

BUDGET 2024 SURVEY

Prepared for the City of Vancouver

October 13, 2023



Background, Objectives and Methodology



BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

Each year, the City of Vancouver must deliver a balanced budget while maintaining services and capital projects. Public input on the budget helps inform Council when deliberating the draft annual budget. **This report presents the findings of the City's 2024 Budget Survey.** The survey was fielded on the City's Talk Vancouver platform. Ipsos' role was to analyze the data and prepare a summary report.



ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- Identify priorities for City spending
- Understand preferences for delivering a balanced budget, including tax tolerance



TALK
VANCOUVER

METHODOLOGY

- Online survey with Vancouver residents (15+ years) and business owners/operators
 - Resident survey included targets for age and geographic zone
- Fielded Aug. 24 to Sept. 17, 2023
- Final data weighted by age and geographic zone (residents) and business size (businesses)



WHO WE HEARD FROM

- n=2845 residents
- n=502 businesses

See Sample Characteristics at the end of this report for more information

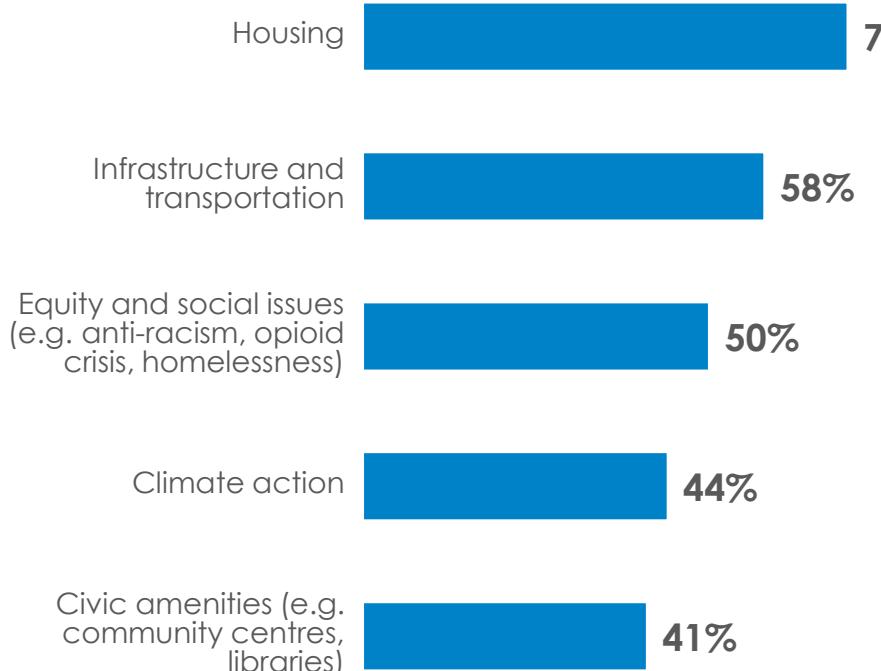
Note: Ipsos also conducted the City's 2023 Civic Satisfaction Survey to track resident and business satisfaction with City services and provide insight into service priorities. The results of this survey can be found under a separate cover.

RESULTS

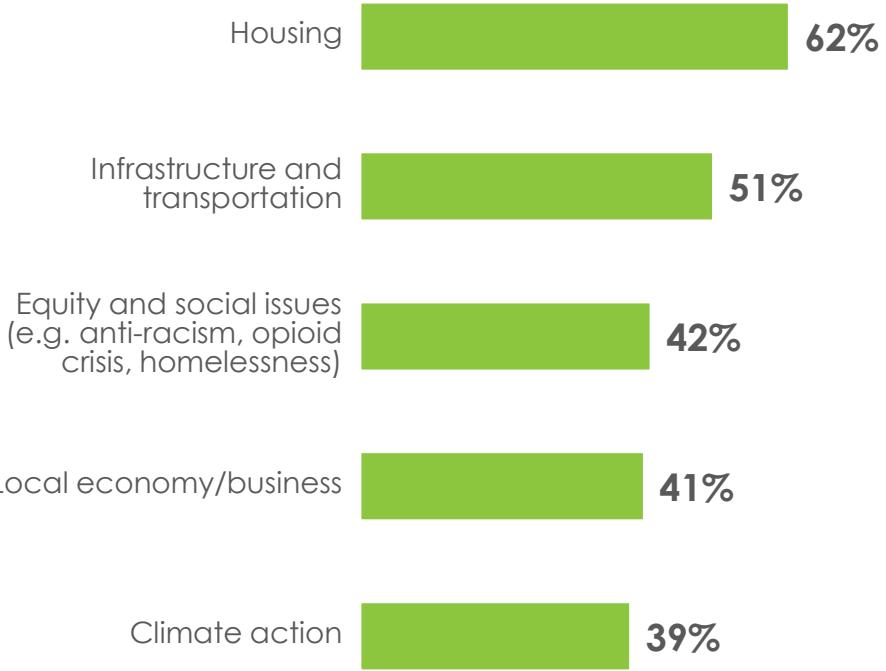
Top Five Budget Priorities

- Housing is the number one budget priority for both residents (70%) and businesses (62%).
- This is followed by infrastructure and transportation (58% residents, 51% businesses) and equity and social issues (50% residents, 42% businesses).
- For residents, climate action (44%) and civic amenities (41%) round out the top five. For businesses, it is local economy/business (41%) and climate action (39%).

RESIDENTS (n=2845)



BUSINESSES (n=502)



Base: All respondents

Q1. What areas or services do you think City Council should prioritize in the budget for next year? Select your top five.

Top Five Budget Priorities – Demographic Differences (Residents)

Highlights by Age

- Housing is the single most important priority across all age groups, but particularly among those who are 15-39 years of age (79% versus 63% of 40-59 years, 66% of 60+ years).
- Younger residents (15-39 years) prioritize infrastructure and transportation and equity and social issues equally, while those 40+ years emphasize infrastructure and transportation over equity and social issues.
 - Infrastructure and transportation: 59% 15-39 years, 56% 40-59 years, 58% 60+ years
 - Equity and social issues: 58% 15-39 years, 46% 40-59 years, 40% 60+ years
- Climate action is a greater priority for younger residents (48% of 15-39 years versus 41% of 60+ years, 42% of 40-59 years).
- Policing services places third among those who are 60+ years of age (41%, tied with climate action) and sits seventh overall (28%).

Highlights by Geographic Area

- Those living in the Southwest are more likely to prioritize infrastructure and transportation (64% versus 55% of Northeast, 56% of Downtown/West End, 57% of Southeast, 58% of Northwest).
- Mentions of equity and social issues are highest among those living in the Northeast (62% versus 42% of Southwest, 47% of Southeast, 50% of Downtown/West End, 50% of Northwest).

Highlights by Housing Tenure

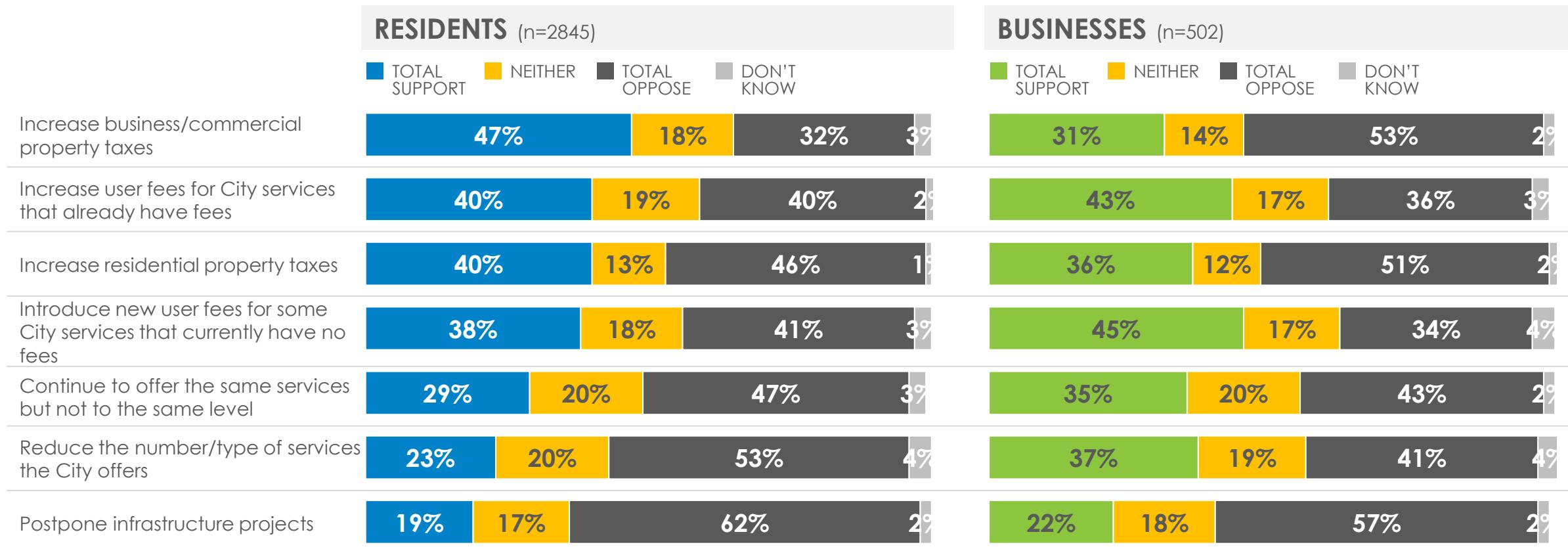
- For renters, housing is the number one priority (85%) by a wide margin. Equity and social issues places second (60%).
- Homeowners have a more diverse set of priorities, led by infrastructure and transportation (62%) and then housing (58%).

Base: All respondents

Q1. What areas or services do you think City Council should prioritize in the budget for next year? Select your top five.

Support for Financial Tools to Balance the Budget

- To balance the budget, residents are most likely to support an increase in business/commercial property taxes (47%).
- Businesses prefer user fees, both new (45%) and increased (43%).
- Residents and businesses alike are the least likely to support postponing infrastructure projects (19% and 22%, respectively).



Base: All respondents

Q2. The City has a number of financial tools that can be used to balance the budget. Tell us how much you support or oppose each of the following options. Select one response for each row.

Support for Financial Tools to Balance the Budget – Demographic Differences (Residents)

Highlights by Age

- Younger residents are the most likely to support an increase in both business/commercial property taxes (56% of 15-39 years versus 33% of 60+ years, 47% of 40-59 years) and residential property taxes (50% of 15-39 years versus 28% of 60+ years, 36% of 40-59 years).
- Conversely, support for other types of financial tools tends to be higher among those who are 40+ years of age. The one exception is support for postponing infrastructure projects, which is equally low across all age groups.

Highlights by Geographic Area

- Support for an increase in business/commercial property taxes is highest among those in the Northeast (56% versus 39% of Southwest, 44% of Northwest, 45% of Downtown/West End, 50% of Southeast).
- Those living in South Vancouver are the *least* likely to support an increase in residential property taxes (34% of both Southeast and Southwest residents versus 48% of Northeast, 45% of Northwest, 43% of Downtown/West End).

Highlights by Housing Tenure

- Renters are more likely than homeowners to support an increase in both business/commercial property taxes (53% versus 42%) and residential property taxes (54% versus 28%).
- Conversely, homeowners are generally more likely than renters to support other types of financial tools. The one exception is support for postponing infrastructure projects, which is equally low among both renters and owners.

Base: All respondents

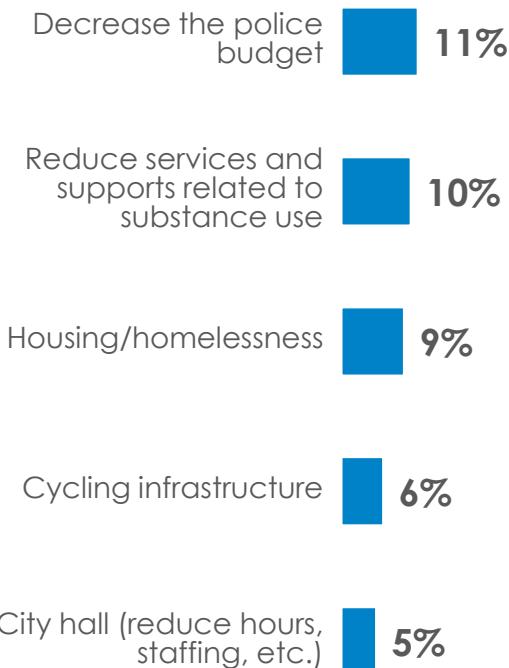
Q2. The City has a number of financial tools that can be used to balance the budget. Tell us how much you support or oppose each of the following options. Select one response for each row.

Top Five Suggestions for Programs and Services to Cut or Reduce

(coded open-ends)

- Residents and businesses identify a wide variety of programs and services that could be eliminated or reduced to help balance the budget.
- Common themes among both are decreasing the police budget, housing/homelessness, cycling infrastructure, and changes to City hall operations.
- Residents also suggest reducing services and supports related to substance use while businesses point to parks/greenspace.

RESIDENTS (n=733)



BUSINESSES (n=161)



Base: Those answering
Q2a. To help balance the budget, which programs and services should the City not offer, or reduce the level of service offered?

Top Five Suggestions for Programs and Services to Cut or Reduce

(example verbatim comments)

- Examples of the types of comments included in each of the top five suggestions provided by residents and businesses are provided below.

RESIDENTS (n=733)

 Reduce the level and type of services offered by the Vancouver Police Department.

 Safe drug program. Safe injection sites.

 Less social housing support.

 Reduce the construction of bike lanes on busy vehicle driven streets.

 Not sure about specific services, but a reasonable and evidence-based reduction in service hours seems reasonable. By e-based, I mean reducing hours at non-peak times.

BUSINESSES (n=161)

 Reduce police budget and demand fiscal transparency and accountability from police department.

 Reduce city hall staff count and high paid employees.

 Stop trying to provide housing for people. That is the responsibility of the province and federal governments.

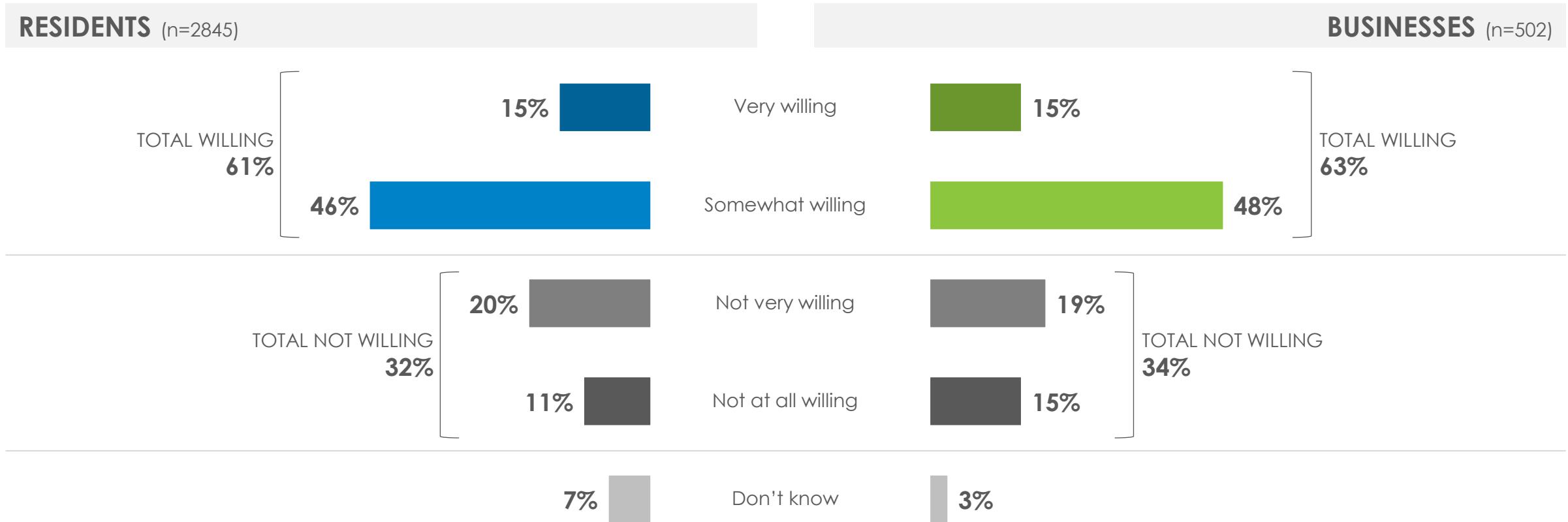
 Stop wasting money on bike lanes that people don't use.

 Reduce park services. Some of the programs are too costly such as the Stanley Park Train.

Base: Those answering
Q2a. To help balance the budget, which programs and services should the City not offer, or reduce the level of service offered?

Willingness to Pay Increased User Fees

- A majority of both residents (61%) and businesses (63%) say they would be willing to pay more in user fees for the services they use in order to maintain or improve them.
- One-third (32% residents, 34% businesses) are unwilling to pay additional user fees.



Base: All respondents

Q3. User fees are paid to the City by the public to access specific services, facilities, and utilities. Some examples include: business licences, building and development permits, and use of City-owned facilities such as recreation centres. Would you be willing to pay more in user fees for the services you or your business use in order to maintain or improve them? Select one.

Willingness to Pay Increased User Fees – Demographic Differences (Residents)

Highlights by Age

- Willingness to pay increased user fees is higher among those who are 40-59 years of age (65% versus 60% of 15-39 years, 61% of 60+ years).

Highlights by Geographic Area

- Those in the Southeast are the *least* willing to pay increased user fees (55% versus 66% of Downtown/West End, 64% of Northeast, 64% of Southwest, 62% of Northwest).

Highlights by Housing Tenure

- Homeowners are more willing than renters to pay increased user fees (66% versus 57%).

Base: All respondents

Q3. User fees are paid to the City by the public to access specific services, facilities, and utilities. Some examples include: business licences, building and development permits, and use of City-owned facilities such as recreation centres. Would you be willing to pay more in user fees for the services you or your business use in order to maintain or improve them? Select one.

Agreement with Potential Property Tax Increase (among Owners)

- Just over half (53%) of strata property owners agree with a property tax increase of \$64 to \$103 more in annual taxes for 2024.
- Nearly four-in-ten (39%) single-detached home owners agree with the property tax increase of \$169 to \$270 that is proposed for their property type.
- Three-in-ten (30%) commercial property owners agree with a proposed property tax increase of \$284 to \$454. These results should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size (only 30 commercial owners answered this question). The small number of business respondents for this question is a reflection that commercial property owners are a sub-set of the overall business respondents in the survey.

TOTAL AGREE ■ TOTAL DISAGREE ■ DON'T KNOW

Pay \$64 to \$103 tax increase (strata)
(n=1112)

53%

46%

1%

Pay \$169 to \$270 tax increase (single-detached home) (n=710)

39%

59%

1%

Pay \$284 to \$454 tax increase
(commercial) (n=30)*

30%

70%

*Small sample size (<50), interpret with caution.

Base: Owner of specific property

Q5/Q6/Q7. Would you agree or disagree with this property tax increase for [strata properties / single-detached home properties / commercial properties]? Select one.

Agreement with Potential Property Tax Increase (among Renters)

- Nearly seven-in-ten (69%) residential renters agree with the property tax increases proposed for strata property owners, single detached home property owners, and commercial property owners.
- Agreement is similar (68%) among business renters.

RESIDENTS (n=1229)

■ TOTAL AGREE ■ TOTAL DISAGREE ■ DON'T KNOW

Residential renters (shown above increases)

69%

26%

5%

BUSINESSES (n=180)

■ TOTAL AGREE ■ TOTAL DISAGREE ■ DON'T KNOW

Business renters (shown above increases)

68%

28%

4%

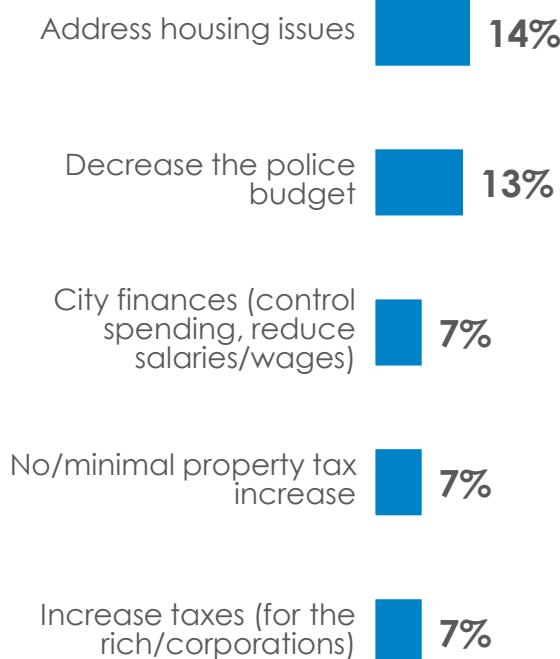
Base: Rent a home or business property or both

Q8. Understanding that renters are not responsible for paying property taxes, would you agree or disagree with such a property tax increase? Select one.

Top Five Comments or Suggestions about 2024 Budget

- Residents and businesses provide a wide variety of final comments and suggestions regarding the 2024 budget.
- Addressing housing issues tops the list of both residents (14%) and businesses (13%), underscoring the importance of this issue to the public.

RESIDENTS (n=1714)



BUSINESSES (n=333)



Base: Those answering
Q9. Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to add about the 2024 Budget? Please type in your comments in the space provided.

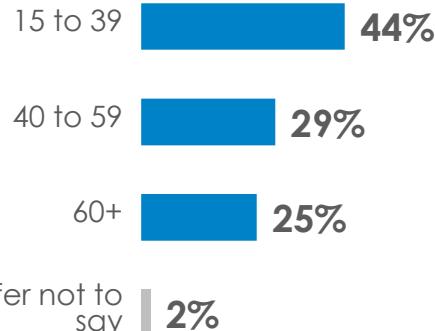
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Sample Characteristics – Residents

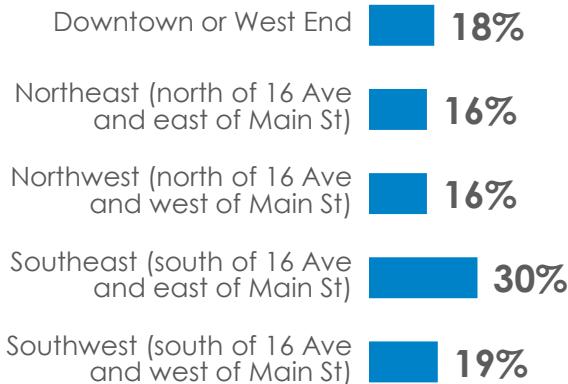
(weighted by age and area of city)



AGE



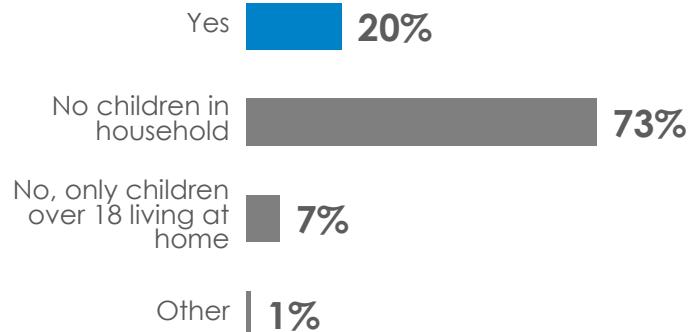
AREA OF CITY LIVE IN



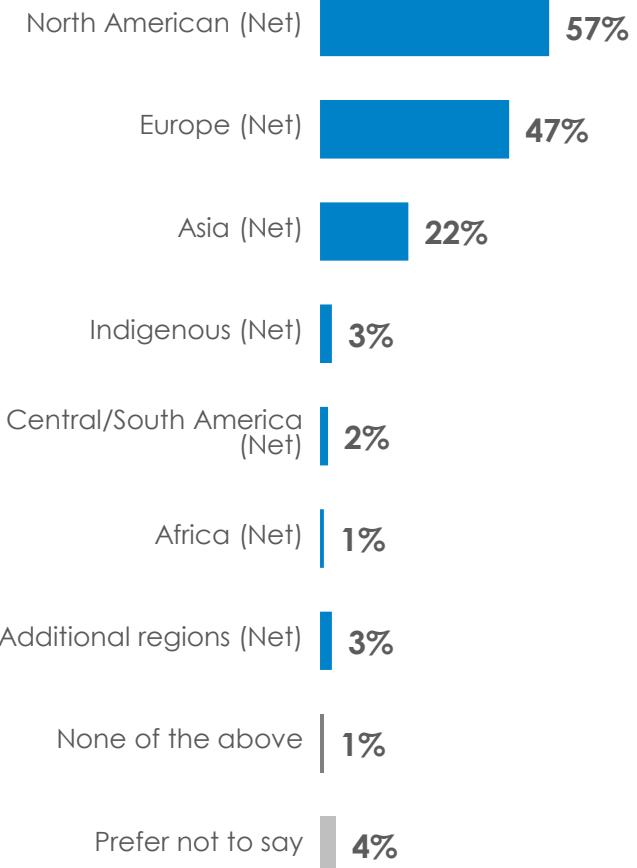
GENDER IDENTITY



CHILDREN <18 IN HOUSEHOLD



ETHNIC ORIGIN¹



Base: All residents (n=2845)

Sample Characteristics – Businesses

(weighted by business size)



NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

None - self-employed  46%

1 to 3  19%

4 to 9  12%

10 to 24  10%

25 to 99  9%

100 or more  2%

Prefer not to say  2%

Base: All businesses (n=502)