

Report on Public Engagement Options for Budget**Report Purpose**

To provide a report on public engagement options targeted to the County's budget.

Recommendation

1. THAT public engagement on the annual budget for 2022 budget process include activities that do not require in person attendance:
 - virtual meetings between individual councillors and constituents;
 - a non-statutory public hearing to be advertised once the budget dates have been determined; and
 - inclusion of budget related questions in a mixed topic SCOOP survey prior to the budget process, including a question on the proposed 2022 tax rate.
2. THAT by the end of 2021 Administration bring forward a plan to address public engagement on the proposed budget in future years.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 7 - Provide opportunities for public engagement and communication

Goal 1 - Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents

Continuously improving the way we work, as one organization, in an agile and sustainable manner

Report

On November 26, 2019 Council passed a motion that directed Administration to provide a report, by the start of the second quarter of 2020, outlining logistics, timing and costs of options for providing a specific annual opportunity for residents to have input on upcoming yearly budgets, the report to address the following:

- Opportunities for resident input to be provided prior to the end of July each year to allow timely consideration of the input;
- Include recommendations on how the input is to be received, and who would receive the input.

To address the motion, Corporate Planning and Communications met with Councillors individually to better understand desired outcomes of engagement/stakeholders to be engaged. Further planning discussions were held with subject matter experts to identify and analyze public engagement options. It's important to consider that Administration is engaging residents on a regular basis on items that have budget impacts.

Since the motion several major public engagements have occurred including:

- Animal Control Bylaw
- COVID Task Forces' engagement including session with small and medium businesses, agricultural business engagement session, annual summit, advisory committees, Strathcona County 2020 COVID-19 survey
- Indoor Fieldhouse
- Recreation and Culture Strategy
- South of Wye
- Sustainable Rural Roads Master Plan – first phase
- Southwest Strathcona County Functional Planning Study
- Tourism Strategy – residents and businesses
- Waste Management Road Map

- 63 external surveys were conducted in 2020 on a variety of topics
- The 2021 budget documents were released early with a news release/social media/Councillor toolkit and a call for opportunities for the public to ask questions and/or send in comments.

Council and Committee History

September 29, 2020	Council approved the Corporate Planning report on public input opportunities for the business planning and budget process be brought back to Council for the revised date of Q1 2021.
April 28, 2020	Council approved the Public input opportunities for the business planning and budget process report be brought back to Council on the revised date of Q3 2020.
November 26, 2019	Council directed that Administration provide a report, by the start of the second quarter of 2020, outlining logistics, timing and cost of options for providing a specific annual opportunity for residents to have input on upcoming yearly budgets, the report to address the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities for resident input to be provided prior to the end of July each year to allow timely consideration of the input;• Include recommendations on how the input is to be received, and who would receive the input.

Other Impacts**Policy:** n/a**Legislative/Legal:** n/a**Interdepartmental:** Corporate Planning, Communications**Master Plan/Framework:** n/a**Enclosure**

1	Report on Public Engagement Options for Budget presentation
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