

Citizen Budget 2020 Results

ILC – February 2020 -- FINAL

As Town Council, one of the most important tasks that we face is to set the annual municipal budget. This process takes months to complete, and requires the involvement of every department. We are always striving to improve the process, and one of the ways that we have done so is by asking for the opinion of our most valuable asset – our citizens!

One of the tools that Council employs in the development of our annual budget is “Citizen Budget” - an online survey that takes approximately five minutes to complete. Citizen Budget allows you to see the breakdown of how your taxes are allocated, based on the assessed value of your home. You are asked if you would support the same, higher or lower tax allocation for various services that the Town is responsible for (beyond inflationary and non-discretionary adjustments) such as fire & rescue, bylaw compliance and protective services, roads & operations, health & sanitation, parks & trails, as well as planning & development. In addition, we ask for your general comments and feedback. All of this information is compiled into a report that is given to Council. We, as Council, understand that our citizens have entrusted us to make good decisions for the Town with their tax dollars and by utilizing Citizen Budget, we are given the opportunity to ensure that the priorities of Council and our citizens are aligned.

We received 226 responses to the Town of Creston 2020 Citizen Budget survey. Most respondents said that they supported the same allocation of their tax dollars to the services that the Town provides, which tells us that we are on the right track! The top recurring themes of the comments were economic development (jobs/business/tourism), infrastructure maintenance and upgrades (roads/utilities), recycling and composting, and the reduction of taxes and spending. Other themes were physicians/medical services, active transportation network, affordable housing, parks/greenspaces/outdoor recreation, highway realignment and our new fire hall. I can tell you that all of Council read all of the comments and took that feedback into consideration during our budget deliberations. Thank you to all who participated in this important community process! The themes of economic development and infrastructure maintenance/upgrades have been top priorities for Council for the 11 years that I have been your Mayor. We continue to participate and contribute to economic development initiatives and tourism, as well as being very engaged in asset management.

In January 2020, Council and staff embarked on the development of our current “Corporate Strategic Plan”. This is yet another tool to help us to continue to make informed decisions and this year, we are focusing on defining levels of service as they relate to infrastructure. The strategic priorities that are developed through this planning process are meant to define the

vision, goals and direction for this Council, for the next five years. The need for a new fire hall has been a focus of our corporate strategic planning since 2014. In my opinion, the fact that we will begin construction of our new fire hall this year is a testament to the value of the corporate strategic planning process. You can view the current and past Corporate Strategic Plans on our website – www.creston.ca.

The Town of Creston's Corporate Strategic Plan is a collaborative process and provides clear direction from Council to fulfill our commitment to continue to build and maintain a Town that our citizens are proud to call home. We look forward to sharing the new Corporate Strategic Plan in the near future!

Do not hesitate to contact me by:

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