY

The *Municipal Government Act, 2000,* provides municipalities with the authority to acquire, hold, lease, and dispose of municipal lands. Pursuant to Sections 7, 9, and 70 of the MGA, Council may approve the transfer of municipal lands to a not-for-profit housing provider, subject to applicable legislative requirements, municipal policies, and any conditions Council considers necessary to protect the public interest and long-term affordable housing objectives.

If Council wishes to proceed with a land transfer or other disposition of the Homestead lands, Administration would complete further legal review to confirm title considerations, statutory notice requirements, land designation, public-interest protections, and any required agreements or registered instruments.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The proposed recommendation aligns with Council's 2022–2025 Strategic Plan by supporting affordable housing objectives while maintaining prudent financial stewardship and long-term municipal flexibility.

Livability:
The recommendation supports livability by continuing to advance affordable housing opportunities and supporting a range of housing options within the community through ongoing collaboration with the Cochrane Society for Housing Options (CSHO) and other housing partners.

Financial & Environmental Stewardship:
The recommendation supports stewardship by maintaining municipal ownership of the Homestead lands and preserving long-term strategic flexibility over a significant municipal asset, while balancing future affordable housing objectives with responsible asset management and financial decision-making.

Built Environment:
The recommendation supports the built environment by continuing to encourage the expansion of affordable housing inventory and exploration of alternative housing delivery approaches that contribute to a more inclusive and diverse housing system.

Intentional Relationships:
The recommendation advances intentional relationships by continuing collaborative discussions with CSHO regarding alternative funding models, social finance opportunities, philanthropic investment, and other approaches that support the long-term sustainability and expansion of affordable housing within Cochrane.

OPTIONS / IMPLICATIONS

Option 1 (Recommended):

That Council decline, at this time, the request to transfer ownership of the municipal lands associated with the Homestead property to the Cochrane Society for Housing Options.

That Council direct Administration to continue working collaboratively with CSHO to explore alternative funding, financing, lease-based partnership, and project-specific approaches that support the long-term sustainability and expansion of affordable housing in the community.

Implications:

Maintains Municipal Control of the Property

- Retaining ownership preserves the Town's long-term control and flexibility over the Homestead lands and their future use.

Protects Public Interest and Reduces Precedent Concerns

- Declining the transfer at this time avoids permanently transferring a significant municipal land asset without a defined project, confirmed funding plan, clear unit yield, affordability commitment, or implementation timeline. Maintaining municipal ownership helps reduce precedent concerns associated with transferring municipal assets for nominal consideration without a clearly defined and enforceable public benefit.

Supports Continued Affordable Housing Collaboration

- The recommendation does not end the Town's support for affordable housing or its relationship with CSHO. It allows Administration to continue working with CSHO and other partners on funding, financing, lease-based, partnership, and project-specific approaches.

Allows Future Reconsideration if a Business Case is Provided

- The recommendation does not prevent Council from reconsidering land transfer or other municipal support in the future if CSHO or another housing partner brings forward a defined project with clear affordable housing outcomes, confirmed funding sources, and appropriate public-interest protections.

Option 2:

That Council direct administration to further explore the transfer of the municipal lands associated with the Homestead property to the Cochrane Society for Housing Options for nominal consideration of $1.00, subject to legal review and registration of public-interest protections on title, and subject to community engagement.

Implications:

May Support Long-Term Affordable Housing Objectives

- Transferring the lands to the Cochrane Society for Housing Options may provide some support for the long-term operation and potential future expansion of affordable housing at the Homestead site.

Requires Strong Public Interest Protections

- If Council proceeds with transfer, Administration recommends that any transfer be subject to robust protections, including affordability covenants, restrictions on sale or refinancing, reporting obligations, project milestones, and a mechanism for the Town to regain ownership if affordable housing use ceases or agreed outcomes are not achieved.

Creates Precedent and Public Perception Risk

- Transferring municipal land for nominal consideration may create public concern and expectations from other organizations seeking similar treatment.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Value & Risk Assessment: Continued Lease versus Land Ownership
Attachment B - Alternative Financing Options for Affordable Housing

Value & Risk Assessment
Continued Lease versus Land Ownership

Item	Current Lease Structure	Land Ownership Transfer	Implications
Mortgage Amount	-	-	Ownership moderately increases borrowing capacity by approximately **39.06%**.
Loan-to-Value Ratio	50%	70%	Ownership allows CSHO to leverage a greater portion of the property value.
Additional Financing Capacity	Lower	Higher	The incremental borrowing capacity is relatively modest in the context of new affordable housing development costs.
Estimated Housing Yield	Limited	Limited	Based on current construction costs, the additional financing capacity may only support approximately **3–4 additional affordable housing units**, depending on unit type and subsidy availability.
Security Position	Town retains land ownership through lease arrangement	CSHO holds land title	Ownership provides CSHO with greater control over the asset and potentially more flexibility with lenders.
Municipal Control	Higher	Lower	The Town maintains stronger long-term control and flexibility under the lease model.
Risk Exposure	Lower municipal disposition risk	Higher political/governance sensitivity	A $1 land transfer may attract public scrutiny regarding the disposition of municipal assets. Establishes a precedent that any future land lease agreement with not-for-profit organizations will result in future ownership.
Financing Complexity	Simpler governance structure	Potential covenant/title restriction complications	Right-of-first-refusal clauses and affordable housing covenants may reduce lender flexibility despite ownership transfer.

Alternative Financing Options for Affordable Housing

Financing structures that may support affordable housing initiatives

FOR LOANS

Investment Type	Maximum % of Portfolio	Term of Investments	Interest Rate / Coupon Rate	Potential Affordable Housing Applications
ASSET-BACKED FINANCING *(Bridge financing, mortgages, fundraising, or other uses supported by strong security)*	No limit	75% of investments in this category mature within **10 years.**	4.3% – 7.3% (secured first position) 4.6% – 8.3% (other secured position)	Affordable housing developments, building acquisitions, capital improvements, or property purchases.
BRIDGE FINANCING *(No underlying asset backing)*	10%	75% of investments in this category mature within **2 years.**	4.7% – 9.2%	Pre-development work, construction planning, or interim financing pending grant approvals.
OPERATIONAL FINANCING *(De-risked or proven track record)*	25%	75% of investments in this category mature within **5 years.**	4.95% – 9.2%	Organizational scaling, program expansion, staffing, and long-term affordable housing growth initiatives.

Note: Interest rates are indicative ranges and may vary based on market conditions, credit quality, and security position.

Source: Social Enterprise Fund https://socialenterprisefund.ca/faqs/

Town of Cochrane Council Report

Meeting:	Regular Council
Meeting Date:	June 15, 2026
Originated By:	Carly Davies, Manager, Parks and Recreation Services
Title:	Captain Huw Jeffries Park
Agenda Item:	7b

RECOMMENDED ACTION

That Council approves the park at 59 Emberside Green in Fireside be named the "Captain Huw Jeffries Park".

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Administration is recommending that the park located at 59 Emberside Green in Fireside be officially named "Captain Huw Jeffries Park" in recognition of Captain Huw Jeffries' longstanding service and contributions to the Cochrane community.

The honorary naming request was initiated by Captain Jeffries' family, who approached Administration to inquire whether the Town would consider recognizing Captain Jeffries through the naming of a public park space. Following the request, Administration reviewed the proposal in accordance with Policy 2303-03 Naming of Streets & Public Areas and evaluated potential municipal parks that would meet the policy criteria for honorary naming.

Administration identified the park at 59 Emberside Green as an appropriate location due to its size, visibility, and role as a community gathering space. Throughout the review process, Administration worked collaboratively with the Jeffries family, Cochrane RCMP, the Interim Fire Chief, the Parks and Recreation Committee, CHAPS, and the development community to ensure the proposal aligned with both the intent of the policy and the significance of Captain Jeffries' contributions to Cochrane.

Captain Jeffries served the Town and community for more than three decades and was widely recognized for his leadership, commitment to public safety, mentorship, and dedication to the community. His service included receiving the Governor General of Canada's Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal in 2013.

Administration believes the proposed naming appropriately recognizes Captain Jeffries' lasting contributions to the Cochrane community and respectfully aligns with the Town's Naming of Streets & Public Areas Policy.

BACKGROUND

Policy 2303-03 Naming of Streets & Public Areas provides direction for the naming of municipal parks, pathways, natural areas, and public facilities in recognition of individuals, families, or organizations that have made significant contributions to the community.

The request to honour Captain Huw Jeffries through the naming of a public park was initiated by the Jeffries family, who approached Administration to inquire about potential recognition opportunities through the Town's honorary naming process. Following the request,

Administration reviewed the proposal in accordance with the policy and evaluated potential municipal park spaces that met the policy criteria.

Administration identified the park located at 59 Emberside Green in Fireside as an appropriate location for honorary naming. In accordance with the policy, the park exceeds the minimum one-acre size requirement and serves as a prominent community gathering space that reflects the community-oriented legacy of Captain Jeffries. The proposed park signage would be installed at the north entrance near the pergola and fire features.

As part of the review process, Administration confirmed that no other municipal parks or public areas within the Town carry the same or a phonetically similar name.

Captain Jeffries served the Cochrane community for more than three decades through Cochrane Fire Services and was widely recognized for his leadership, commitment to public safety, mentorship, and service to the community both on and off duty. His contributions included receiving the Governor General of Canada's Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal in 2013.

Throughout the review process, Administration engaged with the Jeffries family, Cochrane Fire Services, the Interim Fire Chief, the Cochrane RCMP, CHAPS, the Parks and Recreation Committee, and representatives from the development community. Administration received positive feedback and support for the proposed honorary naming.

The current Naming of Streets & Public Areas Policy was originally approved in 2003 and last updated in 2011. Through this review process, Administration identified opportunities to modernize and clarify portions of the policy, including updating consultation requirements related to organizations that no longer exist and refining the public area naming review process. Administration is currently reviewing and updating the policy and anticipates bringing proposed amendments forward to Council in Fall 2026.

COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Administration undertook consultation in alignment with the intent of Policy 2303-03 Naming of Streets & Public Areas. Throughout the review process, Administration engaged with the Jeffries family, Cochrane Fire Services, the Interim Fire Chief, the Cochrane RCMP, CHAPS, the Parks and Recreation Committee, and representatives from the development community. Administration received positive feedback and support for the proposed honorary naming.

Should Council approve the recommendation, Administration anticipates coordinating a future park sign unveiling with the Jeffries family once the signage has been completed and installed. Members of Council may be invited to participate should they wish to attend.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Administration has worked collaboratively with Communications to ensure the proposed park signage aligns with current municipal branding and wayfinding standards. The estimated cost for the design and installation of the signage is approximately $2,500 and will be accommodated within the Parks & Active Living operating budget. Should Council approve the recommendation, Administration anticipates installation of the park signage later in 2026.

LEGISLATION/AUTHORITY

Town of Cochrane Policy 2303-03 Naming of Streets & Public Areas.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The proposed honorary naming of Captain Huw Jeffries Park aligns with Council's Strategic Plan and Envision Cochrane 2050 by recognizing individuals who have made significant contributions to the community and helping preserve Cochrane's unique identity, history, and sense of place. The recommendation supports the Strategic Plan aspirations of Identity by celebrating a community leader whose service helped shape Cochrane, and Connectivity by creating a public space that fosters community connection and remembrance.

The recommendation also aligns with Envision Cochrane 2050's commitment to preserving Cochrane's character, culture, and community values while supporting vibrant public spaces that contribute to quality of life and community belonging.

OPTIONS / IMPLICATIONS

Option 1 (Recommended):

That Council approves the park at 59 Emberside Green in Fireside be named the "Captain Huw Jeffries Park".

> *Implications: Naming the park "Captain Huw Jeffries Park" recognizes and commemorates Captain Huw Jeffries' contributions and service to the community while providing a formal identity for the municipal park space.*

Option 2:

That Council provide further direction to Administration.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Map of the Park
2. Photo of the proposed sign
3. Policy 2303-03 Naming of Streets & Public Areas

Emberside Place
PROPOSED
CAPTAIN
HUW JEFFRIES
PARK
Emberside Green
Emberside Hollow

CAPTAIN HUW JEFFRIES PARK

HOURS OF OPERATION **5 A.M. - 11 P.M.**
REPORT CONCERNS TO **PARKS@COCHRANE.CA**
EMERGENCIES, CALL **9-1-1**

59 EMBERSIDE GREEN

cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

	Town of Cochrane Policy
Policy No.: **Policy Title:** **Approval Date:** **Revision Date:** **Department:**	**2303-03** **Naming of Streets and Public Areas** **April 14, 2003** **September 24, 2007** **June 13, 2011** **Community Services & Planning & Engineering Services**

Policy Statement:

The Town will name municipal parks, pathways, natural areas or other public facilities to honour individuals or groups in recognition of their historical significance, volunteer contribution or national/international celebrity status.

The Town will ensure that all local streets and major roadways are named in accordance with this Policy.

1. Reason for Policy

1.1 The Town of Cochrane believes in the naming of public areas to honour individuals, families and/or organizations that have made significant contributions to the community. Contributions that have been made in the following areas may be recognized:

- Volunteerism
- Historical
- Celebrity
- Honorary

1.2 The Town of Cochrane believes in naming streets to provide a sense of community within developments, and to recognize natural, historical or environmental features, and/or contributing persons and organizations of the Town, in the naming of major roadways.

2. Definitions

2.1 "Public areas" means publicly owned and/or operated facilities, parks, pathways, playgrounds, natural areas and significant public landmarks.

2.2 "Major Roadways" means roads, and associated right-of-ways, developed at a collector standard or greater, as defined by the Town of Cochrane Transportation Master Plan, or similar document, as may be amended from time to time.

2.3 "Local Streets" means roads, and associated right-of-ways, that are not developed at less than a collector standard, as defined by the Town of Cochrane Transportation Master Plan, or similar document, as may be amended from time to time.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. Town Council to:

3.1.1 Approve by resolution this policy and any amendments.

3.1.2 Consider the allocation of resources for successful implementation of this policy in the annual budget process.

3.1.3 Invite the Cochrane and Area Heritage Association and the Cochrane Historical and Archival Preservation Society to provide recommendations to Council for the naming of public areas.

3.1.4 Review recommendations for the naming of public areas and to formally approve names for public areas.

3.2 Chief Administrative Officer to:

3.2.1 Implement this policy and approve procedures.

3.2.2 Ensure policy and procedure reviews occur and verify the implementation of policies and procedures.

3.3 Directors of the Departments to:

3.3.1 Ensure implementation of this policy and procedure.

3.3.2 Ensure that this policy and procedure is reviewed every three years.

3.3.3 Make recommendations to the Chief Administrative Officer of necessary policy or procedure amendments.

3.4 Supervisor to:

3.4.1 Understand and adhere to this policy.

3.4.2 Ensure employees are aware of this policy and procedures.

3.5. All Employees to:

3.5.1 Understand and adhere to this policy.

4. End of Policy

	Town of Cochrane Procedure
Policy No.: **Policy Title:** **Department:**	**2303-03** **Naming of Streets and Public Areas** **Community Services & Planning & Engineering Services**

1. General Guidelines

1.1 The Parks and Facilities Section will maintain a list of all public areas that may be named in honour of individuals, families or organizations. Public parks/natural areas to be named should be not less than one acre in size. Pathways to be named shall have a natural start and end point and should be not less than one kilometre in length.

1.2 The Planning Services Section will maintain a database of all street names and will work with developers to ensure that no local street or major roadways names are duplicated within the Town of Cochrane.

2. Naming of Streets

2.1 The names of collector or arterial streets which traverse more than one subdivision or community area should reflect natural, historical or environmental features, or contributing persons/organizations of the Town (i.e. Big Hill, Bow River, Quigley, George Fox etc.).

2.2 A list of recommended names for major roadways shall be prepared by Planning Services, with the assistance of the Cochrane and Area Heritage Association or the Cochrane Historical Archival and Preservation Society as required.

2.3 Planning Services shall provide a recommended list of names for major roadways to landowners over which a major roadway will traverse.

2.4 Local streets and major roadway names shall be suggested by developers at the time of subdivision and approved as part of the Subdivision Approval process. In the event that a major roadway is developed outside of the subdivision process, the Senior Leadership Team will determine roadway name.

2.5 Where suitable, the name of local streets shall be prefixed with the name or names associated with the subdivision or community area in which they are located (i.e. Gleneagles Close, Eagleview Way).

2.5 Where suitable, the name of local streets shall be prefixed with the name or names associated with the subdivision or community area in which they are located (i.e. Gleneagles Close, Eagleview Way).

3. Naming of Public Areas

3.1 In naming a public area, the name shall not be duplicated nor shall it approximate phonetically the name of any other public areas, already named within the Town of Cochrane or within the urban fringe area having regard to the possibility of future annexation.

3.2 The name may have some historical significance to Cochrane such that the name shall reflect aboriginal activity and original names in the local area, early pioneers; or pioneering ethnic groups who resettled and developed the town and surrounding areas; or persons who have contributed to and/or participated in a broad range of public services and/or community activities.

3.3 The Town of Cochrane shall encourage suggestions for the naming of public areas. Suggestions should clearly state the historical significance; volunteerism, contribution, or celebrity of the individual, family or organization to be honored.

3.4 All suggested names will be referred to the Cochrane and Area Heritage Association and the Cochrane Historical and Archival Preservation Society for review and recommendation to Council.

3.5 Council will review the recommendations from the Cochrane and Area Heritage Association and the Cochrane Historical and Archival Preservation Society and designate public areas to be named in honor of the organization, individual, or family suggested.

3.6 All submissions shall be received confidentially and reviewed "In Camera" by Council. Only submissions that are chosen will be identified publicly.

3.7 The Parks and Facilities Section will prepare and install appropriate signage identifying the names of public areas

3.8 Parkland that is dedicated for the development of schools and school playfields should be named by the school jurisdiction constructing the school.

4. End of Procedure

Approval

Julian deCocq, C.A.O.

Jun. 22 2011
Date

Town of Cochrane Council Report

Meeting:	Regular Council
Meeting Date:	June 15, 2026
Originated By:	Kristin Huybrecht, Manager, Communications & Engagement
Title:	2027-2029 Budget Engagement
Agenda Item:	7c

RECOMMENDED ACTION

That Council receive the 2026 Budget Engagement Results Report for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To support Administration's preparation of the draft 2027–2029 budget for Council's consideration and forthcoming budget deliberations, the Town conducted a comprehensive public engagement process designed to gather meaningful input from residents about budget priorities and values.

Led by the Town's Communications and Engagement team, the 2026 engagement program built on previous years while incorporating refinements to better align with Council's current priorities and information needs. Building on past efforts, the program included a statistically valid survey conducted by Advanis, a third-party research firm, through online and telephone channels. The survey was updated in 2026 to better reflect current community priorities while maintaining select trend measures from previous years.

Additionally, to gather more in-depth qualitative feedback, the Town partnered with Parsons Dialogue to facilitate an in-person focus group.

Engagement activities took place throughout the spring of 2026, with 1,031 survey responses collected and valuable insights gathered through a facilitated focus group involving 16 residents. The feedback collected reflects a broad range of resident perspectives and highlights priorities related to infrastructure investment, growth management, community character, fiscal sustainability and municipal service delivery.

The findings will help inform the development of the draft 2027–2029 budget, future budget communications, and ongoing public engagement efforts.

BACKGROUND

Purpose

To support Administration's preparation of the draft 2027–2029 budget for Council's consideration and deliberations, the Town conducted a comprehensive public engagement process designed to gather meaningful input from residents about budget priorities, service levels, taxation, infrastructure investment, growth, and community values.

Engagement approach

Led by the Town's Communications and Engagement team, this year's engagement approach built on previous years while incorporating refinements to better align with Council's current priorities and information needs.

The 2026 engagement program included:

- A marketing campaign to encourage survey participation, supported by a letter mailed to all Cochrane households, each containing a personalized survey link.
- A statistically valid survey conducted by Advanis, a third-party research firm, via online and telephone channels.
- In-person engagement at the Cochrane Chamber Trade Show (May 2–3, 2026).
- A facilitated in-person focus group held at the RancheHouse on April 29, 2026, conducted by Parsons Dialogue.

The focus group format, introduced in 2025 and continued in 2026, provides qualitative insight into residents' values, expectations and perspectives on municipal budgeting.

Consultant partnerships

- **Advanis:** Conducted the online and telephone survey using a representative sample of landline and mobile phone numbers. The consultant's What We Heard report is attached.
- **Parsons Dialogue:** Facilitated the in-person focus group and provided a thematic analysis of resident input to complement the survey findings. The consultant's What We Heard report is attached.

Participation summary

- 1,031 survey responses were collected through mailed survey invitations and telephone interviews (Advanis), an increase from 976 responses in 2025.
- 16 residents participated in the facilitated focus group, compared with 15 participants in 2025.

The survey and focus group findings provide insight into resident priorities, perceptions and expectations regarding municipal services, infrastructure investment, taxation, growth and long-term financial sustainability.

Key themes from the survey

In 2026, the Town of Cochrane updated its budget survey to better align with Council's current priorities and the evolving needs of the community. Working collaboratively with Advanis, the Town reviewed previous survey content to determine which questions should be retained, revised, removed or added. The result was a streamlined survey designed to capture key insights related to citizen perceptions, service delivery, infrastructure investment, taxation and budget priorities while improving usability and reducing respondent burden. As a result of the redesign, trend comparisons are only available for select questions.

Overall, the survey results indicate strong satisfaction with life in Cochrane, positive perceptions of municipal services, and continued support for maintaining critical infrastructure and long-term fiscal sustainability.

Key themes that emerged from the survey included:

- **High quality of life:** A new question introduced in the 2026 survey found that 99% of respondents rated Cochrane's quality of life as acceptable or better, with 39% rating it as very good. These results exceed municipal benchmark levels and establish a baseline for future measurement.
- **Positive perceptions of municipal services:** Most respondents (82%) felt Town services and infrastructure adequately meet community needs, and 65% expressed confidence in the Town's long-term planning.

- **Strong perceived value for taxes:** Sixty-five percent of respondents indicated they receive good value for their municipal taxes, exceeding the provincial benchmark. Infrastructure maintenance and service levels were identified as key contributors to perceived value.
- **Infrastructure investment remains a priority:** Roads, transportation infrastructure, utilities, public safety facilities, parks and recreation emerged as top service and infrastructure priorities.
- **Focus on long-term sustainability:** Long-term fiscal sustainability was identified as the highest budget priority, with respondents supporting investments that maintain existing infrastructure and services.
- **Mixed views on taxes and service levels:** While a slight majority preferred maintaining or lowering taxes through service adjustments, respondents were nearly evenly divided when presented with a modest tax increase dedicated to preserving current infrastructure and service levels.
- **Limited awareness of tax distribution:** Many residents were unaware of Cochrane's comparatively low municipal tax rate and the proportion of property taxes allocated to provincial education funding, highlighting opportunities for continued public education.
- **Survey awareness and participation:** Direct mail was the most effective awareness channel, with 65% of respondents indicating they learned about the survey through the mailed invitation. Other awareness channels included road signs, telephone outreach, email, social media, the Town website, the Town app, newspapers, radio and other sources.

Overall, survey results reinforce the importance residents place on maintaining critical infrastructure, ensuring responsible financial management, and balancing growth with service and infrastructure needs.

Key themes from the focus group

The Town hosted a focus group with 16 residents to explore perspectives on key budget priorities, including infrastructure investment, taxation, service levels, growth and community character. Participants represented a range of ages, life stages and lengths of residency, providing diverse viewpoints on the challenges and opportunities facing Cochrane.

Key themes that emerged from the discussion included:

- **Infrastructure first:** Residents generally supported prioritizing investment in critical infrastructure and maintaining existing assets over developing new amenities.
- **Growth management:** Participants expressed concerns about the pace of growth and emphasized the importance of ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with development.
- **Community character:** Maintaining Cochrane's unique identity and western character was identified as an important consideration in future planning and development decisions.
- **Stable taxes and fiscal responsibility:** Residents preferred stable taxes and wanted clear explanations of the costs, benefits, and outcomes associated with any tax increases.
- **Operational efficiency:** Participants encouraged the Town to continue pursuing efficiencies and exploring opportunities to maximize value for taxpayers.
- **Future priorities:** Transportation connectivity, affordable housing, infrastructure renewal, and long-term financial sustainability were identified as important priorities for Council's consideration.

Feedback on budget communications was positive overall. Participants viewed the Citizens' Budget Book as a valuable tool for increasing transparency and understanding of municipal finances.
Suggestions for future improvements included:

- More detailed financial information and context.
- Interactive or drill-down features to explore budget information.
- Clearer cost-benefit explanations for major investments and budget decisions.
- More in-depth survey questions and decision-making scenarios to support informed public input.

The written letters submitted to Council at the conclusion of the session reinforced these themes, particularly the importance of infrastructure investment, fiscal responsibility, growth management and maintaining Cochrane's community character.

Actioning the feedback
The survey and focus group findings will help inform the development of the 2027 draft budget and support Administration's understanding of resident priorities, perceptions and expectations related to municipal services, infrastructure investment, taxation, growth and long-term financial sustainability.

Feedback gathered through both engagement activities highlights the importance residents place on maintaining critical infrastructure, ensuring responsible financial management, and balancing growth with community character and service needs. These insights will be considered alongside operational requirements, legislative obligations, Council priorities, and financial constraints as Administration prepares the draft 2027–2029 budget for Council's consideration.

Feedback related to the Citizens' Budget Book and budget engagement process will be used to enhance future budget communications and engagement initiatives. Planned improvements will support greater transparency, understanding of municipal finances, and informed public participation in future budget discussions.

COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

What We Heard reports summarizing the findings from the budget survey and resident focus group will be published on Let's Talk Cochrane by June 16, 2026.

A second phase of public engagement is planned for fall 2026 following Council's review of the draft 2027 budget. Residents will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft budget through Let's Talk Cochrane and participate in a follow-up focus group.

Feedback collected on the Citizens' Budget Book and budget engagement process will be used to enhance future budget communications materials, including the 2027 Citizens' Budget Book. These improvements will support greater transparency, understanding of municipal finances and informed participation in the budget process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2027-2029 budget engagement was delivered within the approved 2026 Communications and Engagement operating budget.

LEGISLATION/AUTHORITY

Sections 242 to 249 of the Alberta *Municipal Government Act* pertain to budget planning and approval. While not required under legislation, public engagement is a best practice that reflects Cochrane's commitment to democratic transparency and resident-informed decision-making.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This initiative directly supports Council's Strategic Plan foundational element of Intentional Relationships, emphasizing meaningful two-way engagement with residents, businesses and community partners. The expanded program also reflects the Town's commitment to continuous improvement in public service delivery and financial stewardship.

OPTIONS / IMPLICATIONS

Option 1 (Recommended):

That Council receive the presentation and report for information.

ATTACHMENTS

What we heard report: 2027-2029 budget - Survey
What we heard report: 2027-2029 budget - Focus Group

ADVANIS

Town of Cochrane

Budget 2027 Survey Results

cochrane
HOW THE WEST IS NOW

May 2026

AUTHOR
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PUBLISH DATE
May 2026

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Advanis is a member of the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC) and confirms that this research fully complies with all CRIC Standards including the CRIC Public Opinion Research Standards and Disclosure Requirements. This research was sponsored by the Town of Cochrane and conducted by Advanis. For information about data collection, please contact Patrick Kyba at pkyba@advanis.net.

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1. Background and Objectives

In early 2026, the Town of Cochrane contracted Advanis to design and administer the 2027 Town of Cochrane Budget Survey. The purpose of the study was to gather statistically valid and representative feedback from Town residents to help inform the Town's 2027 budget planning process and support municipal decision-making. Specifically, the research was designed to engage a broad and demographically representative sample of Cochrane residents, generate statistically sound insights supported by clearly defined methodology and confidence intervals, and provide actionable findings aligned with the Town's strategic priorities and fiscal planning cycle.

Advanis was responsible for the end-to-end delivery of the project, including survey design support, data collection, analysis, progress reporting, and preparation of this report. The study was designed to ensure representation across key demographic and geographic segments of the community. In total, 1,031 Town of Cochrane residents aged 17 and older completed the survey between April 2nd and May 6th, 2026.

This report presents the findings from the 2027 Town of Cochrane Budget Survey. Where applicable, results are compared with findings from previous budget engagement surveys to identify shifts or trends in resident perceptions, priorities, and opinions over time.

2. Methodology

All components of the project were designed and executed in close consultation with the Town of Cochrane. A detailed description of each task of the project is outlined in the remainder of this section.

2.1 Project Planning

Advanis team members reviewed the relevant documents and met with Town employees charged with leading this research to ensure total understanding of the purpose and needs of this study. Both the Town and Advanis agreed upon a research methodology and detailed work plan.

2.2 Survey Design

In 2026, the Town of Cochrane made the decision to update its budget survey to better align with the changing needs of the Town and Council. To ensure the new survey met the current goals, Advanis worked closely with the Town to review and prioritize key research objectives. This collaborative process informed decisions about which questions from the previous iterations of the survey to retain, revise, or remove as well as what new questions needed to be added. The result was a refined questionnaire that captures essential insights about citizen perceptions and budget planning priorities while also improving survey usability and reducing respondent burden. Note that given the survey was redesigned, trending is only available for select results.

The survey was then programmed and tested, and the Town had an opportunity to review the survey online and provide additional feedback. A text version of the final questionnaire is provided in the Appendix (section 5.4).

2.3 Survey Population and Data Collection

Advanis acquired a random set of landline telephone numbers and used Advanis' proprietary General Population Random Sample[1] wireless numbers for the Town of Cochrane. Potential participants were contacted by telephone and recruited to complete the online survey. A link to the online survey was provided either by email or text message.

Advanis also worked with the Town to design a letter to recruit households to complete the survey. The letter instructed residents to either manually text Advanis or scan a QR code (which would text Advanis) to receive a unique link to the online survey. The Town had the addressed letters printed and delivered to every household in Cochrane. In total, 1,031 residents completed the survey through this recruiting approach. For comparison, 820 respondents were recruited by letter and 205 respondents were recruited by telephone this year. Specific details of the recruitment letter used can be found in the Appendix (section 5.5).

Given that every household was invited to participate through the addressed letter campaign, this component of the research is considered a census rather than an open public survey. As all households had already been provided with instructions on how to access the survey, the Town was also able to promote awareness of the survey through the Let's Talk Cochrane website, social media channels, roadside signage, Town app, email communications, radio, and newspaper advertisements. These communications served to remind and encourage already-invited residents to participate, rather than broaden eligibility beyond the intended census population. Access to the survey remained controlled, as residents were required to request a unique survey link from Advanis and could only complete the survey once.

[1] For more information, visit https://www.advanis.net/general-population-random-sample-gprs.

Although survey respondents were recruited different ways (i.e., telephone and letter), both methodologies are considered statistically representative. Indeed, telephone recruitment is considered a random sample, while providing a letter to every household is considered conducting a census. Furthermore, since all respondents completed the survey online, we can be confident that the methodology is sufficiently consistent with previous years to allow for trending analysis.

The Town remains cognizant of the increased use of mobile devices within our community and recognized the importance of creating a mobile friendly platform for the 2027 Budget Planning Survey in order to engage all Cochrane residents most effectively. As mentioned, the survey platform used in 2025 allowed for a mobile-optimized experience ensuring that those who chose to complete the survey on a smartphone or tablet could do so with ease. In total, 79% of surveys collected for this report were completed on a mobile device.

A pre-test of the survey was conducted on April 2, 2026. The purpose of the pre-test was to ensure the survey was functioning as intended on the survey platform by collecting a limited number of completed surveys and reviewing the results. Since data checks did not flag any concerns, the survey was fully launched (and these results are included in this report). The primary fielding dates for the remainder of residents who completed the survey were from April 2nd and May 6th, 2026. In total, 1,031 residents completed the survey which implies a margin of error no greater than ±3.0% at 95% confidence.

2.4 Survey Awareness

Survey participants were asked if they recalled seeing or hearing an advertisement for the survey. In total, 65% mentioned that they learned about the survey from the letter they received in the mail. Other channels include 15% from road signs, 15% received a call, 10% from e-mail, 6% from social media, 5% from the Town of Cochrane website, 3% from the Town of Cochrane application, 3% from newspaper, 1% from radio, and 3% saw or heard an advertisement for the survey somewhere else.

2.5 Analysis

- Data for which the base of respondents is less than 30 are generally not reported.
- To simplify reporting, chart labels for values under 5% may not be shown.
- Results have been rounded to remove decimal places. As a result, the values shown may not sum to the shown total, sub-total, or nets due to rounding.
- Some results are compared to scores as determined by Advanis' municipal benchmarks. These results were obtained through a telephone recruit to web survey which asked, among others, some municipal questions. These benchmark results are based on an aggregation of results from most municipalities in Alberta with more than 15,000 residents[2] excluding Cochrane, Calgary, and Edmonton. In total, 248 records are used for the benchmarks. The data was collected between May 2025 and April 2026 inclusive.

[2] Population counts are determined by Alberta Municipal Affairs 2025 population list. This includes the cities of Airdrie, Camrose, Chestermere, Cold Lake, Fort Saskatchewan, Grande Prairie, Leduc, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Spruce Grove, and St. Albert, towns of Canmore, Okotoks, Stony Plain, and Sylvan Lake, as well as Fort McMurray and Sherwood Park. Note that Beaumont is not included as Beaumont is not specifically captured in the results.

2.5.1 Stat Testing

- All statistical testing was conducted at a 95% confidence level.
- Statistical testing between current results and results from the previous wave have been conducted at the 95% confidence level and statistical differences are indicated with an upward/downward arrow (↑↓).
- To simplify reporting, results of statistical testing may not be shown for values under 5%.
- Z-tests were performed to highlight differences between two proportions, T-tests were performed to highlight differences between two means.

2.5.2 Segment Comparisons

The analysis checked for statistical differences between the following groups:

- Gender (Woman, Man, Others)
- Age (17 to 34, 35 to 54, 55 to 64, 65 or older);
- Children in household (children, no children);
- Income (under $50,000, $50,000 to $99,999, $100,000 to $149,999, $150,000 or more);
- Employment status (employed full/part time, on leave/homemaker/student/not employed/retired);
- Home ownership (owning, renting);
- Overall quality of life (very good, good/acceptable/poor/very poor);
- Perceived value from taxes (fairly good/very good, fairly poor/very poor); and
- Preferred tax strategy (prefer to increase taxes, prefer to cut services).

The subgroup differences mentioned above are statistically tested in mutually exclusive groupings. For example, if a result says that it is statistically higher for those aged 17 to 34, this means that the result among those aged 17 to 34 is statistically higher than those who are not aged 17 to 34.

2.6 Representativeness

Weighting was used to better represent the population and reduce non-response bias.

- Results are weighted to match age & gender population counts from the the 2024 Municipal Census[3].
- Weights ranged between 0.71 and 1.98 and have an overall weighting efficiency of 90%.
- Although the results are weighted, sample sizes for each question represent the number of actual respondents (i.e., unweighted n).
- Specific details of the weighting scheme used can be found in the Appendix (section 5.2).

[3] https://www.cochrane.ca/government/census

3. Executive Summary

3.1 Quality of Life and Community Perceptions

- 99% of respondents rate Cochrane's quality of life as acceptable or better (39% “very good”), outperforming municipal benchmarks of 84% and 24%, respectively.
- 82% rate services and infrastructure as acceptable or better in meeting community needs (9% “very good”).
- 65% are confident in the Town’s long-term planning effectiveness.

3.2 Property Tax Value and Regional Perceptions

- 65% of respondents feel they receive good value for municipal taxes, above the provincial benchmark of 47%. Top positive drivers are infrastructure maintenance (11%) and general service levels (10%); primary concerns are desired service improvements (26%) and infrastructure maintenance (24%).
- 68% report value for taxes stayed about the same, 17% feel it worsened, and 4% feel it improved.
- While Cochrane's tax rate is objectively among the lowest of its regional peers, only 5% were aware of this. Instead, 36% believe it is higher, 33% view it as about the same, and 26% are unsure.
- 46% underestimated the provincial education tax share. When informed of the true breakdown, 52% are satisfied with how the Town balances its remaining 62% share of spending (25% neutral).

3.3 Fiscal Strategies and Tax Preferences

- 53% of respondents prefer to adjust or lower service levels to maintain or lower current taxes, while 38% prefer increasing taxes to maintain or expand services.
- Faced with a specific 2% to 4% property tax increase dedicated strictly to maintaining current infrastructure and services, respondents are split: 53% support the increase and 44% oppose it.
- Long-term fiscal sustainability (27%) is the top budget priority.

3.4 Service and Infrastructure Priorities

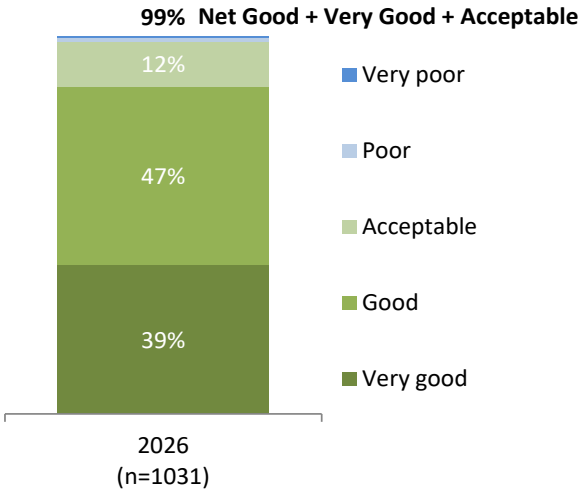
- Roads, parks and open spaces, fire services, and recreation are the top priority service and investment areas.
- Top infrastructure priorities include transportation infrastructure (27%), utility/core infrastructure (22%), and public safety facilities (20%).
- 60% favor a balanced investment approach to improving infrastructure while 21% prioritize current asset maintenance and 20% prioritize new public safety facilities construction to pace growth.

4. Detailed Findings

4.1 Quality of Life

To open the survey, respondents were asked to rate their overall quality of life. Nearly all Cochrane respondents (99%) rate their quality of life as acceptable or better, and 40% rate it as "very good", which strongly outperforms the municipal benchmarks of 84% and 24%, respectively.

Quality of life in Cochrane



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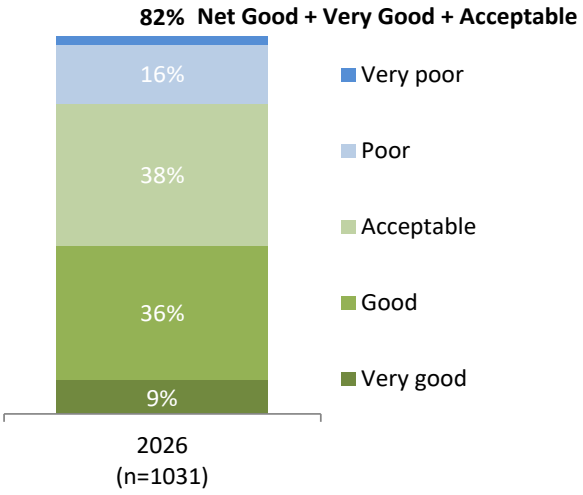
Subgroups that are significantly more likely to have a "very good" quality of life include:

- 55%: Ages 65+,
- 54%: Prefer to increase taxes,
- 51%: Feel they receive good value for their taxes,
- 50%: Not in the workforce,
- 47%: Income level $50k – $99k,
- 43%: Households with no children, and
- 41%: Homeowners.

Respondents were then asked to rate the Town's services and infrastructure in meeting the needs of residents. In total, 82% rated the services and infrastructure as acceptable or better, although only one-in-ten rate them as "very good".

Rating the Town's services and infrastructure in meeting the needs of residents



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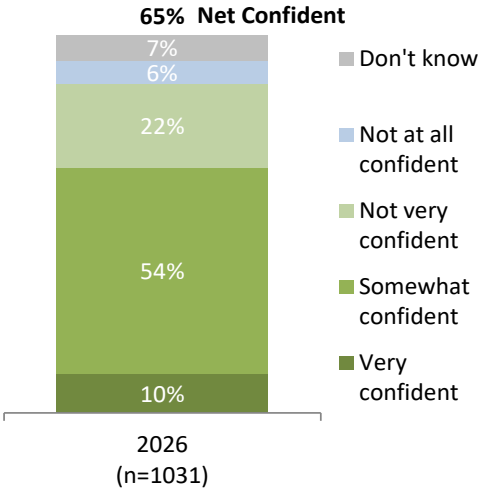
Subgroups that are significantly more likely to rate the Town's services and infrastructure as meeting the needs of residents as "very good", "good", or "acceptable" include:

94%: Feel they have very good quality of life,
94%: Feel they receive good value for their taxes,
90%: Ages 65+,
87%: Prefer to increase taxes,
86%: Households with no children, and
85%: Men.

When asked how confident they are that the Town is planning effectively for Cochrane's future, about two-thirds (65%) are "somewhat confident" or "very confident".

Confidence that the Town is planning effectively for Cochrane's future



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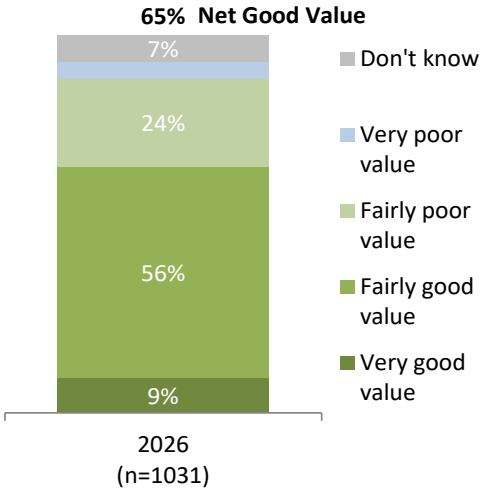
Subgroups that are significantly more likely to be "somewhat confident" or "very confident" that the Town is planning effectively for Cochran's future include:

78%: Feel they have very good quality of life,
78%: Feel they receive good value for their taxes,
74%: Ages 65+,
74%: Prefer to increase taxes, and
70%: Not in the workforce.

4.2 Property Tax Value

Respondents were then asked to think about all the programs, services and infrastructure that are funded by property taxes and then to rate the value they feel they receive for their municipal tax dollars. In total, about two-thirds (65%) feel they receive good value with most (56%) feeling they receive "fairly good value". This is far above the provincial benchmark of 47% who say they receive good value.

Perceived value received for taxes paid



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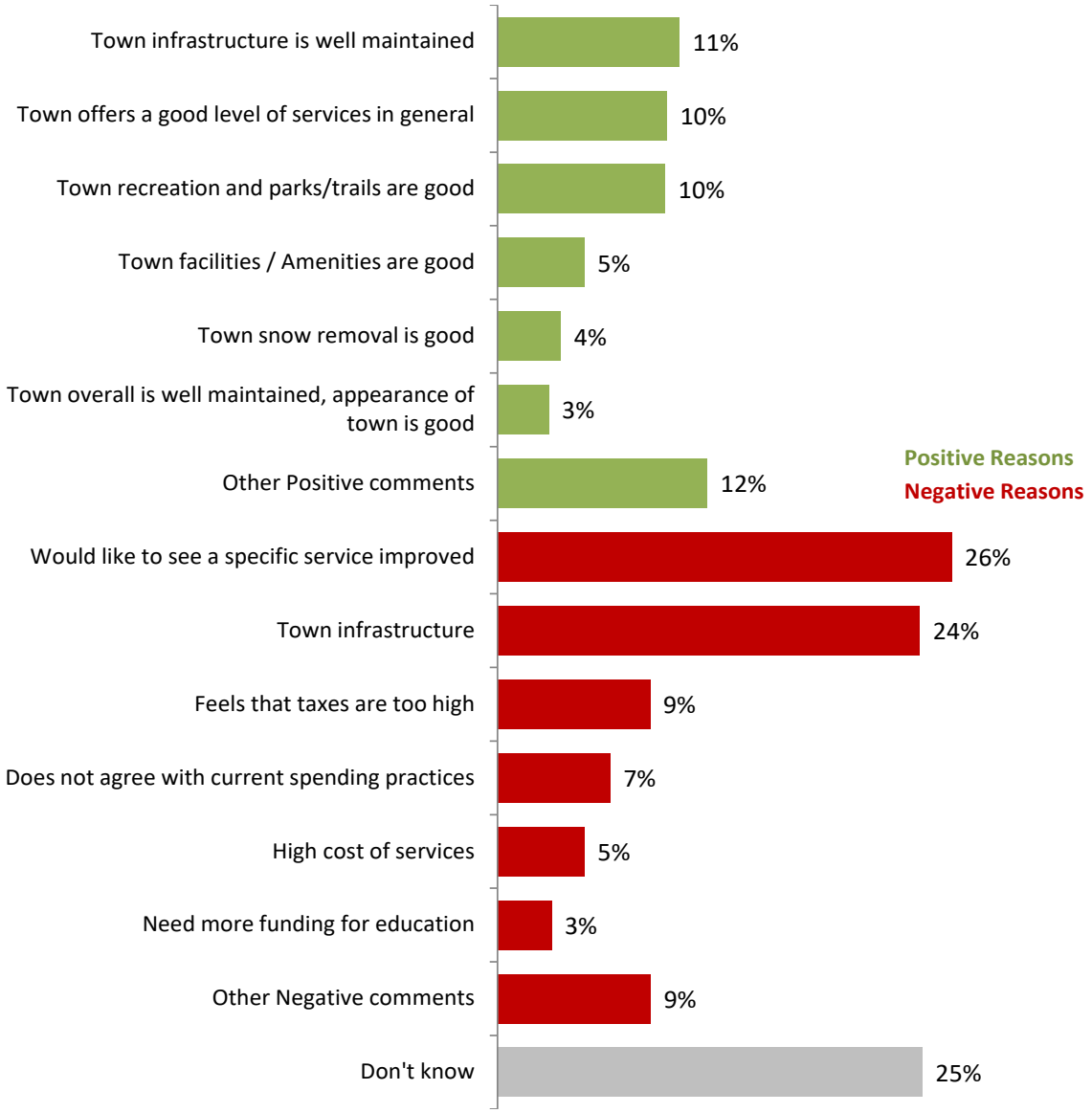
Subgroups that are significantly more likely to feel they receive "fairly good" or "very good" value include:

- 84%: Feel they have very good quality of life,
- 81%: Prefer to increase taxes,
- 79%: Ages 65+,
- 72%: Not in the workforce,
- 70%: Income level $100k – $149k, and
- 69%: Households with no children.

When asked to explain the reasoning behind their value-for-tax-dollar rating, respondents provided a variety of insights. The leading **positive** drivers included that the Town has well-maintained infrastructure (11%), a strong overall level of municipal services (10%), and high-quality recreation, parks, and trails (10%). Conversely, the most **negative** areas of concern were a desire for specific service improvements (26%) and a perception that town infrastructure is not well-maintained (24%). High taxes (9%) and disagreement with current spending practices (7%) rounded out the top four negative themes. Note that one-quarter (25%) of respondents did not provide a response and among those who did not rate their value for tax dollars, the most common reason was because they are new to Cochrane.

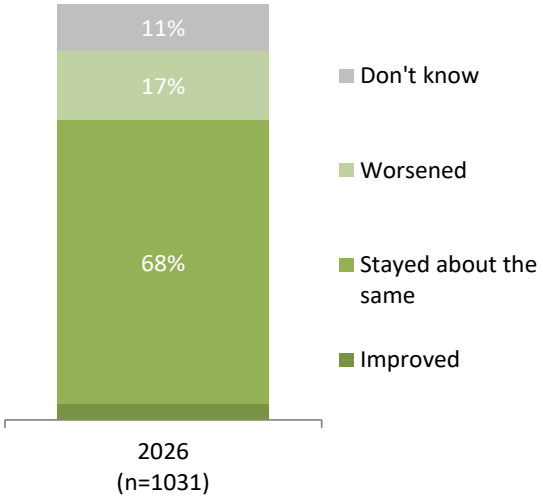
Why Respondents Feel this Way



n=966. Values may sum to more than 100% as multiple mentions were allowed. Responses <2% have been grouped into the "Other" category.

Respondents were then asked to compare the value they felt they received from their property tax in the past year compared to the previous year. The majority (68%) felt that it has “stayed about the same”, however there approximately four-times more respondents who feel the value they have received has worsened (17%) than who feel it has improved (4%).

Property tax dollars’ value compared to last year



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Subgroups that are significantly more likely to say the value of their property tax dollars has **worsened** include:

- 37%: Those who feel they receive poor value for their taxes,
- 23%: Feel they have good to poor quality of life,
- 23%: Those who prefer to cut services, and
- 18%: Those who own their home.

Subgroups that are significantly more likely to say the value of their property tax dollars has **stayed about the same** include:

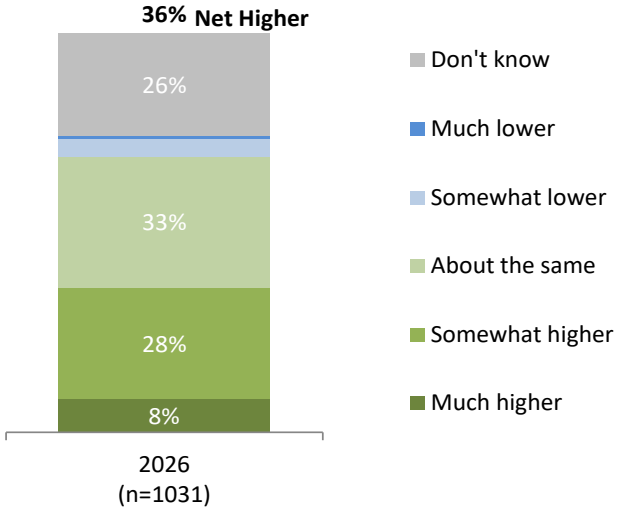
- 77%: Ages 65+,
- 77%: Feel they receive good value for their taxes,
- 76%: Prefer to increase taxes, and
- 74%: Feel they have very good quality of life.

Subgroups that are significantly more likely to say the value of their property tax dollars has **improved** include:

- 5%: Those with no children, and
- 5%: Those who feel they receive good value for their taxes.

Following the property tax evaluation, the survey explored how respondents perceive Cochrane's tax rates relative to peer municipalities. While Cochrane objectively maintains one of the lower tax rates among its regional peers[4], public perception varies from reality. Only a small minority (5%) correctly identified the rate as lower. Instead, 36% believe Cochrane's taxes are higher, 33% view them as about the same, and 26% are unsure. This highlights that there is an opportunity to bridge the gap between public perception and reality.

Compared to other similar sized communities, Cochrane's property tax rate is…



Values may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Bars missing values are less than 5%.

Subgroups that are significantly more likely to say the tax rate in Cochrane is higher include:

- 54%: Feel they receive poor value for their taxes,
- 47%: Prefer to cut services,
- 44%: Ages 55 to 64,
- 43%: Feel they have good to poor quality of life, and
- 40%: Households with children.

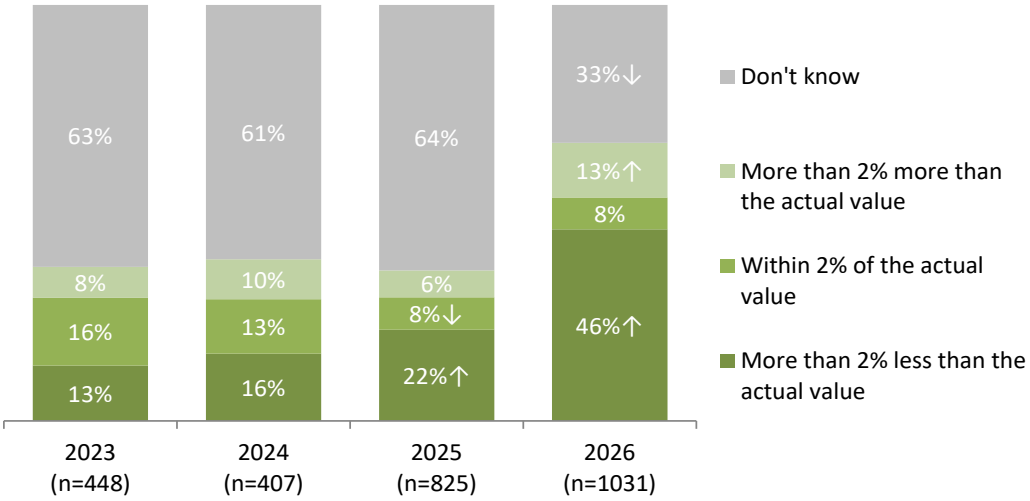
[4] The Town of Cochrane's residential tax rate is 0.0065730 (https://www.airdrie.ca/index.cfm?serviceID=2320) which is lower than the residential tax rates of 0.0067274 in Okotoks (https://www.okotoks.ca/sites/default/files/2025-06/Bylaw%2005-25%20Assessable%20and%20Supplementary%20Tax%20Rates.pdf) and 0.008073 in Strathmore (file:///C:/Users/pkyba/Downloads/25-11-property-tax-bylaw-no-25-11-signed-copy-on-file.pdf). However, Airdrie's 0.00645561 rate (https://www.airdrie.ca/index.cfm?serviceID=2320) is slightly lower than Cochrane's.

The survey then explained that a portion of the property taxes collected in Cochrane doesn't actually stay with the Town. It is collected on behalf of the Province of Alberta to fund education and senior living. The true percentages, which were shown later to respondents, are:

Percent of Property Tax that goes to…

When asked about the percentage of a typical property tax bill that goes toward the Provincial education tax, fewer respondents selected "don't know" compared with previous years (33% vs. 64% last year). While the proportion correctly identifying the 37% share remained unchanged at 8%, respondents were more likely to either overestimate (13% vs. 6% last year) or underestimate (46% vs. 22% last year) the amount.

Percent of property tax collected on behalf of the Province of Alberta for provincial education tax



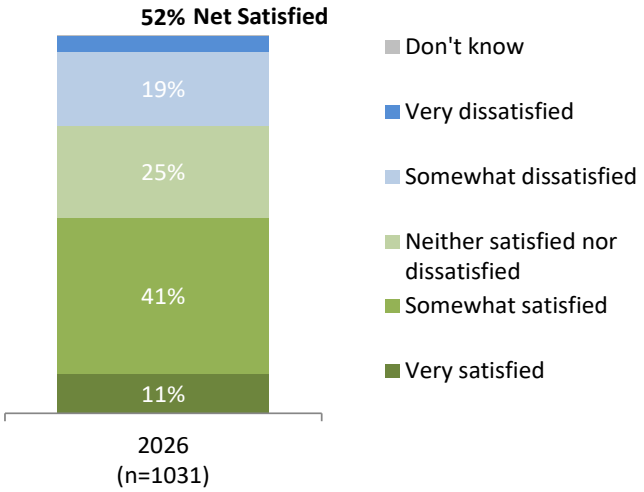
Values may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Subgroups that are significantly more likely to be correct (or close to correct) include:

9%: Households with no children.

After informing respondent of the actual percentages of property tax collected that goes to the Province of Alberta for education and for Seniors' Housing, they were asked to rate their satisfaction with how the Town balances the spending of the 62% that is used to fund programs, services, and infrastructure like roads, parks, public buildings, and local programs. Slightly over one-half (52%) are satisfied with this spending while another one-quarter (25%) are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Property tax spendings satisfaction level



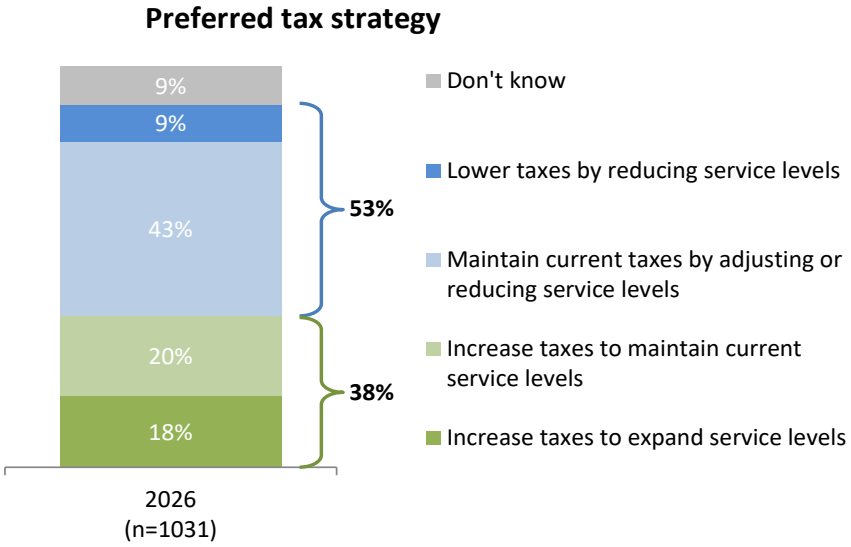
Values may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Bars missing values are less than 5%.

Subgroups that are significantly more likely to be satisfied overall with the spendings include:

- 72%: Feel they have very good quality of life,
- 69%: Feel they receive good value for their taxes,
- 68%: Prefer to increase taxes,
- 60%: Ages 65+,
- 59%: Not in the workforce,
- 56%: Women,
- 55%: Households with no children.

4.3 Overall Property Tax Preference

Next, respondents were shown four different tax strategies and asked for their preference. In total, 53% of respondents prefer to either adjust or lower service levels to maintain or lower current taxes, whereas 38% prefer an increase to taxes to maintain or increase services. A further 9% could not decide on what tax strategy they preferred.



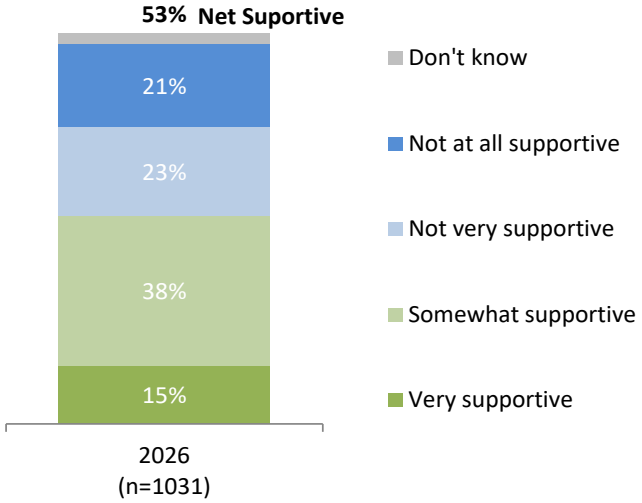
Values may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Significant subgroup differences include those who:

Increase taxes to expand service levels	Increase taxes to maintain current service levels	Maintain current taxes by adjusting or reducing service levels	Lower taxes by reducing service levels
24%: Income level, $150k or more, 23%: Feel they have very good quality of life, 22%: Ages 35 to 54, 21%: Households with children, 20%: Women, and 20%: In the workforce.	33%: Ages 65+, 30%: Not in the workforce, 29%: Feel they have very good quality of life, 28%: Feel they receive good value for their taxes, 26%: Income level $100k to $149k, and 24%: Households with no children.	None.	25%: Feel they receive poor value for their taxes, 14%: Feel they have good to poor quality of life, 12%: Men, and 11%: In the workforce.

A question was then asked to gauge the level of support among respondents for a property tax increase of 2-4% in order to maintain current infrastructure and services. Results are fairly split with slightly more than one-half (53%) of respondents supporting an increase in the taxes while slightly less than one-half (44%) do not support the tax increase.

Support/Opposition for an increase in taxes to maintain infrastructure and services



Values may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Bars missing values are less than 5%.

Subgroups that are significantly more likely to **support** increasing taxes to maintain services include:

- 90%: Prefer to increase taxes,
- 71%: Feel they have very good quality of life,
- 68%: Ages 65+,
- 65%: Feel they receive good value for their taxes,
- 64%: Not in the workforce,
- 60%: Income level $100k to $149k,
- 58%: Households with no children, and
- 57%: Women.

Subgroups that are significantly more likely to **oppose** increasing taxes to maintain services include:

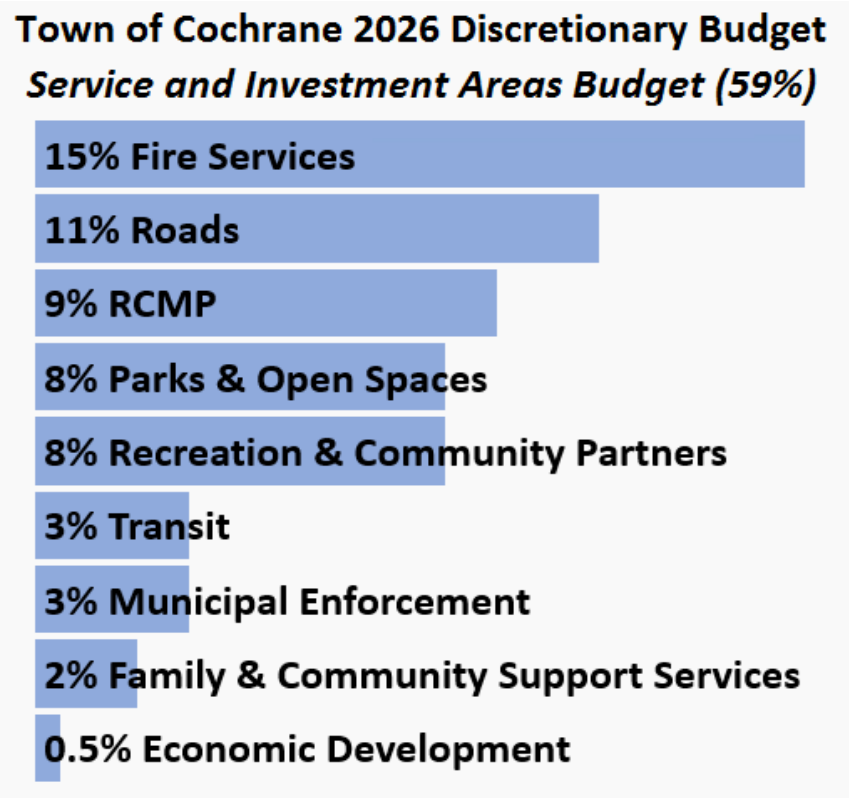
- 71%: Feel they receive poor value for their taxes,
- 67%: Prefer to cut services,
- 55%: Feel they have good to poor quality of life,
- 50%: Households with children, and
- 48%: In the workforce.

4.4 Service Priorities

The Town of Cochrane budget includes two spending categories:

- Essential spendings (about 41%) includes core items that are necessary to keep the Town running legally and safely. This includes areas like financial planning, customer service, and property assessments.
- Service and Investment Areas (about 59%) includes categories where spending can be increased or decreased based on community priorities. Changes here directly impact the level of service, infrastructure investment, and future projects.

The proposed Town of Cochrane 2027 Service and Investment Areas budget is split between the following services:



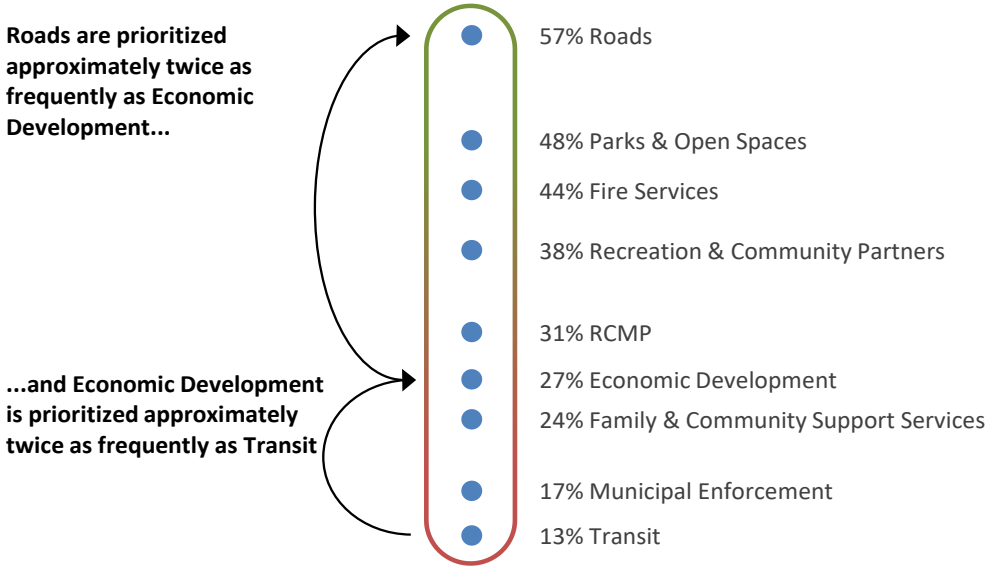
To better understand residents' priorities within the Town's discretionary budget, respondents participated in an exercise designed to measure the relative importance of the different Service and Investment Areas. Rather than asking residents to rate every item independently, respondents were shown groups of three Service and Investment Areas and asked to select the option they considered the highest priority. This process was repeated three times for each respondent, each time using a different (but controlled) combination of items.

This approach helps identify the relative priority all residents place on different areas of investment by requiring respondents to make direct trade-offs between options. This method also reduces the tendency for respondents to rate all items similarly important and provides a clearer distinction between priorities. By aggregating responses across all participants, the analysis produces a statistically reliable ranking of Service and Investment Areas based on their relative importance to residents.

Given these tradeoffs, the results should be interpreted as a measure of comparative preference rather than absolute support. Higher scores indicate areas respondents prioritized more often relative to other options presented in the exercise. The choices revealed a clear hierarchy of local priorities:

- **Top Tier:** Roads (57%) stood out as the primary service, followed by Parks and Open Spaces (48%), Fire Services (44%), and Recreation (38%).
- **Mid Tier:** RCMP (31%), Economic Development (27%), and Family & Community Support Services (24%) were all prioritized roughly twice as frequently as the lower tier services.
- **Lower Tier:** Municipal Enforcement (17%) and Transit (13%) were prioritized least often when forced against other choices.

Respondent priorities for service and investment areas



n=1031. Values may not sum to 300% (since 3 questions were asked) due to rounding.

Some key subgroups differences include:

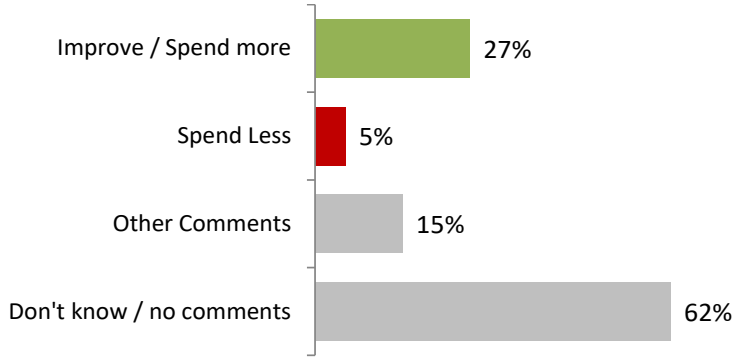
- Fire Services is the top priority among those with incomes under $50,000[5].
- Parks and Open Spaces is the top priority among those aged 17 to 34 years old and those with incomes of $150,000 or more.
- Recreation and Community Partners are prioritized third overall by those aged 17 to 34 as well as those aged 35 to 54 years old, those with children in the household, those with incomes of $150,000 or more, those who are employed, those who rent[6], and those who prefer to increase taxes.

[5] Note that the base size for those with incomes under $50,000 is only 68 so results should be interpreted with caution.

[6] Note that the base size for renters is only 66 so results should be interpreted with caution.

Respondents were then asked if there was anything else they would like to add about the services. While most (62%) did not provide any additional comments, 27% mentioned that they would like the Town to increase spendings and improve a specific service (for example, 6% suggested improving or spending more on recreation facilities and 5% reiterated their design to spend more on roads) while a small group (5%) mentioned that they want spending to decrease.

Services and investment spending feedback

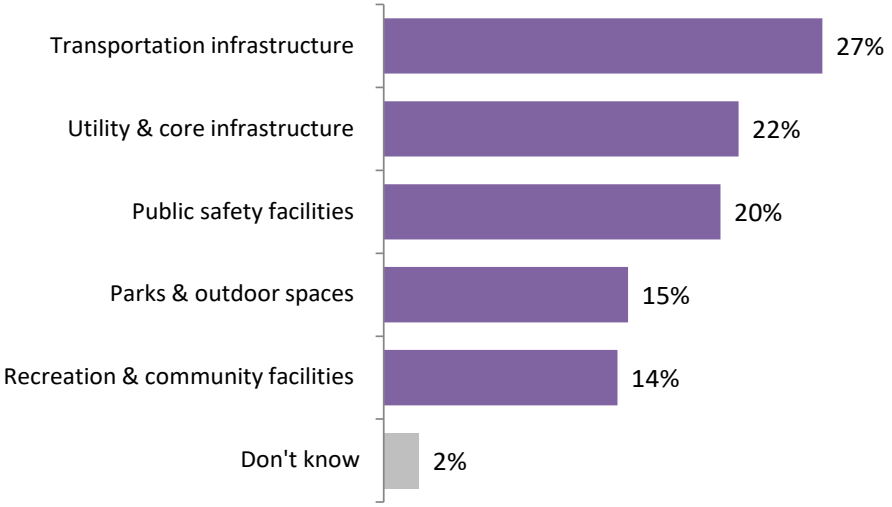


n=1031. Values may sum to more than 100% as multiple mentions were allowed.

4.5 Infrastructure

When presented with a list of core infrastructure areas and asked to identify their single highest priority for limited funding, respondents focused on three main categories. Transportation infrastructure was selected most frequently (27%), followed closely by utility and core infrastructure (22%) and public safety facilities (20%).

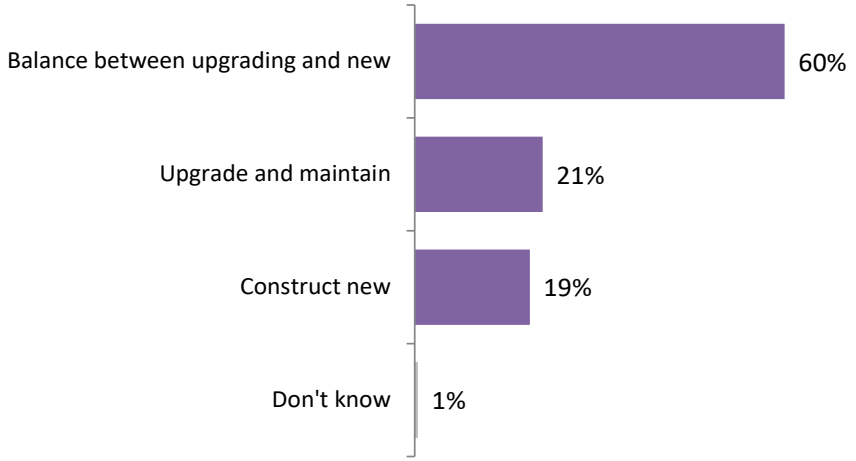
Projects or goals to prioritize with limited funding



n=1031. Values may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Existing infrastructure could be improved, or new infrastructure could be built. When asked to choose between maintaining existing assets and building for the future, a clear majority of respondents (60%) favored a balanced approach. This desire for equilibrium is further reinforced by the remaining respondents, who were split almost exactly down the middle with 21% preferring a focus on upgrading and maintaining current infrastructure versus 19% prioritizing building new infrastructure to pace Cochrane's growth.

Respondent preferences for infrastructure investment



n=1031. Values may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Subgroups that are significantly more likely to suggest **upgrading and maintaining** infrastructure include:

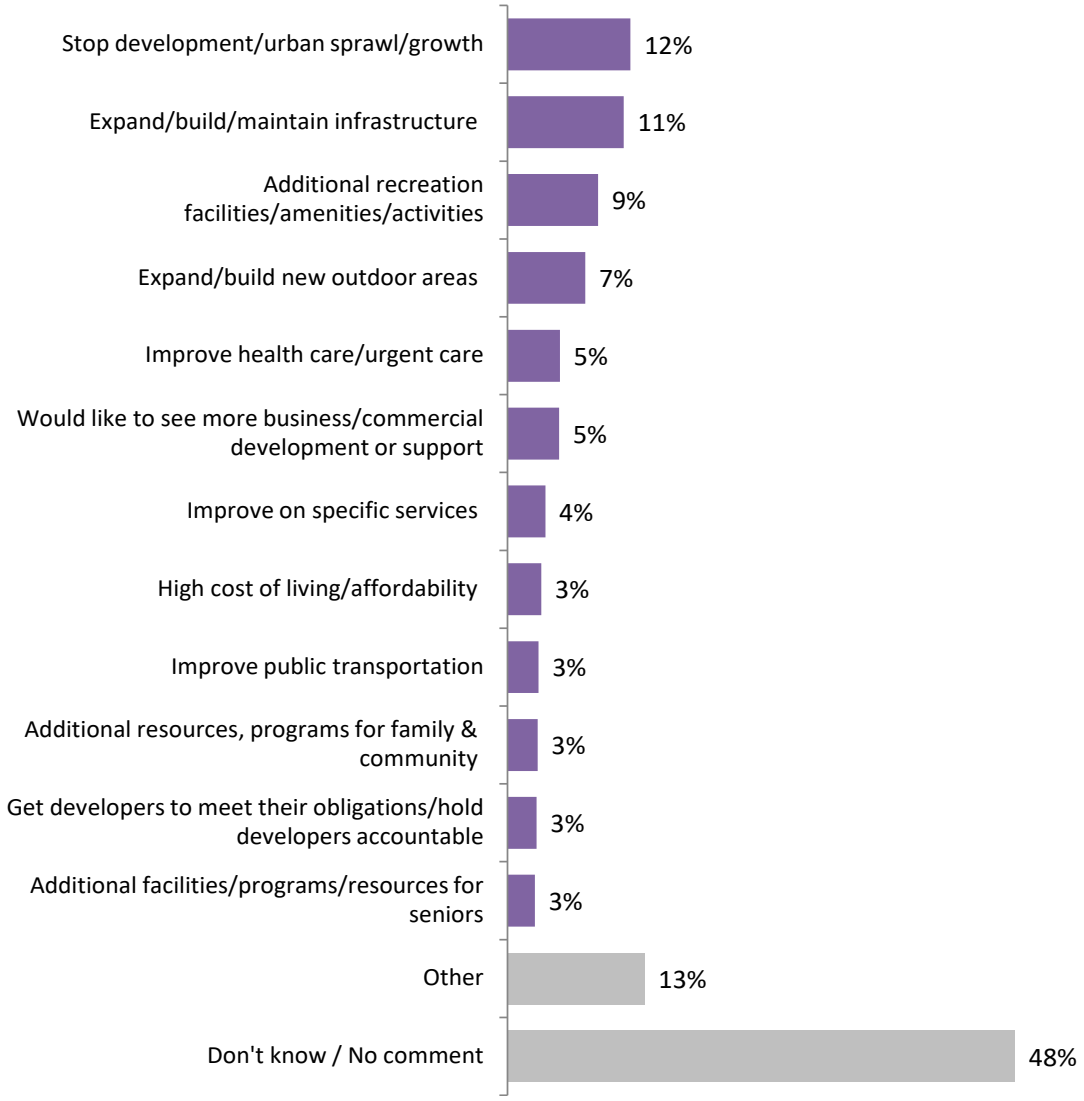
- 36%: Those who rent,
- 28%: Those who feel they receive poor value for their taxes,
- 27%: Those who prefer to cut services,
- 24%: Feel they have good to poor quality of life, and
- 23%: Those who are employed.

Subgroups that are significantly more likely to suggest **constructing new** infrastructure include:

- 25%: Those who prefer to increase taxes,
- 25%: Those with children in the household,
- 24%: Those who feel they receive poor value for their taxes, and
- 23%: Those earning $150,000 or more per year.

When invited to share additional priorities for Cochrane's future beyond everything mentioned so far, nearly one-half of respondents (48%) offered no further comment, suggesting the previous questions captured their primary concerns. That said, opinions on community growth were closely divided: 12% advocated for curbing urban sprawl and slowing development, while 11% focused on expanding or maintaining infrastructure to support growth. Additionally, a combined desire for community amenities emerged, with requests for new indoor recreational facilities (9%) and expanded outdoor spaces or trails (7%) also being mentioned more often than other priorities.

Suggestions for other projects or goals

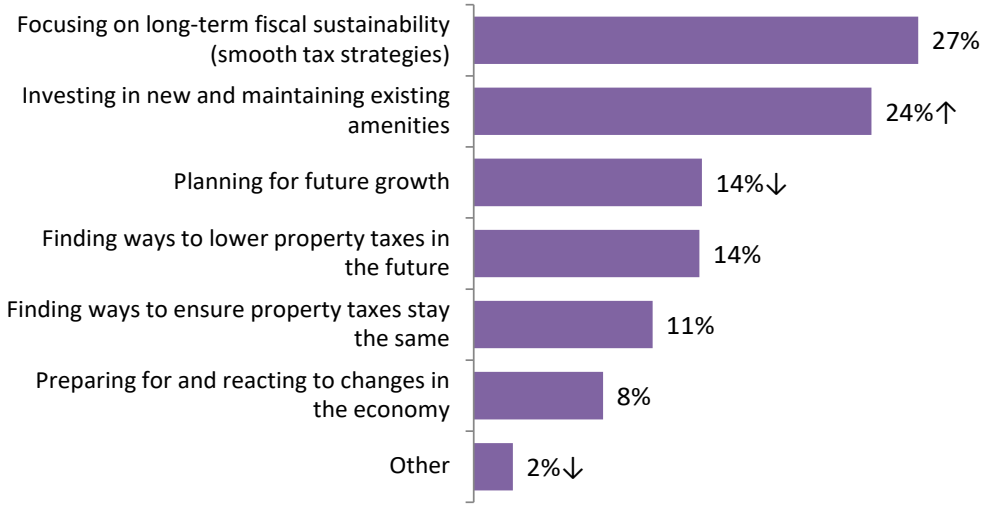


n=1031. Values may sum to more than 100% as multiple mentions were allowed. Responses <2% have been grouped into the “Other” category.

4.6 Most Important Budget Consideration

Finally, when asked to select the single top budget priority for the Town, the largest share of respondents (27%) identified long-term fiscal sustainability. This was followed closely by investing in new and maintaining existing amenities, which saw a notable increase to 24% (up from 13% in 2025). Planning for future growth and finding ways to lower property taxes both received 14% of selections, though support for prioritizing growth dropped substantially from 25% last year.

Most important priority facing the Town



n=1031. Values may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

5. Appendix

5.1 Weighted Respondent Demographics

	Percent of Respondents			
	2026 n=1031	**2025** n=825	**2024** n=407	**2023** n=448
Age				
17 to 24	3%	2%	1%	2%
25 to 34	21%	21%	23%	22%
35 to 44	22%	25%	19%	21%
45 to 54	17%	14%	19%	17%
55 to 64	15%	15%	16%	16%
65 or older	22%	22%	21%	21%
Prefer not to say	1%	0%	0%	0%
Employment status				
Working full time, including self-employment	58%	57%	53%	52%
Working part time, including self-employment	8%	8%	8%	13%
On leave (disability, maternity, paternity, etc.)	2%	2%	2%	2%
Homemaker	2%	2%	4%	3%
Student	2%	2%	1%	1%
Not employed	1%	0%	2%	1%
Retired	24%	25%	25%	24%
Prefer not to answer	3%	4%	4%	4%
Household income*				
Under $50,000	7%	-	-	-
$50,000 to $99,999	19%	-	-	-
$100,000 to $149,999	26%	-	-	-
$150,000 or more	36%	-	-	-
Prefer not to answer	13%	-	-	-
Primary residence				
Own	91%	94%	91%	89%
Rent	7%	5%	7%	10%
Not Applicable	2%	1%	1%	1%
Gender*				
Man	46%	-	-	-
Woman	50%	-	-	-
Non-binary	0%	-	-	-
Prefer to self-describe	0%	-	-	-
Prefer not to answer	3%	-	-	-
Children (under 18) in household				
Yes	39%	36%	35%	41%
No	59%	63%	64%	57%
Prefer not to answer	2%	1%	1%	1%

Values may not add to 100% due to rounding.

*Data unavailable for previous years due to change in the question.

5.2 Data Weighting

The data was weighted to the age characteristics of the residents of Cochrane as determined by the 2024 Municipal Census. Population weights were based on known age and gender distributions. Because some respondents did not provide one or both of these characteristics, the population distributions were proportionally adjusted to account for missing responses in the corresponding variable. Respondents who provided both age and gender were weighted using the full adjusted age–gender distribution. Respondents missing either age or gender were weighted using only the available characteristic, with population proportions rescaled accordingly. Respondents missing both characteristics were assigned a weight of 1, as no demographic information was available for weighting.

The following outlines the weighting factors utilized in this research:

Gender	Age group	Number of completed surveys	Proportion of completed surveys	Census proportions	Weight factor
Woman	17 to 34	80	7.8%	12.3%	1.53
Woman	35 to 44	132	12.8%	11.3%	0.85
Woman	45 to 54	94	9.1%	8.3%	0.85
Woman	55 to 64	82	8.0%%	8.1%	0.96
Woman	65 or older	115	11.2%	11.7%	1.03
Woman	Unknown/Refused*	1	0.1%	0%	1.02
Man	17 to 34	61	5.9%	12.1%	1.98
Man	35 to 44	126	12.2%	10.7%	0.83
Man	45 to 54	65	6.3%	8.4%	1.26
Man	55 to 64	82	8.0%	6.7%	0.79
Man	65 or older	148	14.4%	10.4%	0.71
Man	Unknown/Refused*	1	0.1%	0%	0.99
Other	17 to 34	6	0.6%	0%	1.17
Other	35 to 44	10	1.0%	0%	0.84
Other	45 to 54	9	0.9%	0%	1.02
Other	55 to 64	9	0.9%	0%	0.88
Other	65 or older	5	0.5%	0%	0.85
Other	Unknown/Refused*	5	0.5%	0%	1.00

** Respondents were allowed to refuse to answer their age as long as they confirmed that they are at least 17 years old.*

5.3 Survey Methodology Summary

Research sponsor (including all financial sponsors)	Town of Cochrane
Research/data collection supplier	Advanis
Population represented	Town of Cochrane Residents
Sample size	n=1031
Mode of data collection	Telephone recruitment to an online survey Letter mail-out to households where respondents can send an SMS to receive a link to the online survey (English only)
Source of sample	- Letters to all households in Cochrane via Canada Post - Advanis General Population Random Sample - ASDE Listed & Unlisted RDD landline numbers
Type of sample	Telephone numbers and letters to every household
Sample design	Census - all sample contacted
Start and end dates of data collection	April 2, 2026, to May 6, 2026
Strategies used to gain cooperation	Request permission on the phone, reminders to those who agreed to do the survey Sent letter to every household City advertised that the survey would occur Draw to win a gift certificate to a local Cochrane business of your choice (valued at $150)
Margin of sampling error for total sample	+/- 3.0 percentage points at the 95% confidence level
Is data weighted?	Yes, based on resident age to the 2024 Municipal Census. See section 5.2 above for details.
Contact for more information	Patrick Kyba, pkyba@advanis.net Advanis (780) 229-1135
Survey text	See section 5.4 below

5.4 Survey

What follows is a paper version of the web survey.

Budget Planning Survey 2027
Town of Cochrane
Generated on 2026-05-13 at 15:51:10 MT

Languages: English

Survey Content

Page INTROS
Intro1

Have your say in Cochrane's budget planning process!

The Town of Cochrane is developing the next municipal budget. Your input will help Council and administration understand residents' priorities as it balances services, infrastructure investment, and property taxes.

The budget is a plan for tomorrow's Cochrane and this is your chance to share your thoughts with Town Council and administration to help guide the 2027 budget. Doing so makes you eligible to **enter a draw to win a gift certificate to a local Cochrane business of your choice (valued at $150)**.

We want to hear from you! Please use the arrows in the bottom right of your screen to move forward and backward in the survey, do not use your browser back button. If you get interrupted while doing the survey, you **can click on the same link** to pick up right where you left off. **Press the right arrow to continue.**
To ensure your confidentiality, the third-party vendor Advanis Inc. has been hired to ensure only aggregated results are shared.
© 2026__ Privacy Policy (https://advanis.net/privacy-policy/english/) CRIC Pledge (https://www.canadianresearchinsightscouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CRIC-Pledge-to-Canadians.pdf)

Intro2
Please read each question and statement carefully. Throughout the survey, information will be provided to you so that you are able to reflect and provide an informed response to the questions. Pressing this icon ***?*** when shown will provide additional information. For each question, please select the response(s) that best represents your point of view.

Survey is open until May 4, 2026.

? This is just an example info button. On future questions where this button appears, you will see additional information that you may wish to review to help inform your answers.

D1
To begin, how old are you?

- ❍ 1 16 or younger
- ❍ 2 17 to 24
- ❍ 3 25 to 34
- ❍ 4 35 to 44
- ❍ 5 45 to 54
- ❍ 6 55 to 64
- ❍ 7 65 or older
- ❍ 8 Prefer not to say

D1a *Show if D1 Refused (D1 = 8)*
We want to make sure we're hearing from a wide range of voices. To get started, can you confirm you are at least 17 years old?

- ❍ 1 Yes
- ❍ 2 No

T1 *Show if D1 younger OR D1a no ((D1a = 2) OR (D1 = 1))*

Unfortunately, you don't quite fit the criteria for this particular survey. We truly appreciate your time and your interest in Cochrane's budget planning.

S1
Do you live **within the town limits** of Cochrane?

- ❍ 1 Yes
- ❍ 2 No
- ❍ 3 Prefer not to answer

T2 *Show if S1 Does not live in Cochrane (S1 != 1)*

Unfortunately, you don't quite fit the criteria for this particular survey. We truly appreciate your time and your interest in Cochrane's budget planning.

Page QUALITY OF LIFE & GROWTH CONTEXT
Q1
Overall, how would you rate your quality of life in Cochrane?

- ❍ 1 Very good
- ❍ 2 Good
- ❍ 3 Acceptable
- ❍ 4 Poor
- ❍ 5 Very poor

Q2
In your view, how would you rate the Town's services and infrastructure in meeting the needs of residents today?

- ❍ 1 Very good
- ❍ 2 Good
- ❍ 3 Acceptable
- ❍ 4 Poor
- ❍ 5 Very poor

Q2a
Looking ahead, how confident are you that the Town is planning effectively for Cochrane's future?

- ❍ 1 Very confident
- ❍ 2 Somewhat confident
- ❍ 3 Not very confident
- ❍ 4 Not at all confident
- ❑ -9 Don't know

V1

Thinking about all the programs, services and infrastructure that are funded by property taxes, please rate the value you feel you receive for your municipal tax dollars.

- ❍ 1 Very good value
- ❍ 2 Fairly good value
- ❍ 3 Fairly poor value
- ❍ 4 Very poor value
- ❑ -9 Don't know

V1Why1 *Show if rated value for taxes (V1 = 1,2,3,4)*

(if very good value (V1 = 1)) What is the **main reason** you feel that you receive very good value?
(if fairly good value (V1 = 2)) What is the **main reason** you feel that you receive fairly good value?
(if fairly poor value (V1 = 3)) What is the **main reason** you feel that you receive fairly poor value?
(if very poor value (V1 = 4)) What is the **main reason** you feel that you receive very poor value?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

- ❑ -9 Don't know / No comment

V1Why2 *Show if value for taxes is dk (V1 = Don't know)*

What is the **main reason** you couldn't rate the value you feel you receive for your municipal tax dollars?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

- ❑ -9 Don't know / No comment

V2

And compared to last year, do you feel that the value you feel you receive from your property tax dollars has...?

- ❍ 1 Improved
- ❍ 2 Stayed about the same
- ❍ 3 Worsened
- ❑ -9 Don't know

V3

Based on your general impression, how do you think Cochrane's property tax rate compares to other similar-sized communities?

- ❍ 1 Cochrane's property tax rate is **much higher**
- ❍ 2 Cochrane's property tax rate is **somewhat higher**
- ❍ 3 Cochrane's property tax rate is **about the same**
- ❍ 4 Cochrane's property tax rate is **somewhat lower**
- ❍ 5 Cochrane's property tax rate is **much lower**
- ❑ -9 Don't know

Q0

Every year, a portion of the property taxes collected in Cochrane doesn't actually stay with the Town. It is collected on behalf of the Province of Alberta to fund education and senior living.

Just based on what you know, what percentage of a typical property tax bill do you think goes toward this Provincial education tax?
After entering a value, please press the right arrow to continue.

Minimum: 1, Maximum: 99

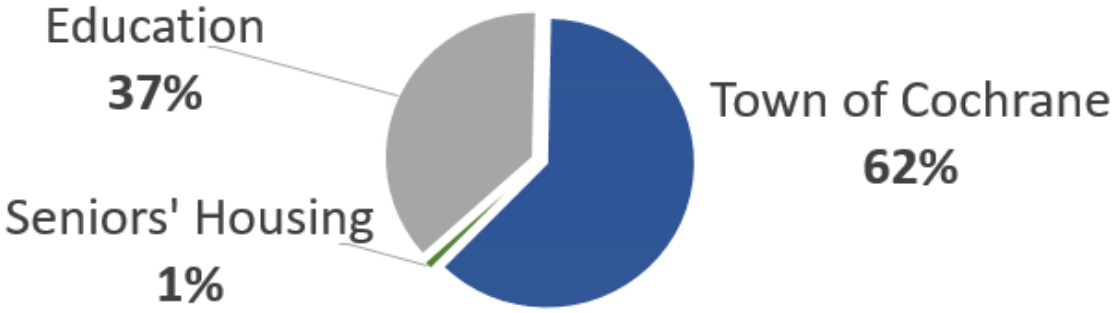
_____ %

- ❑ -9 Don't know

V4txt

To give you some context, for every dollar of property tax collected last year:

62 cents stayed right here to fund Town services and infrastructure;
37 cents went to the province for education; and
1 cent went to the Rocky View Foundation for operating seniors' housing.



Press the right arrow to continue.

V4

Thinking about that **62% of property taxes that stays in Cochrane**, how satisfied are you with how the Town balances that spending across programs, services, and infrastructure like roads, parks, public buildings, and local programs?

- ❍ 1 Very satisfied
- ❍ 2 Somewhat satisfied
- ❍ 3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ❍ 4 Somewhat dissatisfied
- ❍ 5 Very dissatisfied

Q3

As Cochrane continues to grow, the Town must balance service levels with property taxes. Which approach **best** reflects your view?

- ❍ 1 Increase taxes to expand service levels
- ❍ 2 Increase taxes to maintain current service levels
- ❍ 3 Maintain current taxes by adjusting or reducing service levels
- ❍ 4 Lower taxes by reducing service levels
- ❑ -9 Don't know

Q7

If additional investment were needed to maintain current infrastructure and services, how supportive would you be of a modest (2 - 4%) property tax increase?

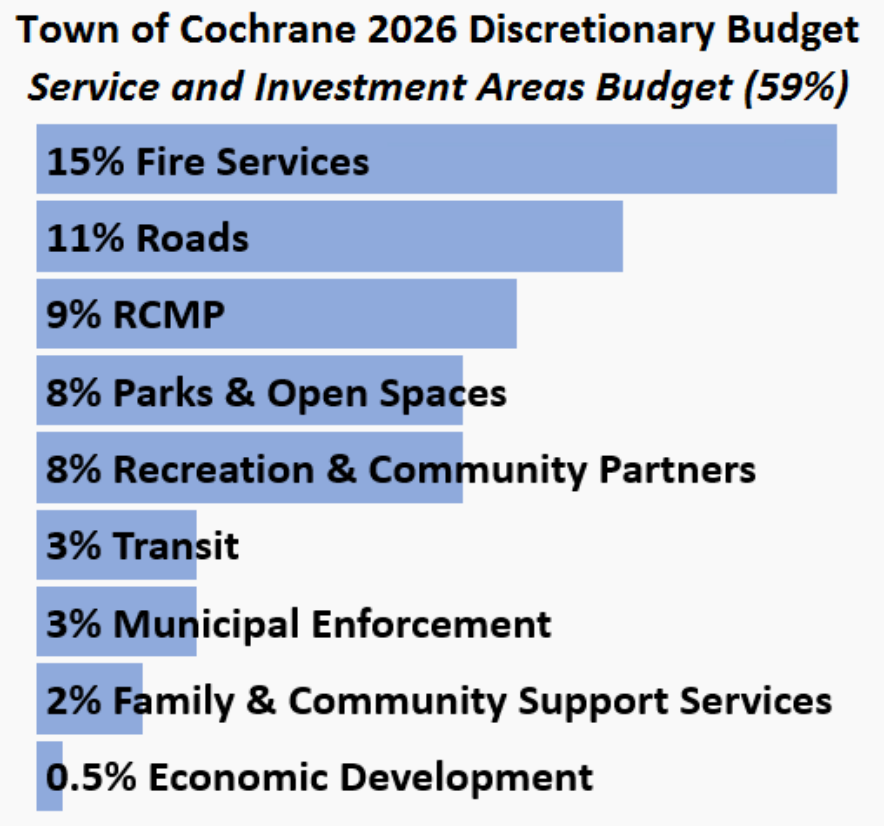
- ❍ 1 Very supportive
- ❍ 2 Somewhat supportive
- ❍ 3 Not very supportive
- ❍ 4 Not at all supportive
- ❑ -9 Don't know

Section PRIORITIES
BIntro, BInstruction, BOS, Q4, Inf1, Inf2, Q5, Q6

Page SERVICES
BIntro
To help make sense of how the budget works, we look at spending in two main ways:

The Essentials (About 41%)
These are the costs required to keep the Town running legally and safely. This includes things like financial planning, customer service, and property assessments. Because these are core requirements, we aren't focusing on them in the next part of the survey.

Service and Investment Areas (About 59%)
This is where the Town has more flexibility. These are the areas where funding can be increased or decreased based on community priorities. Changes here directly impact the level of service, infrastructure investment, and future projects.



In the next section, we want to hear your thoughts on priorities for this 59% of the budget.

Press the right arrow to continue.

BInstruction

Help Us Prioritize Our Services

This next part is the heart of the survey. We're going to show you a few different groups of Town services. For each group, we'd like you to pick the **one** service that is the **most important** to you.

It might be tough to choose, but your answers will give us a clear picture of what the community values most. If you aren't sure what a specific service includes, just tap the info icon ***?*** for a quick description.

Ready to have your say? Press the right arrow to begin.

? This is just an example info button. On future questions where this button appears, you will see additional information that you may wish to review to help inform your answers.

BOS

Looking at these three services, which one would you say is the **highest priority** for you and your household?

<item 1>
<item 2>
<item 3>
BOS Cards: 3

BOS Responses:

1. Fire Services ***?*** *
   ? Includes Fire response, as well as community prevention and inspection services and emergency preparedness
2. Roads ***?*** *
   ? Includes street, parking lot and alleyway seasonal cleaning, sanding, snow plowing and snow removal, as well as regular street and sidewalk repairs and maintenance
3. RCMP ***?*** *
   ? Includes RCMP contract and detachment administrative support
4. Parks & Open Spaces ***?*** *
   ? Includes maintaining 440 acres of parkland, 43 playgrounds, 80kms of pathway, outdoor skating rinks, as well as the maintenance of sports fields and cemeteries
5. Recreation & Community Partners ***?*** *
   ? Includes organizations that are in partnership with the Town of Cochrane including Spray Lake Sawmills Centre, community grants, and the Cochrane Public Library
6. Transit ***?*** *
   ? Includes the COLT (Cochrane On-Demand Local Transit) services which includes the E-Scooters, E-Bikes and Rocky View Handibus
7. Municipal Enforcement ***?*** *
   ? Includes enforcement of community bylaws, education to reduce violations, traffic enforcement, development compliance and creating a safer space for all residents.
8. Family & Community Support Services ***?*** *

? Includes connecting people and systems, preventative and early intervention programs, affordable housing, and family resource network

9. Economic Development ***?*** *

? Includes business attraction and retention, and downtown vitality

*Levels marked with * are randomized*

Page SERVICES1

Q4

Is there anything else you'd like to add about the services we just covered? We value any extra context you can provide.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

❑ -8 No additional feedback

Page INFRASTRUCTURE

Inf1

If the Town has to prioritize where to put limited funding first, which of **these areas is most important** to you and your household right now?

❍ 1 Public safety facilities (e.g., new fire hall, emergency facilities) *
❍ 2 Recreation & community facilities (e.g., outdoor recreation amenities such as baseball, soccer, etc.) *
❍ 3 Transportation infrastructure (e.g., major road expansions, intersections) *
❍ 4 Utility & core infrastructure (e.g., water, wastewater, stormwater expansion) *
❍ 5 Parks & outdoor spaces (e.g., parks, trails, public spaces) *
❑ -9 Don't know

*Levels marked with * are randomized*

Inf2

When it comes to those projects, there is often a balance between taking care of what we already have and building for the future. Which approach do you think the Town should prioritize?

❍ 1 Focus on upgrading and maintaining our current infrastructure and amenities to keep them in good shape *
❍ 2 Focus on constructing new infrastructure and amenities to keep up with Cochrane's growing population *
❍ 3 Finding a steady balance between maintaining current and building new infrastructure and amenities
❑ -9 Don't know

*Levels marked with * are randomized*

Q5
Beyond what we've already covered, what else would you like to see the Town prioritize in the coming years? We'd love to hear any other ideas or goals you have for Cochrane's future.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

❑ -8 Don't know / No comment

Q6
When it comes to planning the Town's budget, everyone has different priorities. If you had to pick just **one** of these areas for the Town to focus on most, which would it be?

❍ 1 Focusing on long-term fiscal sustainability (smooth tax strategies) *
❍ 2 Planning for future growth *
❍ 3 Investing in new and maintaining existing amenities *
❍ 4 Finding ways to lower property taxes in the future *
❍ 5 Finding ways to ensure property taxes stay the same *
❍ 6 Preparing for and reacting to changes in the economy *
❍ 7 Other (specify): _____

*Levels marked with * are randomized*

Section Demographics
DTxt, Gender, D2, D6, D3, D4, D7GP, I0, I1, I2, End

Page DEMOGRAPHICS
DTxt
We're almost done! This last set of questions helps us make sure we're hearing from a good cross-section of the community.

Just a reminder: your answers are completely anonymous. We'll only look at these details as part of a group, and nothing will ever be linked back to you or your household.

Please press the right arrow to continue.

Gender

What is your gender? ***?***

? Refers to current gender which may be different from sex assigned at birth and may be different than what is indicated on legal documents.

- ❍ 1 Woman
- ❍ 2 Man
- ❍ 3 Non-binary
- ❍ 4 Prefer to self-describe: _____
- ❍ 5 Prefer not to answer

D2

Are there any children under the age of 18 in your household?

- ❍ 1 Yes
- ❍ 2 No
- ❍ 3 Prefer not to answer

D6

Which of the following categories applies to your total household income before taxes in 2025?

- ❍ 1 Under $50,000
- ❍ 2 $50,000 to $99,999
- ❍ 3 $100,000 to $149,999
- ❍ 4 $150,000 or more
- ❍ 5 Prefer not to answer

D3

Which of the following **best** describes your current employment status?

- ❍ 1 Working full time, including self-employment (more than 30 hours per week)
- ❍ 2 Working part time, including self-employment (30 hours per week or less)
- ❍ 3 On leave (disability, maternity, paternity, etc.)
- ❍ 4 Homemaker
- ❍ 5 Student
- ❍ 6 Not employed
- ❍ 7 Retired
- ❍ 8 Prefer not to answer

D4

Do you own or rent your primary residence in Cochrane?

- ❍ 1 Own
- ❍ 2 Rent
- ❑ -8 Not applicable

D7GP

How did you learn about the survey?
Please select all that apply

- ❑ 1 Road signs *
- ❑ 2 Social media (Facebook & Instagram) *
- ❑ 3 Town of Cochrane website or Let's Talk Cochrane website *
- ❑ 4 Town of Cochrane App *
- ❑ 5 Letter in the mail *
- ❑ 6 Radio *
- ❑ 7 Newspaper *
- ❑ 8 Email *
- ❑ 10 I received a call mentioning this survey *
- ❑ 9 Other (specify): _____

*Levels marked with * are randomized*

Page End survey

I0

We really appreciate your time today. To say thanks, we're giving away one $150 gift certificate to a local business of the winner's choice. Would you like to be included in the draw?

Rest assured, your contact info is used only for the prize draw and stays completely separate from your survey responses.

- ❍ 1 Yes, enter me in the draw
- ❍ 2 No, I do not wish to enter the draw

I1

And, finally, the Town of Cochrane regularly conducts research about other topics affecting its citizens. Would you be interested in participating in future research conducted by the Town of Cochrane?

- ❍ 1 Yes, I allow Advanis to provide the Town of Cochrane with my contact information so I may participate in future research
- ❍ 2 No, I do not wish to participate in future research

I2 *Show if I0 yes or I1 yes ((I0 = 1) OR (I1 = 1))*

(if I0 yes and I1 no ((I0 = 1) AND (I1 = 2))) Please provide your contact details so that we may contact you should you be the winner of the draw.

(if I0 no and I1 yes ((I0 = 2) AND (I1 = 1))) Please provide your contact details so that we may contact you should you be invited to future research.

(if I0I1 yes ((I0 = 1) AND (I1 = 1))) Please provide your contact details so that we may contact you should you be the winner of the draw or invited to future research.

Personal information collected as part of the Town of Cochrane Budget Survey contest and future research is done so under Section 4(c) of the Protection of Privacy Act. It will remain confidential, and it will only be used to contact the individual who has won the draw or is being invited to participate in future research.

First name: _____

Last name: _____

Email: _____

Phone number: _____

❑ -8 [Not interested in entering the draw or participating in future research / Not interested in entering the draw / Not interested in participating in future research]

End

Thank you very much for your participation in this important study, your time and feedback are greatly appreciated by the Town of Cochrane!

Please note that the results of this survey will be shared with Town Council during the budget planning process for 2027. Should you have any additional questions, please contact:

Town of Cochrane Communications
403-851-2503
communications@cochrane.ca

You will be redirected shortly to the Town of Cochrane website.

Status Code: -1

Help Page

CRIC: Advanis is a registered member of the Canadian Research Insights Council. Advanis upholds their pledge. This can be accessed at:
https://www.canadianresearchinsightscouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CRIC-Pledge-to-Canadians.pdf
CRIC Verification Number: 20260331-AD814

Town contact:
Email: communications@cochrane.ca

General town phone number: 403-851-2503

If you are having some stress/emotional difficulties at this time, it might help to talk to someone.
I have a toll free number I could give you if you were interested in talking to someone.

Canada: 1-800-784-2433 or 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)
US: 1-800-273-8255

5.5 Recruitment Letter

April 2026

Town of Cochrane
101 Ranchehouse Road
Cochrane, AB T4C 2K8

RE: Help shape Cochrane's 2027 budget

Dear Cochrane resident,

Your input helps shape Cochrane's future! For the past few years, the Town has partnered with an independent research company, Advanis, to gather feedback that reflects the views of residents across Cochrane. Your input directly influences, and helps, to guide decisions about funding for services, projects and staffing.

Cochrane's budget is more than just numbers—it's a plan that reflects our community's priorities and helps guide decisions about the future. As we begin planning the 2027 budget, we invite you to share your thoughts once again. Every response helps ensure the budget reflects the priorities of our community. Your feedback will help guide how we prioritize spending in the year ahead.

To participate – you have two options:

- ✅ **Text "Cochrane" to 587-412-2994**
- ✅ **OR scan the QR code:**

As a thank-you for your support, you will have the chance to enter to win a $150 gift certificate for a local business of choice. **Survey is open until May 4th, 2026.**

Please direct questions to: communications@cochrane.ca

Visit www.letstalkcochrane.ca/2027budget to learn more.

Advanis is a privately owned Canadian market and social research firm known for its innovation, technology leadership, and client responsiveness. Advanis staff are located across Canada in Edmonton (Alberta), Waterloo (Ontario), and Montreal (Quebec). Advanis is a member of The Canadian Research and Insights Council (CRIC), the industry association for the market / survey / insights research industry, and follows the ICC/ESOMAR International Code of Market, Opinion, and Social Research and Data Analytics.

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Email: info@advanis.net

ADVANIS

TOWN OF COCHRANE

Budget Consultation Focus Group

April 29, 2026

PREPARED BY:

Parsons DIALOGUE

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Executive Summary

The Town of Cochrane hosted a pre-budget consultation focus group on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, building upon a similar practice from the 2025 budget cycle. The purpose was to understand resident perspectives around infrastructure priorities, taxes, service levels and growth, and obtain feedback on the budget communications work.

Sixteen residents from a variety of ages and life stages participated with care and thoughtfulness. Four of the sixteen had participated in 2025 focus groups. Additional attendees were drawn from Advanis 2026 Budget Survey respondents that indicated an interest in participating in focus groups. Participants represented a mix of ages, genders, and lengths of residency in Cochrane, bringing a range of perspectives shaped by different life experiences and connections to the community.

The discussion focused on several key trade-offs and competing priorities currently facing Council, including:

- Essential infrastructure vs community amenities
- Stables taxes vs service levels and investment
- Growth & economic diversification vs community character

The final topic of the evening was feedback on the recently introduced 2026 citizens budget book and participant experience with the 2027 budget survey.

Prior to leaving, residents were asked to write a two-sentence letter to Council identifying priorities they thought Council should keep in mind as they consider the draft 2027 budget this fall.

Major themes that emerged from the discussions include:

- *Residents expressed a preference for investments in critical infrastructure over new amenities while maintaining existing amenities and slowing any new initiatives*. Accessibility of amenities for mobility impaired could be improved in Cochrane and residents wondered if there were greater opportunities for volunteer groups to assist in maintaining amenities, whether user-pay fees should be

implemented for non-residents, and noted that music and arts are vital to well-being.

- *Residents prefer stable taxes and spoke to the importance of understanding what a tax increase would pay.* They want to see a clear cost / benefit explanation. For them, maintaining critical infrastructure is non-negotiable. Residents noted the importance of a risk management lens when making investments.

- *Residents continue to be concerned about the Town's growth rate* and suggested that the growth rate be capped or managed at a fixed annual rate. Protecting Cochrane's western vibe and maintaining character is important. New businesses to Cochrane are expected to contribute to the Community character.

- *Residents felt that growth should lead to lower or stable taxes* as more people are contributing to revenues and ask that Council focus on operational efficiency. Some wondered if more funding could be requested of the province.

- *The Town should prioritize critical infrastructure, two-way in / out of neighbourhoods*, affordable housing, updated bylaws and levies indexed to inflation.

- *The budget book is a good step in budget communications*, and the opportunity for more interactive / drill down features was noted. This budget-curious groups of residents would like a meatier survey, decision making questions, more financial context and cost / benefit style questions.

- *Letters to Council reinforced the themes that emerged from the evening's discussions.*

Residents thanked the Town for hosting this conversation and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage.

Introduction

Two focus groups were conducted before and after the 2025 budget. The first, in April, welcomed 15 residents who provided feedback on budget preferences and priorities. The second, in November, invited residents back to hear how their input had been used in the budget. Residents were also asked for feedback and suggestions about budget communication processes.

On Wednesday, April 26, 2026, the Town of Cochrane hosted a pre-budget consultation focus group building on the practice of 2025 budget cycle.

The purpose was to understand resident perspectives around infrastructure priorities, taxes, service levels and growth, and asking for feedback on the first citizen's budget book and the 2026 budget survey.

Recruitment began with participants from the 2025 focus groups and was augmented by residents indicating an interest in participating in further conversations in the Advanis 2026 Budget Survey responses.

Of the 16 participants, four had participated in 2025 conversations. The group included eight men and eight women who have lived in Cochrane for 2- 15+ years. Three participants were in the 20 to 35 age range, one of which had limited mobility. Five participants were mid 30s to late 40s and the remainder in their 50s and beyond.

In the Spring 2025 focus group, conversation was framed around prioritizing known initiatives. Spring 2026 conversations were framed around inherent budget dilemmas and tensions facing Council that included:

- Essential infrastructure vs community amenities
- Stables taxes vs service levels & investment
- Growth & economic diversification vs community character

The final topic of the evening asked residents for feedback on the 2026 citizens budget book and communications practices related to budget engagement. Prior to parting, residents were asked to

write a two-sentence letter to Council identifying priorities they thought Council should keep in mind.

Preparing for the Focus Group

Step 1: Establishing Objectives

Parsons Dialogue collaborated with the Town's Engagement Team to develop engagement objectives. The team included:

- Kevin Blanchette, Executive Director, People & Strategy
- Kristin Huybrecht, Manager Communications & Engagement
- Karla Schulz, Public Engagement Advisor
- Robin Parsons, Facilitator
- Dave Robertson, Facilitator

The following objectives for the focus groups we established:

- Understand resident priorities
- Gather qualitative information on key budget dilemmas
- Gather feedback on the Citizen's budget book and 2026 budget survey experience

A goal for the experience was for residents to find the environment welcoming, casual and comfortable and to know their fellow residents a little. At the end of the discussion, it was important that residents felt their contributions had been useful and appreciated.

Step 2: Developing Discussion Questions

The Town provided some scenarios that highlight the tensions that both Council and Administration balance when making budget decisions. Facilitation guides were developed that framed these dilemmas for participants.

The framing intentionally put residents in paradoxical scenarios (wicked questions) balancing two competing and important aspects of budget considerations to allow more nuance to surface.

The Town produced an inaugural Citizens' Budget book in 2026 and wanted to obtain input and feedback that would inform the evolution of the document and so questions about that document were included.

As focus groups took place in parallel with the survey, participants were also asked for feedback on the survey experience and questions, as well as the 2026 budget book.

As a final step in the focus group, residents were asked to write a two-sentence letter to Council identifying priorities they thought Council should keep in mind.

All verbatim results can be found in Appendix A.

Step 3: Preparing Residents

Residents were provided with the Citizens' Budget Book for the 2026 fiscal year as a pre-read and a request to complete the 2027 Budget survey.

Step 4: Facilitate The Meeting

Mayor Morgan Nagel and CAO Drew Hyndman provided welcoming remarks and participated in a question-and-answer period, after which Parsons Dialogue stepped in to facilitate and document the meeting. Residents were energetic and engaged and pleased to be invited to this conversation. They expressed their appreciation to the Town for this opportunity.

Step 5: Prepare the Report

Verbatim notes were captured in-meeting and can be found in the Appendix A of this report. Results have been themed and preserved the language and terminology used by residents wherever possible

All responses are qualitative and directional in nature representing individual opinions.

These findings are not statistically representative.

Summary of Findings

Following a brief welcome by Mayor Nagel and CAO Hyndman, residents had the opportunity to participate in a question-and-answer period. Residents were primarily focused on questions about development, levies on developers and the responsibilities and accountabilities of developers for fulfilling promises.

Dilemmas

The goal of the discussions was to understand the relative importance of various topics for residents, and so the discussions were framed as dilemmas faced by Council and Administration when making budget decisions.

1. **Essential infrastructure and Community Amenities.**

   Context: Every dollar the Town spends on essential infrastructure – water systems, roads, wastewater – is a dollar not available for the amenities that make Cochrane a great place to live. Both matter. But when budgets are tight, Council must choose what comes first. Example: Upgrading aging water mains versus building the additional ball diamonds that Cochrane is already running short of.

   Residents expressed a preference for investments in critical infrastructure over new amenities while indicating the importance of maintaining existing amenities.

   a. *Accessibility:* Amenities could, however, be made more accessible for people with mobility limitations, in particular wheelchairs (e.g. wheelchair friendly curbs and paths without potholes). Limited transit availability is a disadvantage for people who are unable to drive.
   b. *Volunteerism:* Residents suggested that there may be community groups who could assist with existing amenity maintenance (e.g. bike group maintaining paths); or additional resources within the community that could be accessed.

c. *Slow down*: New amenities should be postponed for now; investments could be slowed down (such as a recreation centre or parks) to focus on immediate concerns.
d. *User-pay fees:* Non-Cochrane residents could pay user fees for access to Cochrane amenities.
e. *Arts & music:* One participant noted the value of arts and music and its importance to community well-being, and its value to tourism.

2. Stable Taxes and Service Levels and Investment

Context: Cochrane is under real fiscal pressure. Holding taxes steady sounds appealing, but it could mean cutting services, deferring maintenance, or delaying investments that will cost more later. Raising taxes is unpopular, but it may be what's needed to maintain what residents already have and invest in what we need for the future.

Residents prefer stable taxes and spoke to the importance of understanding what a tax increase would pay for. They want to see a clear cost / benefit calculation.

a. *Non-negotiable:* Residents will not accept any degradation in the following services: public safety, emergency services, water and, for some, roads. They called these non-negotiables.
b. *Risk management*: Some residents discussed the importance of good risk assessment and evaluation before making investment decisions.
c. *Value for money*: Some residents discussed 'value for money' considerations. Could a service be better performed by others? Does it generate good value for

the dollar?

It's worth noting that residents found this question frustrating and felt the framing was unrealistic. In their view, risk management practices would negate the either / or context of the questions.

3. **Growth and Economic Diversification and Community Character**

Context: Cochrane is one of the fastest-growing communities in Alberta. Growth brings new tax revenues, local jobs, and economic resilience, but it also puts pressure on roads, services, and the small-town character that most residents moved here for. Past conversations have told us there are concerns about growth rates. The question isn't whether Cochrane grows, but how.

Residents felt that growth should lead to lower or stable taxes, as more people are contributing to revenues

a. *Operational efficiency*: Focusing on operational efficiency and cutting Town Council expenses were mentioned.
b. *Grant funding*: Some wondered if more funding could be requested of the province.

Residents continue to be concerned about the Town's growth rate and suggested that the growth rate be capped or managed at a fixed annual rate.

a. *Growth:* In small business and boutique industry was encouraged.
b. *Important Attributes*: Cochrane's western vibe, outdoor living and boutique business character is very important to residents.
c. *Downtown character:* Some noted that the downtown character area attracts tourists, is a very congested area and wondered if the area could be expanded.
d. *Community contribution:* New businesses to Cochrane must go the 'extra mile' to contribute to the community, including hiring practices and

physical appearance.

The Town should prioritize critical infrastructure, two-way in/out of neighbourhoods, affordable housing, updated bylaws and levies indexed to inflation.

Feedback on the 2026 Citizens' Budget Book and Communications Process

Participants were asked for feedback on the new Citizens' Budget Book. Most did not recall seeing it before, although it was a component of their pre-reads.

Generally, they believe it is a good step in budget communications. They said that the budget book was clear, simple, and easy to read and liked the idea of clicking on a graphic to go deeper into the details.

Suggestion for improvement included the opportunity for more interactive links and / or drill down capabilities for those who really want to dig in and adding values, rather than just percentages.

When asked about their experience with the budget survey, some felt that budget curious or savvy residents felt it didn't offer enough substance or quality questions. They thought cost / benefit style questions with concrete examples, more financial or decision-making context for questions, and setting expectations about the length of survey would be useful. Residents wondered if a short and long form survey might be needed to accommodate different levels of interest in the budget.

Letters to Council

The focus group concluded with each participant offering advice to Council in the form of a letter. Verbatim results can be found in Appendix A. The letters reinforced workshop themes and included:

1. **Fiscal Responsibility & Value for Money**
    a. Residents want the Council to prioritize spending wisely — reducing taxes where possible, questioning whether each service represents good value, and ensuring the budget focuses on *core* services.

2. **Prioritize Critical Infrastructure**
    a. There is strong sentiment that growth and development should not outpace critical infrastructure. Roads, subdivision access, and other foundational systems need to be in place *before* new residential development is approved, and all infrastructure projects should be risk-assessed and built into the Capital Plan.

3. **Maintenance Over New Projects**
    a. Residents favor investing in maintaining and protecting what already exists rather than pursuing new, costly amenities.

4. **Balancing Needs vs. Wants**
    a. While critical infrastructure is the priority, some residents also recognize the value of community amenities — public art, music events, green spaces — that contribute to mental well-being, social cohesion, and tourism.

5. **Accessibility**
    a. Several voices highlight that not all residents experience the community equally. Mobility impaired people struggle with curbs, ramps, and paths with potholes. Affordable housing, and accessible transportation are important.

6. **Better Questions**
    a. Residents want to be engaged with 'real' questions in focus groups and on surveys.

7. **Budget book feedback**
    a. Residents liked the Citizens' Budget Book and said that adding drill-down links to accommodate different levels of interest in the budget would be a welcome addition.

Conclusion

Budget sentiments in 2026 are quite consistent with those of 2025 and generally lean towards fiscal prudence.

Consistent messages emerged around prioritizing critical infrastructure, maintaining existing amenities and managing growth, ensuring that infrastructure is in place before development. In both 2025 and 2026 residents voiced concerns about whether developers are accountable for their commitments. Keeping taxation increases low, fiscal prudence, and protecting Cochrane's unique character were also echoes of 2025.

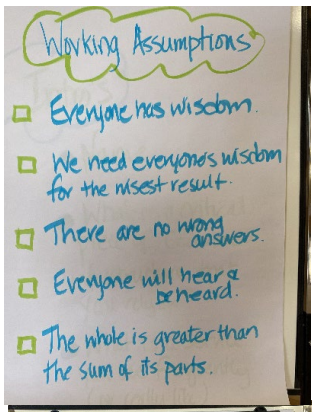
Question framing in 2026 helped surface the tension that residents understand between wants and needs. New messages in this focus group included paying attention to accessibility of pathways, transit and amenities for mobility impaired and the importance of music and arts and their value to community well-being and tourism.

Residents again expressed appreciation to the Town for creating this opportunity to discuss the budget and priorities and appreciated the efforts the Town was making to keep residents informed about the budget.

Appendix A: Verbatim Results

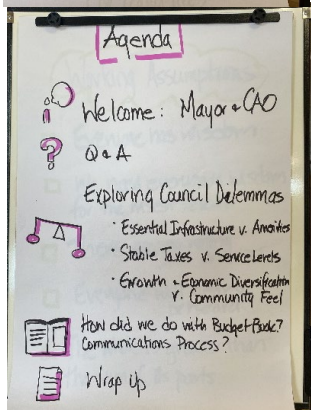
Working Assumptions

- Everyone has wisdom.
- We need everyone's wisdom for the wisest result.
- There are no wrong answers.
- Everyone will hear & be heard.
- The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.



Agenda

- Welcome: Mayor & CAO
- Q & A
- Exploring Council Dilemmas
    - Essential Infrastructure v. Amenities
    - Stable Taxes v. Service Levels
    - Growth & Economic Diversification vs. Community Feel
- How did we do with 2026 Citizens' Budget Book? Communications Process?
- Wrap Up



Welcome & Context Setting

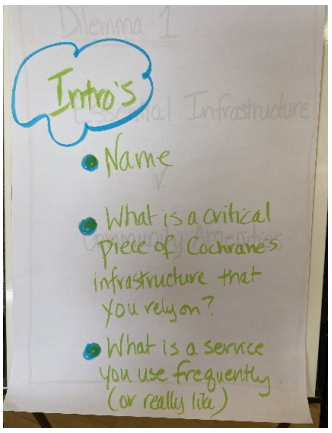
(Mayor Nagel & CAO Drew Hyndman)
Question & Answer

- How is feed determined for developers? What has been grandfathered? What can be collected now? What hasn't been collected?
- How do we hold developers accountable for money and overall servicing areas/streets/etc.
- How do we charge developers more?
- Are we charging enough for taxes and growth?

Introductions

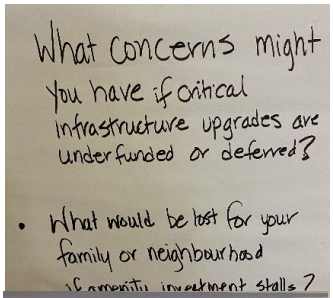
Name, what is a critical piece of Cochrane's infrastructure that you rely on, and what is a service you use frequently (or really like)?

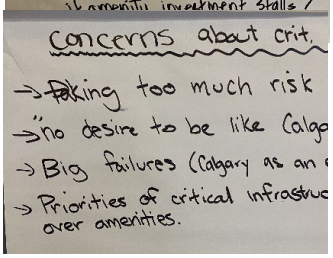
- Water
- Wastewater
- Parks
- Pathways / walkways
- Recreation Centre

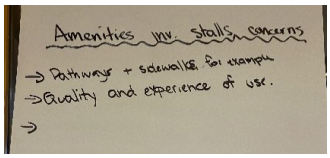


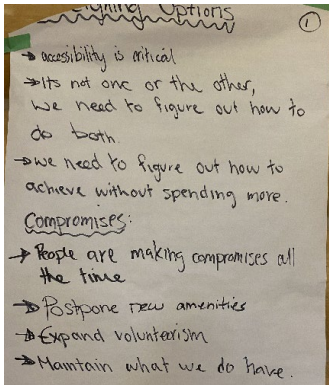
Exploring Council Dilemmas

Dilemma 1: Essential Infrastructure and Community Amenities









Context: Every dollar the Town spends on essential infrastructure – water systems, roads, wastewater – is a dollar not available for the amenities that make Cochrane a great place to live. Both matter. But when budgets are tight, Council must choose what comes first.
Example: Upgrading aging water mains versus building the additional ball diamonds that Cochrane is already running short of.

What concerns might you have if critical infrastructure upgrades are underfunded or deferred?

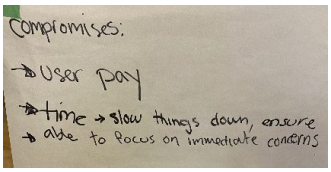
- That the Town is taking too much risk by not upgrading infrastructure
- No desire to be like Calgary
- Big failure (Calgary as an example)
- Priorities of critical infrastructure over amenities

What would be lost for your family or neighbourhood if amenity investment stalls?

- Pathways and sidewalks, for example
- Quality and experience of use

Weighing options

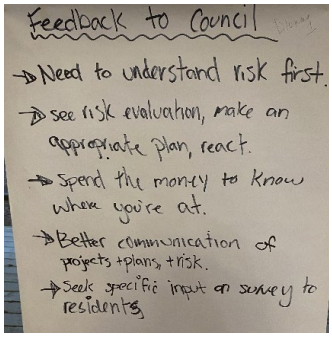
- Accessibility is critical; when you are in a wheelchair, accessibility looks quite different; (e.g., getting into this building (RancheHouse) was difficult because the transition between door frame and sidewalk had a gap in it)
- Cracks / holes / gaps in sidewalks make it much more difficult to navigate a wheelchair
- Transit isn't available after 5 pm for someone who doesn't drive
- It's not one or the other; we need to figure out how to do both
- We need to figure out how to achieve this without spending more



What Compromises would you be prepared to accept to achieve a balance you could live with?

- People are making compromises (in their own households) all the time
- Postpone new amenities (in favour of critical infrastructure) such as pickleball courts or rec centres
- Expand volunteerism – there are groups who may be able to pick up amenity maintenance (e.g. Bike Groups maintain pathways). Are there other volunteer groups that could be activated?
- Maintain what we have and focus on what is needed to get by
- Maybe we need more user-pay fees (e.g. for Non-Cochrane residents using Cochrane amenities)
- Time: slow investments down, ensure able to focus on immediate concerns; stop what isn't needed right now

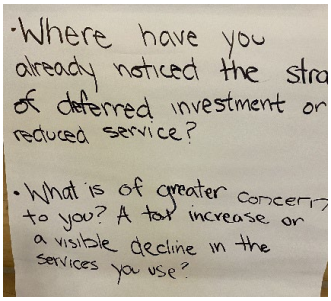
What is your feedback to Council

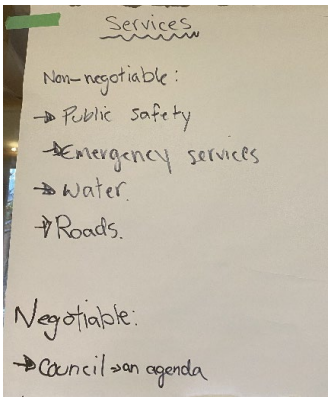


- Need to understand risk first
  - Do the risk evaluation
  - Make an appropriate plan
  - Be transparent about the plan to Community
  - Spend the money to know where you're at
- Better communication of projects, plans and risk to residents
- Seek specific input on surveys from residents (give concrete and specific examples of tradeoffs that Council might be considering)

Dilemma 2: Stable Taxes and Service Levels & Investment

Context: Cochrane is under real fiscal pressure. Holding taxes steady sounds appealing, but it means cutting services, deferring maintenance, or delaying investments that will cost more later. Raising taxes is unpopular, but it may be what's needed to maintain what residents already have and invest in what we need for the future.





Where have you already noticed the strain of deferred investment or reduced service?

- EMS – longer response times

What is of greater concern to you? A tax increase or a visible decline in the services you use?

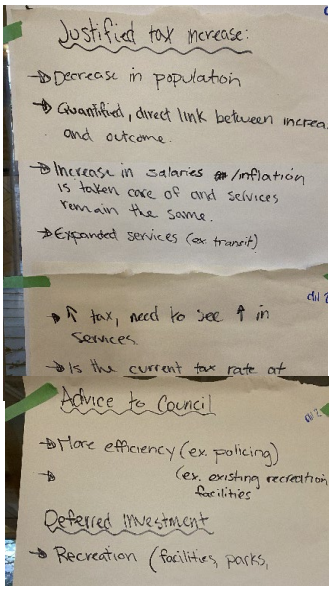
- Facilitator note: Residents found this question difficult to grapple with and felt it was an unrealistic question.

Which services feel truly non-negotiable to you, and where could you accept some reduction?
Non-negotiable:

- Public safety
- Emergency Services
- Water
- Roads

Negotiable:

- Council; an agenda



What would make a tax increase fee justified (or unjustified) to you?

- Decrease in population
- Quantified, direct link between increase and outcome
- Increase in salaries/inflation is taken care of, and services remain the same
- Expanded services (example, transit)
- Increase tax: need to see an increase in services
- Is the current tax rate at the right level?

If you had to advise Council today, where would you draw the line on taxes versus service levels?

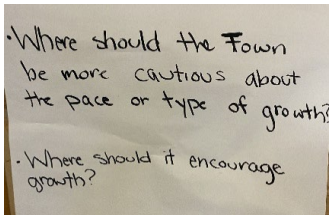
- Focus on more efficiency (e.g. policing and existing recreation facilities)
- Cutting back town council expenses
- Ask the Province for more money

What is one investment you could accept being deferred in the 2027 budget?

- Recreation (facilities, parks)

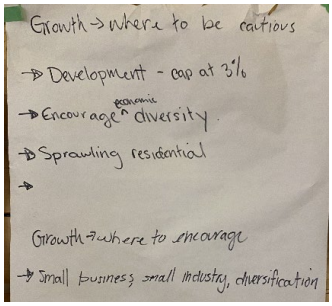
Dilemma 3: Growth & Economic Diversification and Community Feel

Cochrane is one of the fastest-growing communities in Alberta. Growth brings new tax revenues, local jobs, and economic resilience – but it also puts pressure on roads, services, and the small-town character that most residents moved here for. Past conversations have told us there are concerns about growth rates. The question isn't whether Cochrane grows, but how.



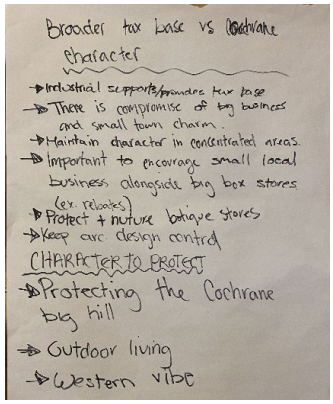
Where should the Town be more cautious about the pace or type of growth?

- Development – cap at 3%
- Encourage economic diversity
- Sprawling residential



Where should it encourage growth?

- Small business
- Small industry, diversification

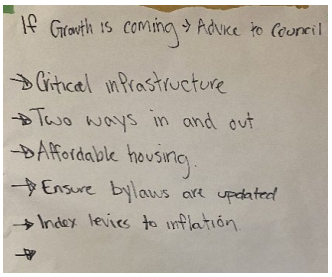


How do you weight the benefits of a broader tax base against the risks of losing what makes Cochrane distinctive?

- Industrial supports / provides tax base
- There is a compromise of big business and small-town charm
- Maintain character in concentrated areas
- Important to encourage small local business alongside big box stores (e.g. rebates)
- Protect and nurture boutique stores
- Keep architectural design control

What aspects of Cochrane's character do you most want to see protected as it grows?

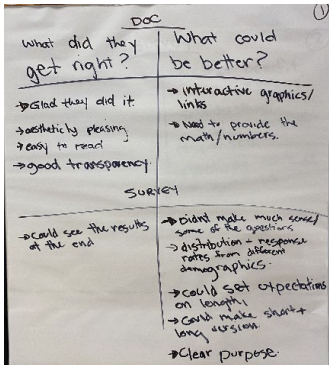
- Protecting the Cochrane Big Hill – don't destroy the view ever
- Outdoor living
- Western vibe
- Boutique businesses, industry (e.g. Garmin)
- Downtown / character area is getting quite congested



If growth is coming regardless, what should the Town prioritize to make sure it works for existing residents?

- Critical infrastructure
- Two ways in and out
- Affordable housing
- Ensure bylaws are updated
- Index levies to inflation

Feedback: How well are our budget book and communications process working?



Feedback about the Cochrane Citizen Budget Book

What did they get right in the budget book?

- Glad they did it
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Easy to read
- Good transparency

What could be better?

- Interactive graphics/links/ability to drill down
- Need to provide the math/numbers
- Too high level

Feedback about the Survey

What did they get right?

- You could see the results at the end of the survey

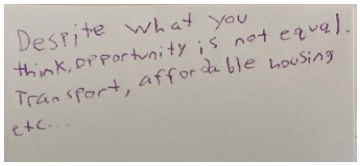
What could be better?

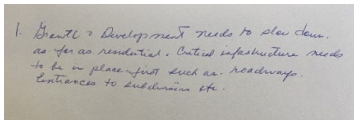
- Some questions didn't make much sense
- Understanding distribution and response rates from different demographics
- Could set expectations on length of the survey at the start of the survey
- Could make short and long versions (some people want to dig in more; some people don't know enough to comment)
- Purpose for doing the survey should be clear
- Pose cost /benefit type questions (cost is x and benefit is y); make examples concrete
- Ask respondents about the implications to them of budget decisions
- Include more financial or decision making context for questions

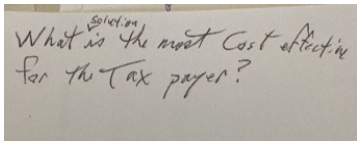
Letters to Council

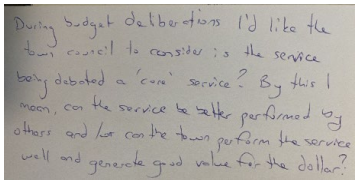
Write a short letter to Council. Provide one sentence for Council to keep in front of them throughout budget deliberations.

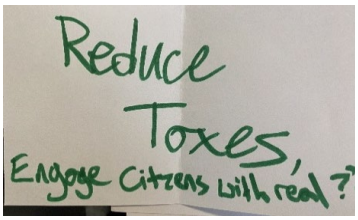
Responses written on white notecards:

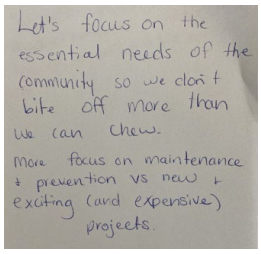




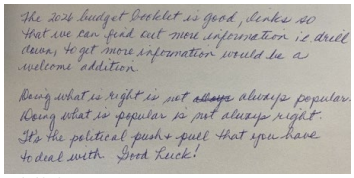




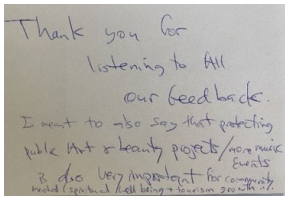


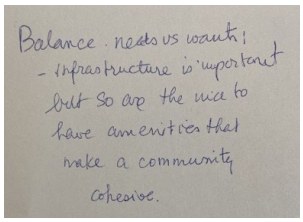


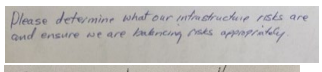
- Let's focus on the essential needs of the community so we don't bite off more than we can chew.
- More focus on maintenance and prevention versus new and exciting (and expensive) projects.
- Despite what you think, opportunity is not equal… transport, affordable housing, etc.
- What solution is most effective for the taxpayer?
- Growth and development need to slow down as far as residential. Critical infrastructure needs to be in place first, such as roadways, entrances to subdivisions, etc.
- Thank you for listening to all our feedback. I also meant to say that protecting public art and beauty projects/more music events, is very important for community mental/spiritual well-being and tourism growth.

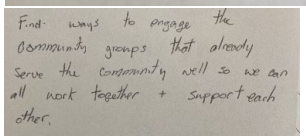


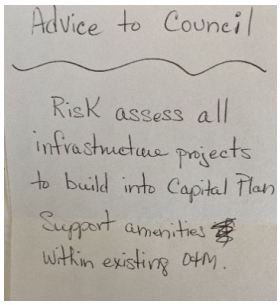
- The 2026 budget booklet is good, links so that we can find out more information, i.e. drill down, to get more information would be a welcome addition.
- Doing what is right is not always popular. Doing what is popular is not always right. It's the political push and pull that you have to deal with. Good luck!
- During budget deliberations, I'd like the Town Council to consider: is the service being debated a 'core' service? By this, I mean, can the service be better performed by others and/or can the Town perform the service well and generate good value for the dollar?
- Reduce taxes, engage citizens with real questions.



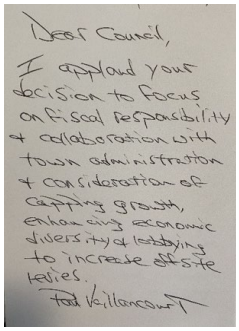


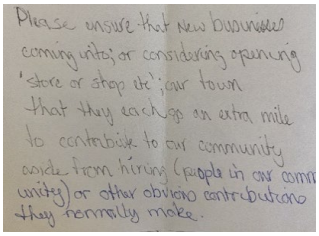






- Balance needs with wants: Infrastructure is important, but so are the nice-to-have amenities that make a community cohesive.
- Please determine what our infrastructure risks are and ensure we are balancing risks appropriately.
- I applaud your decision to focus on fiscal responsibility and collaboration with Town administration and consideration of capping growth, enhancing economic diversity, and lobbying to increase offsite levies.
- Find ways to engage the community groups that already serve the community well so we can all work together and support each other.
- Risk assess all infrastructure projects to build into Capital Plan. Support amenities with existing O&M.
- Please ensure that new businesses coming into; or considering opening 'store or shop etc.'; our town that they each go an extra mile to contribute to our community aside from hiring (people in our community) or other obvious contributions they normally make.





Emailed Feedback – Post Meeting

- The community is called University District. Was built by the U of C, but maybe is a model that can be pushed onto future developers
- High quality and uplifting Art and Music are important for the success of our town and for tourism. Visitors pay attention to these details. If I can help in any way with my unique Music and guitars/vocals accompanist, please let me know. I'd love to help for either a festival or a private function.
- A couple of common themes I noticed, which you may see from the summaries:
    - Many believe 'must haves' are the practical route & not 'nice to' haves, unless there are other ways to manage 'nice tos' without budget upheaval.
    - Cutting back on town council expenditures.

- Looking at several items as longer term planning.
- Asking the Province for more funding.
- Energizing communities to become involved in areas as appropriate. (Perhaps finding a couple of responsible adults in each community to be the 'town community liaisons' if they do not exist today.

Town of Cochrane Council Report

Meeting:	Regular Council
Meeting Date:	June 15, 2026
Originated By:	Joyce Humphrey, Manager, Corporate Strategy
Title:	Council Strategic Plan
Agenda Item:	7d

RECOMMENDED ACTION

That Council approves the foundational elements of the Council Strategic Plan, including the Vision, Mission, Promise to the Community, Strategic Priorities, and Objectives; and further, that Council directs Administration to return in Fall 2026 with a comprehensive Corporate Business Plan and implementation framework incorporating key supporting projects, initiatives, and anticipated timelines for Council's consideration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the Council Strategic Plan developed to date and seek Council's conditional approval of the strategic direction, priorities, and objectives identified through the planning process.

BACKGROUND

Since January 23, 2026, Council and the Executive Leadership Team have participated in a series of planning sessions to establish a shared vision, mission, promise to the community, principles for working together, and Council's strategic priorities for the 2026–2030 term.

The Council Strategic Plan establishes Council's strategic direction and priorities for Administration. The Plan reflects commitments made during the election campaign, ongoing feedback from the community, and insights gathered through recent public engagement activities, including budget engagement.
Julia Harvie-Shemko of Red Thread Connections facilitated the planning process and development of the Strategic Plan.

The strategic priorities and objectives presented in this report provide Administration with the direction required to begin developing the Corporate Business Plan. Over the coming months, Administration will identify the projects, initiatives, resource requirements, and timelines necessary to advance Council's priorities.

COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

No additional public engagement is required at this stage. The Strategic Plan reflects input gathered through prior community and budget engagement activities.

The launch of the completed Strategic Plan will take place in the fall following Council’s approval.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The strategic priorities and objectives contained within the Council Strategic Plan will inform future business planning, resource allocation, and budget development. Projects and initiatives

identified through the Corporate Business Plan process may result in future operating and capital budget requests for Council's consideration.

Funding for this work was approved as part of the 2026 Operating Budget. The total project cost is approximately $40,000, plus applicable GST and printing costs. No additional budget approval is required currently.

LEGISLATION/AUTHORITY

N/A

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

N/A

OPTIONS / IMPLICATIONS

Option 1 (Recommended):

That Council approves the foundational elements of the Council Strategic Plan, including the Vision, Mission, Promise to the Community, Strategic Priorities, and Objectives; and further, that Council directs Administration to return in Fall 2026 with a comprehensive Corporate Business Plan and implementation framework incorporating key supporting projects, initiatives, and anticipated timelines for Council's consideration.

> *Implication: Approval of the foundational elements establishes Council's high-level strategic direction—giving Administration a clear mandate to align staff resources and budget planning—while preserving Council's oversight by requiring a detailed project and timeline framework in Fall 2026.*

Option 2:

That Council defers final approval of the Council Strategic Plan, and directs Administration to return to Council in Fall 2026 with an expanded document that fully integrates the key supporting projects, initiatives, and anticipated timelines for Council's final consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

Council Strategic Plan - content

2026-2030 Town of Cochrane Strategic Plan - Content

Vision

Rooted.	In the land that shapes us and honouring the history that made us.
Connected.	To each other, to nature and to the places that bring us together.
Focused.	On protecting Cochrane's character while planning for our future.

Mission

Set clear direction for Cochrane by thoughtfully balancing responsible growth, reliable service and quality of life for our community.

Our Promise to the Community

Council and Administration commit to working together, serving the community with clarity, respect, accountability and purpose.

Council sets direction. Administration delivers. Together, we work for Cochrane.

Here’s what you can expect from us:

Make good decisions

- We balance community priorities using evidence and expertise
- We make thoughtful, informed decisions
- We are fiscally responsible and plan for the long term

Communicate openly

- We listen to understand
- We communicate clearly and consistently
- We share to support understanding

Follow through

- We set clear goals
- We report progress
- We deliver results that matter to our community

Priority	Statement	Objective titles	Objectives
Responsible community growth	Cochrane will guide growth through responsible decision-making that balances new opportunities with community character and readiness.	Balanced residential growth	Manage residential growth at a pace that aligns with service and infrastructure capacity requirements, minimizing cost impacts on existing residents.
		Community design standards	Guide new development so it reflects Cochrane's culture and character, strengthening a sense of place in buildings, streets and neighbourhoods.
		Growth sequencing	Plan where and when growth occurs by directing development in select areas to ensure it aligns with community infrastructure planning.
		Natural spaces	Integrate the protection of natural spaces and open areas into community growth decisions.
		Regional coordination	Work with regional partners to plan for long-term growth.
Strong financial strategy	Cochrane will strengthen its financial position through transparent decision-making and responsible planning.	Municipal revenue	Diversify and strengthen revenue sources to support long-term financial sustainability.
		Operating costs	Keep operating costs sustainable with a commitment to community affordability.
		Asset management	Protect and manage assets to maintain value and support reliable service over time.
		Debt and reserves	Manage debt and build reserves to ensure long-term financial stability and service demands.
		Municipal tax rates	Set tax rates that balance service levels, community priorities, affordability and service costs.
Infrastructure delivery	Cochrane will invest in infrastructure and community spaces to support dependable services today and into the future.	Utilities	Ensure services have the capacity for growth.
		Transportation network	Ensure Cochrane's transportation network and services support efficient movement through and within the community.
		Recreation and culture	Deliver recreation and culture spaces that strengthen Cochrane as an active living community.
		Regional collaboration	Explore opportunities for regional partnerships.
		Pathways	Create pathway connections to improve movement throughout the community.
A thriving economy	Cochrane will create a strong business environment that encourages local	Employment lands	Ensure Cochrane has an abundance of industrial, commercial and business lands to attract investment and support economic growth.
		Non-residential tax base	Expand and diversify tax revenue sources to reduce reliance on residential property taxes.

Priority	Statement	Objective titles	Objectives
	investment, job creation and a healthy tax base.	Business growth and retention	Streamline rules and processes and foster a supportive environment that makes it easier to start, grow and retain a business.
		Investment attraction	Attract investment that supports job creation and local economic growth.
		Connectivity	Invest in transit infrastructure and services to support workforce mobility.
Housing for people	Cochrane will enable a full spectrum of housing options that help people thrive in all stages of life.	Urban revitalization	Strengthen and reinvest in existing residential neighbourhoods to support vibrant, livable communities.
		Redevelopment	Create policy to ensure thoughtful redevelopment that respects and fits within existing neighbourhoods.
		Housing diversity	Expand housing options to address gaps and support housing types that are limited or not currently available in Cochrane.

Town of Cochrane Council Report

Meeting:	Regular Council
Meeting Date:	June 15, 2026
Originated By:	Drew Hyndman, CAO
Title:	2027 Budget ~ Draft Principles
Agenda Item:	7e

RECOMMENDED ACTION

That Council endorse the 2027 Budget Principles as presented.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Budget principles give directors and managers a consistent basis for evaluating and prioritizing requests throughout the 2027 budget cycle, connecting day-to-day decisions to Council's adopted strategic priorities. The principles presented here were developed through an intentional process including ELT input and resident engagement, and are designed to function as practical decision rules, not aspirational statements.

BACKGROUND

Purpose
As a public entity, the Town of Cochrane is responsible for the prudent management of resources entrusted to its care by residents and businesses. Ensuring that budgets developed by the Town Administration and approved by Council, are prepared in accordance with sound budget principles is fundamental to good stewardship of financial resources. The budget principles described in this report give directors and managers a consistent basis for evaluating and prioritizing budget requests. All directors and managers responsible for budgeting processes are directed to apply these principles in preparing their submissions.

Budget Principles
Each year, Administration undertakes the process of establishing principles, which are utilized by section directors and managers when preparing strategic objectives and associated operating and capital budgets.

The following factors have been considered in preparing the budget principles for 2027:

- Feedback from the 2026 Budget cycle
- 2026–2029 Council Strategic Objectives and Priorities
- Results of the 2027 Budget Engagement
- Economic conditions and fiscal environment

Strategic Alignment
The 2027 budget delivers on Council's strategic priorities while protecting the service levels residents depend on.

- The budget distinguishes between base service delivery, the work that keeps the organization running, and strategic investment that advances Council's adopted priorities. Both are legitimate; neither automatically displaces the other.
- Infrastructure Delivery and Responsible Community Growth receive deliberate resourcing.
- New requests or enhancements outside existing service levels or Council priorities will require a comprehensive business case.

- Directors are expected to identify, before submission, which portion of their budget supports base service delivery and which advances a Council strategic priority.
- Budgets will be developed to ensure that work plans are delivered upon, current service level expectations are met, and Council's strategic priorities are addressed.

Long-Term Financial Sustainability
The 2027 budget strengthens Cochrane's long-term financial position — today's decisions don't borrow from tomorrow.

- Meeting legislated and regulatory obligations is absolute, no budget decision may put compliance at risk.
- Minimum reserve balances and debt levels are hard constraints, not targets.
- Focus on prioritization of essential infrastructure investments.
- Before new requests are brought forward, departments are expected to identify available savings, including discretionary spending in areas such as travel, training, contracted services, and uncommitted projects.

Responsible Growth
Organizational and service growth is balanced against taxpayer affordability.

- Core services are staffed to meet demonstrated need; growth-driven services scale proportionally to Cochrane's population and development growth.
- New permanent positions in core services require evidence of service level impact if unfilled or demonstrated inability to absorb through existing capacity. Growth-driven positions require evidence that staffing has not kept pace with population or development growth. Directors are expected to apply these criteria before considering position submissions.
- Asset management and infrastructure lifecycle costs are explicitly accounted for — not deferred to future budgets.

COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Resident input from the 2027-2029 Budget Engagement informed the development of these principles, particularly the emphasis on strategic alignment with Council priorities and responsible management of infrastructure and financial obligations. Engagement ran from April 7 to May 8, 2026, and included an online survey on Let's Talk Cochrane, a household mailing administered through a third-party consultant, in-person engagement at the Cochrane & District Chamber of Commerce Trade Show on May 2 & 3, 2026, and a focus group on April 29, 2026.

A second phase of public engagement is planned for fall 2026 following Council's review of the draft 2027 budget. Residents will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft budget through Let's Talk Cochrane and participate in a follow-up focus group.

Feedback from these engagements will be provided to Council during budget deliberations scheduled for November.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications from endorsing budget principles. Financial implications will be identified through the budget development process that follows.

LEGISLATION/AUTHORITY

The *Municipal Government Act* requires that each municipality adopt an operating budget and a capital budget, or an annual budget for each calendar year (*MGA, s.283.1*).

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

All Strategic Priorities are reflected in the budget process through the principles, operating and capital budget development, planned community engagement and intended public presentations.

OPTIONS / IMPLICATIONS

Option 1 (Recommended):

That Council endorse the 2027 Budget Principles as presented.

Implications: Administration proceeds with development of the 2027 budget in alignment with Council's priorities.

Option 2:

That Council provide Administration with further direction.

Implications: Administration would return with revised principles at the direction of Council.

ATTACHMENTS

2027 Budget Principles

2027 Budget Principles

Strategic Alignment

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Responsible Growth

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Town of Cochrane Council Report

Meeting:	Regular Council
Meeting Date:	June 15, 2026
Originated By:	Drew Hyndman, CAO
Title:	Closed Session ~ Legal Privilege ~ Exception under Section 32(1)(a) of the Access to Information Act
Agenda Item:	11a

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Closed Session ~ Legal Privilege ~ Exception under Section 32(1)(a) of the Access to Information Act ~ information or a record that is subject to any type of legal privilege, including solicitor-client privilege or parliamentary privilege.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

LEGISLATION/AUTHORITY

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

OPTIONS / IMPLICATIONS

ATTACHMENTS