

Background

The budget is one of the most important tools the City of Winnipeg has when it comes to planning its priorities. Winnipeg’s 2024-2027 multi-year budget is a four-year balanced budget approved by Council. Annual updates allow for adjustments because changes may come up and flexibility is important. The preliminary 2025 update was tabled at a special meeting of the Executive Policy Committee on Wednesday, December 11, 2024. The City gathered feedback from residents to help finalize this year’s update.

Engagement

To help Council with the 2025 budget update, the City collected feedback through:

- The annual citizen satisfaction survey on City services. Available on the [budget webpage](#).
- Focus groups to capture input from equity groups and the broader Winnipeg population.
- A statistically significant survey on the preliminary 2025 budget update.
- An online survey open to all residents on the preliminary 2025 budget update.
- Public meetings where residents can present or submit written feedback to Councillors.

This report outlines key findings from the focus groups and response surveys.

Table 1: Public engagement opportunities

Date	Activity	Details
May 1 - May 21, 2024	Annual citizen satisfaction survey	A representative sample of 600 Winnipeg citizens aged 18 years and over were interviewed by telephone. The sample include both landlines and cell phone numbers. Results available on the budget webpage .
December 12, 2024 – January 5, 2025	Online survey	Open to all residents. 1,362 participants: 1,346 in English and 16 in French. Results available in appendix B.
December 12 – December 18, 2024	Statistical survey	A representative sample of 800 Winnipeg citizens aged 18 years and completed the survey online. Results available in appendix A.
January 7 and 8, 2025	Focus groups	Four meetings were held: two for equity groups and two for the broader population. Recruitment was pulled from a telephone database representative of the general population and via the online survey. Meeting were held online in groups of 10 participants. Results available in appendix D.
January 13 – 29, 2025	Public meetings	Ten public meetings to hear delegations and consider changes to the preliminary budget update will be held. Meeting minutes will be available on DMIS after the meetings.

Promotion

Public engagement opportunities were promoted using the following methods:

- City of Winnipeg website – launched on December 11, 2024
- News release – circulated on December 12, 2024
- Six Facebook posts with over 42,000 followers – December 12, 2024 to January 2, 2025
- Eight Twitter posts with over 130,000 followers - December 12, 2024 to January 2, 2025
- Two Instagram posts with over 10,000 followers - December 12 to 18, 2024 + shared to stories and pinned to highlights
- LinkedIn post with over 47,000 followers – December 18, 2024
- Four Our City newsletters with over 2,300 followers – December 13, 2024 to January 3, 2025
- City of Winnipeg public engagement newsletter with over 5,600 recipients – December 13, 2024
- Our City, Our Stories article: [Provide input on the Preliminary 2025 Budget](#) – 240 views

Key findings

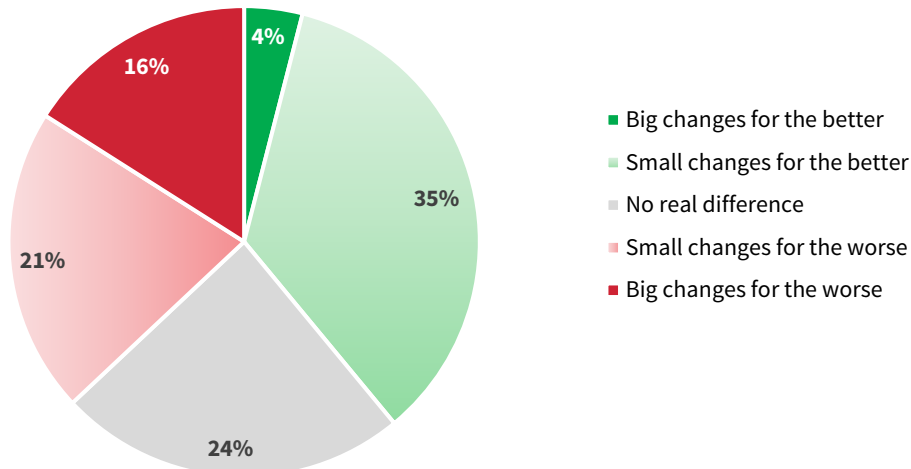
Overall impression of the budget

Respondents who said they knew about the budget were asked if they thought the 2025 plan would make things better or worse (Figure 1).

- The results were almost evenly divided among the statistical survey respondents. Thirty-nine percent believed the budget would bring positive change, while 37 percent thought it would bring negative change.
- Responses to the online survey were much more negative, with 52 percent expecting things to get worse and only 25 percent thinking they would improve.

Figure 1: Based on what you have seen, read or heard, would you say the new City budget is going to bring:

Statistical survey (those aware of the 2025 budget 537 responses)



- There are different reasons why residents may feel negatively about the budget. Some common points included a need for the City to control/ review spending (6 percent), increase funding for social services (3 percent/ 9 percent online), lower police funding (3 percent/ 9 percent online), and a negative impression about the property tax increase (1 percent/ 15 percent online).
 - Focus groups discussed these ideas further, sharing concerns about money being spent inefficiently, especially on policing. They often preferred maintaining existing infrastructure instead of adding new projects.

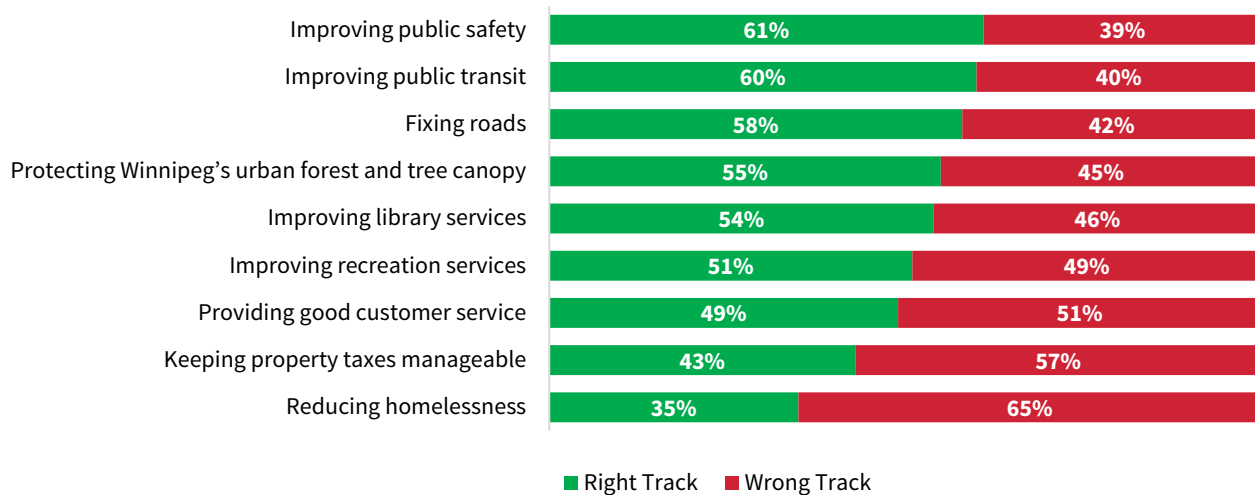
Direction of the budget

Respondents were asked if they felt different areas of the budget were on the right track or wrong track. A similar split was found in most major areas of the budget (Figure 2).

- Improving public safety, transit and roads were the top areas where more than half of statistical survey respondents felt we're heading in the right direction. However, no single area was rated positively by more than 61 percent.
- Roads was the top area in the online survey with 50 percent of respondents feeling we're heading in the right direction followed by urban forest and tree canopy at 49 percent
- The budget's ability to reduce homelessness had the least confidence with only 35 percent of residents saying it's on the right track. The online survey respondents were even less confident at 27 percent.

Figure 2: Based on what you have seen, read or heard, is the City's budget on the right track or the wrong track when it comes to the following areas?

Statistical survey (those aware of the 2025 budget 537 responses)



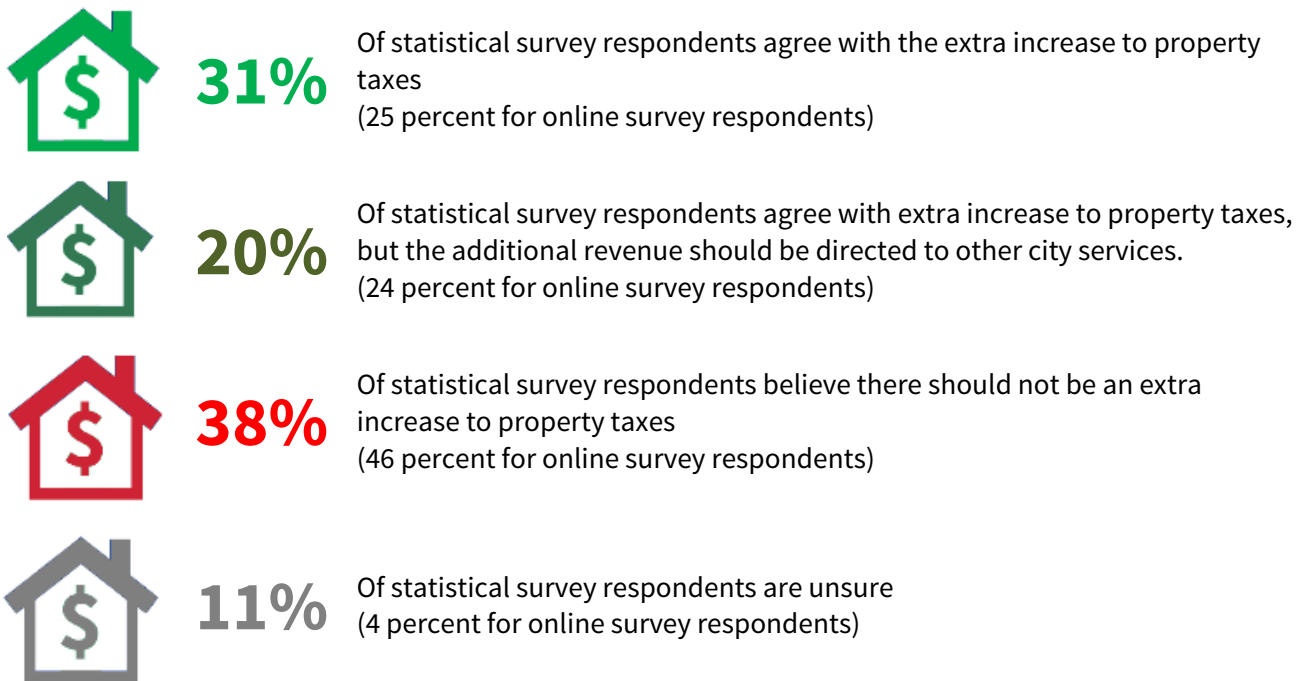
Reaction to property tax increase

Respondents were asked how they felt about the proposed 5.95% property tax increase (Figure 3).

- Fifty-one percent of statistical survey respondents agree with the 5.95% increase versus the 38 percent who oppose the increase. However, among those who agree 20 percent believe the added revenue should follow a different plan.
- A similar reaction was seen in the online survey. Forty-nine percent of respondents agree with the 5.95% increase with 24 percent of those who agree believing the added revenue should follow a different plan.
 - Focus groups clarified expectations that tax increases are contingent of proof of improvement and efficiency. However, some participants remain distrustful about how the funds will be managed.

Figure 3: The city had initially expected a 3.5% increase in property taxes in 2025; however, the city is proposing to increase property taxes to 5.95%. The extra increase is designed to invest more money in public safety, road renewals, and getting the City’s finances in a stable position. Which of these statements best reflects your opinion?

Statistical survey (800 responses)



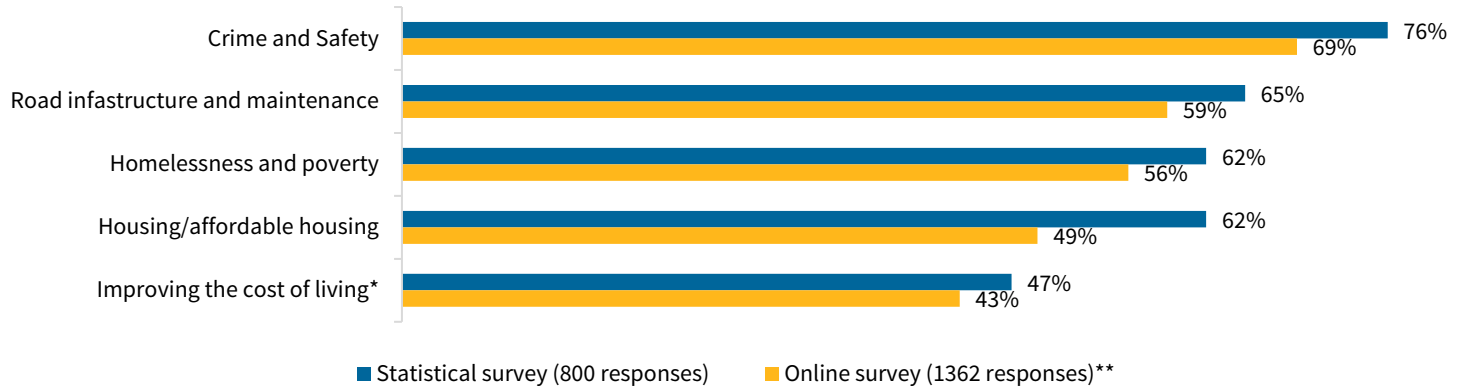
Priority service areas

Respondents were asked to share their most important priority areas for the budget (Figure 4 and Figure 5).

- Roads and social issues like crime, poverty, housing, and affordability were high priorities for both statistical survey and online survey respondents.
- Animal control and insect control were the lowest priorities for the budget.

Figure 4: What are the most important priority areas the City's budget must address?

(Top five service areas)



Note: Respondents could select more than one area.

*Improving the cost of living was the 5th most important service area on the statistically significant survey and 7th most important service area on the online survey

** Respondents to the online survey had two different service areas in the 5th and 6th positions. Snow and ice removal placed 5th with 48% of responses and Public transit placed 6th with 46% of responses.

Figure 5: What are the most important priority areas the City's budget must address?

(Bottom five service areas)

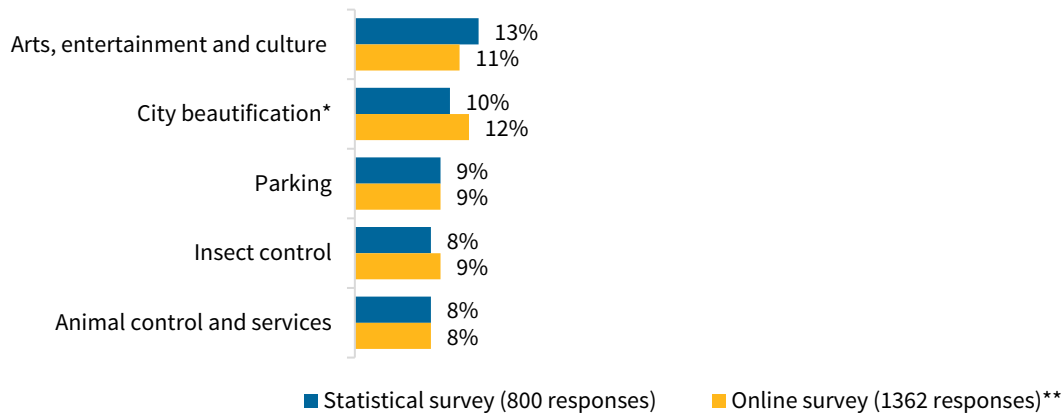


Figure 1: Bottom five service areas

Note: Respondents could select more than one area

*City beautification was 4th least important service area on the statistically significant survey and 6th least important service area on the online survey

** Respondents to the online placed the 311 Contact Centre as the 5th least important service area with 11% of responses.

A list of respondents' priorities for all service areas is available in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Methodology and limitations

The results of this report have some limits, which are explained to help understand the findings:

- **Online feedback:** All feedback outlined in this report was gathered from participants online. This made it easy for many people to join in, but it left out those who don't have good internet access or are uncomfortable using online tools. To make up for this, Winnipeggers are invited to share their thoughts in-person through submissions and presentations at [budget meetings through the appropriate committee](#).
- **Timing:** The feedback period took place in December and early January, a time when it's usually harder to get people's attention because of the holidays. To help with this issue, the survey stayed open longer so more people could participate. Details on the variety of promotion tactics used are outlined earlier in the report. The online survey results are shared in addition to or alongside results from the same questions measured via a statistically significant survey.
- **Focus groups:** Feedback provided in a meeting format allowed for greater dialog about the survey questions. The focus groups were formed using two methods: a telephone panel and the online survey run by the PRA research firm. Focus groups are not meant to be statistically representative. The focus groups aimed to capture a wide range of perspectives, balancing gender, age, region, and ethnicity in two sessions representing the broader population. Another two sessions recruited participants from equity groups identified the City's Engage Winnipeg Policy this included participants that are women, Indigenous people, racialized people, persons with disabilities, newcomers, and 2SLGTQQA+ persons.

Next steps

Residents' feedback will be shared with Council to help finalize the 2025 preliminary budget update. Public meetings will also be held in January to hear delegations and consider changes. The 2025 preliminary budget will be considered by Council on January 29, 2025.

Appendices

[Appendix A – Statistical survey results](#)

[Appendix B – Online survey results](#)

[Appendix C - Focus groups results](#)