

HALIFAX

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Item No. 1

**Budget Committee
February 12, 2020**

TO: Chair and Members of Budget Committee (Standing Committee of the Whole on Budget)

SUBMITTED BY:

Original Signed

Jane Fraser, Director of Finance, Asset Management and ICT/CFO

Original Signed by

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: Feb 7, 2020

SUBJECT: Shape Your City, Shape Your Budget 2020 – Preliminary Public Consultation Results

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

As per Administrative Order 1 and the Budget and Business Plan consultation schedule presented to Regional Council on June 4, 2019.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Charter, section 35 (1) The Chief Administrative Officer shall (b) ensure that an annual budget is prepared and submitted to the Council.

BACKGROUND

For the last several years Council has provided an on-line budget tool to the public, which allows the public to better understand the municipal budget process and provides an opportunity to provide input for Council consideration in the budget process.

DISCUSSION

This is the seventh year for the public consultation on the Budget, where residents of HRM were invited to contribute to the 2020 Budget consultation by sharing their thoughts on service priorities and how they would like to see their municipal tax dollars allocated.

In order to engage as many people as possible, the consultation was promoted in electronic ads through social media and Halifax.ca. The consultation will cost approximately \$3,500 in advertising. Staff were able to utilize the current software contract without any additional expense.

The consultation process began on January 16, 2020 and continued during the Budget presentations to Committee of the Whole.

The public engagement strategy included the following elements:

- Utilizing the Budget Allocator, an on-line Budget Tool
- Public participation at Committee of the Whole

The on-line information included services that the public encounters or utilizes on a day to day basis, as well as the Administrative costs of Governance and Support Services. These services cost \$565.5 million in the 2019/20 budget, which included:

1. Protective Services
 - a. Police
 - b. RCMP
 - c. Fire

2. Public Support Services
 - a. Halifax Transit
 - b. Libraries Services
 - c. Corporate & Customer Service
 - d. Parks & Recreation
 - e. Transportation & Public Works
 - f. Planning & Development

3. Governance and Support Services
 - a. Auditor General
 - b. Chief Administrative Officer
 - c. Finance, Asset Management & ICT
 - d. Legal, Municipal Clerk and External Affairs
 - e. Human Resources

The Budget Allocator provides the opportunity to re-balance the budget of \$565.5 million, based on an individual's priorities. Each service showed the Budget allocated for the 2019/20 year, with the choice and impact for the following options:

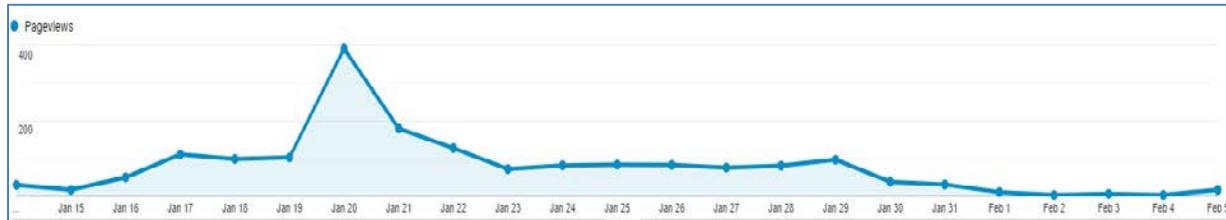
1. to maintain the current budget
2. to increase the budget by 5%
3. to increase the budget by 10%
4. to decrease the budget by 5%
5. to decrease the budget by 10%

The percent amounts used were limited by the consultation software. The 5% or 10% options should be interpreted as adding or removing funding, thus indicating spending reductions.

Consultation Findings

This was an open invitation to all citizens of HRM. Current analysis of the Budget Allocation Tool shows that participation to date is the highest from the past three years. The 2020 Budget Allocator was put on line January 16, 2020. As of February 6, 2020, 854 participants have completed the budget allocation tool compared to 695 in 2019.

The information found below summarizes participation in the engagement process through Shape your City for 2020:



Summary of citizen participation in the Budget Consultation:

Citizen participation	Budget Consultation		
	2018	2019	2020
Visitors to the Shape your City engagement site	677	1,480	1,591
Number of citizens completing Budget Allocator	522	695	854
Percent of visitors, who completed Budget Allocator	77%	47%	54%

1. The average budget calculated was \$562.4M; \$3.1M less than the 2019/20 budget of \$565.4M for these services.
2. The citizens varied on decreasing and increasing the budget for current services.
 - a. 61.9% completed their budget priorities below the current spend vs 76.8% from prior year;
 - b. 1.1% maintaining the current entire budget vs none from previous year.
 - c. 37.0% were willing to increase the budget vs 23.2% from previous year.

The priorities for the Budget Distribution are shown in Appendix 1.

Support to increase the budget was strongest for the following business units Halifax Transit (51.6%) Parks & Recreation (43.8%) and Transportation & Public Works (33.5%).

Category	Department	Budget Percentage	Response	%	Average
Protective Services	Fire & Emergency Services	Increase budget by 10%	42	4.96	4.68
	Halifax Regional Police	Increase budget by 10%	54	6.37	
	RCMP	Increase budget by 10%	23	2.71	
Public Services	Corporate & Customer Service	Increase budget by 10%	15	1.76	12.66
	Halifax Transit	Increase budget by 10%	201	23.62	
	Library Services	Increase budget by 10%	101	11.85	
	Parks & Recreation	Increase budget by 10%	153	18	
	Planning & Development	Increase budget by 10%	99	11.67	
	TPW	Increase budget by 10%	77	9.05	
Government & Support Services	Chief Administrative Officer	Increase budget by 10%	9	1.06	3.18
	Auditor General	Increase budget by 10%	58	6.81	
	Finance, Asset Management & ICT	Increase budget by 10%	15	1.76	
	Legal, Municipal Clerk and External Affairs	Increase budget by 10%	12	1.42	
	Human Resources	Increase budget by 10%	41	4.83	

Category	Department	Budget Percentage	Response	%	Average
Protective Services	Fire & Emergency Services	Increase budget by 5%	188	22.2	15.81
	Halifax Regional Police	Increase budget by 5%	128	15.09	
	RCMP	Increase budget by 5%	86	10.14	
Public Services	Corporate & Customer Service	Increase budget by 5%	65	7.64	19.75
	Halifax Transit	Increase budget by 5%	238	27.97	
	Library Services	Increase budget by 5%	148	17.37	
	Parks & Recreation	Increase budget by 5%	219	25.76	
	Planning & Development	Increase budget by 5%	130	15.33	
	TPW	Increase budget by 5%	208	24.44	
Government & Support Services	Chief Administrative Officer	Increase budget by 5%	20	2.35	5.51
	Auditor General	Increase budget by 5%	84	9.86	
	Finance, Asset Management & ICT	Increase budget by 5%	26	3.06	
	Legal, Municipal Clerk and External Affairs	Increase budget by 5%	20	2.36	
	Human Resources	Increase budget by 5%	84	9.91	

Support for a decrease in the budget was strongest amongst Chief Administrative Office (68.0%), Finance, Asset Management & ICT (60.1%) and Legal, Municipal Clerk & External Affairs (56.0%).

Category	Department	Budget Percentage	Response	%	Average
Protective Services	Fire & Emergency Services	Decrease budget by 10%	43	5.08	17.10
	Halifax Regional Police	Decrease budget by 10%	178	20.99	
	RCMP	Decrease budget by 10%	214	25.24	
Public Services	Corporate & Customer Service	Decrease budget by 10%	153	17.98	11.92
	Halifax Transit	Decrease budget by 10%	75	8.81	
	Library Services	Decrease budget by 10%	132	15.49	
	Parks & Recreation	Decrease budget by 10%	66	7.76	
	Planning & Development	Decrease budget by 10%	144	16.98	
	TPW	Decrease budget by 10%	38	4.47	
Government & Support Services	Chief Administrative Officer	Decrease budget by 10%	340	40	28.87
	Auditor General	Decrease budget by 10%	181	21.24	
	Finance, Asset Management & ICT	Decrease budget by 10%	270	31.76	
	Legal, Municipal Clerk and External Affairs	Decrease budget by 10%	252	29.79	
	Human Resources	Decrease budget by 10%	183	21.58	

Category	Department	Budget Percentage	Response	%	Average
Protective Services	Fire & Emergency Services	Decrease budget by 5%	73	8.62	14.11
	Halifax Regional Police	Decrease budget by 5%	133	15.68	
	RCMP	Decrease budget by 5%	153	18.04	
Public Services	Corporate & Customer Service	Decrease budget by 5%	238	27.97	14.66
	Halifax Transit	Decrease budget by 5%	83	9.75	
	Library Services	Decrease budget by 5%	113	13.26	
	Parks & Recreation	Decrease budget by 5%	90	10.59	
	Planning & Development	Decrease budget by 5%	155	18.28	
	TPW	Decrease budget by 5%	69	8.11	
Government & Support Services	Chief Administrative Officer	Decrease budget by 5%	238	28	24.05
	Auditor General	Decrease budget by 5%	165	19.37	
	Finance, Asset Management & ICT	Decrease budget by 5%	241	28.35	
	Legal, Municipal Clerk and External Affairs	Decrease budget by 5%	222	26.24	
	Human Resources	Decrease budget by 5%	155	18.28	

Generally, many respondents on average support maintaining the level of budget support.

Category	Department	Budget Percentage	Response	%	Average
Protective Services	Fire & Emergency Services	Maintain existing budget	501	59.15	48.29
	Halifax Regional Police	Maintain existing budget	355	41.86	
	RCMP	Maintain existing budget	372	43.87	
Public Services	Corporate & Customer Service	Maintain existing budget	380	44.65	41.01
	Halifax Transit	Maintain existing budget	254	29.85	
	Library Services	Maintain existing budget	358	42.02	
	Parks & Recreation	Maintain existing budget	322	37.88	
	Planning & Development	Maintain existing budget	320	37.74	
	TPW	Maintain existing budget	459	53.94	
Government & Support Services	Chief Administrative Officer	Maintain existing budget	243	28.59	38.39
	Auditor General	Maintain existing budget	364	42.72	
	Finance, Asset Management & ICT	Maintain existing budget	298	35.06	
	Legal, Municipal Clerk and External Affairs	Maintain existing budget	340	40.19	
	Human Resources	Maintain existing budget	385	45.4	

Along with balancing the Budget, participants were invited to provide general comments on HRM's budget, as well as comment on why they made their choice. These comments are included in Appendix 2.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications from this Report. The information in this report will inform Council in the development of a Proposed Budget for 2020/21. The broader financial implications will be discussed and debated as the budget is developed in more detail.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As outlined in the Discussion section above, the budget consultation included a number of ways to engage citizens to provide insight and direction into the priorities for the 2020/21 Budget.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 – Budget Allocator – Budget Distribution
Appendix 2 – Budget Allocator – Comments

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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Report Approved by: Original Signed
Bruce Fisher, Manager, Financial Policy & Planning, 902-490-4493

Appendix 1

Budget Allocator-Budget Distribution

Budgets (includes data from unverified submissions)

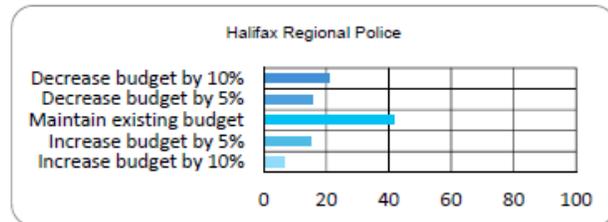
Total Responses 854

Default Category

PROTECTIVE SERVICES

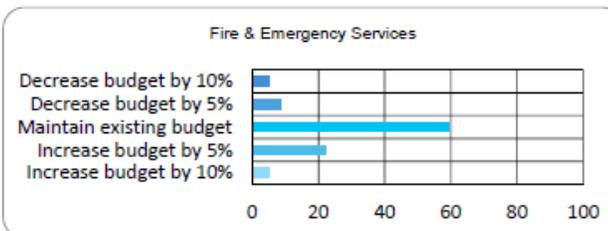
Halifax Regional Police

Increase budget by 10%	54	6.37
Increase budget by 5%	128	15.09
Maintain existing budget	355	41.86
Decrease budget by 5%	133	15.68
Decrease budget by 10%	178	20.99



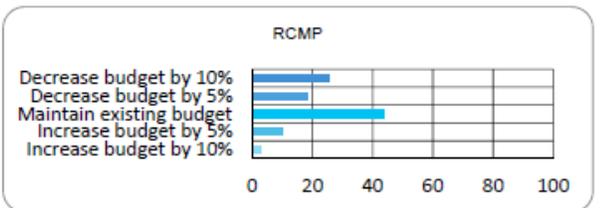
Fire & Emergency Services

Increase budget by 10%	42	4.96
Increase budget by 5%	188	22.2
Maintain existing budget	501	59.15
Decrease budget by 5%	73	8.62
Decrease budget by 10%	43	5.08



RCMP

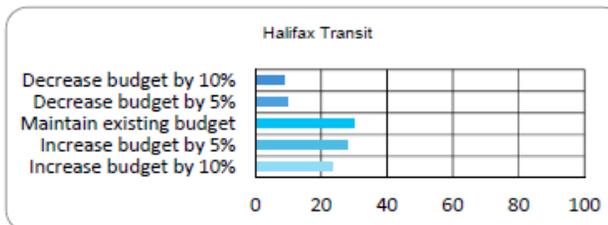
Increase budget by 10%	23	2.71
Increase budget by 5%	86	10.14
Maintain existing budget	372	43.87
Decrease budget by 5%	153	18.04
Decrease budget by 10%	214	25.24



Public Services

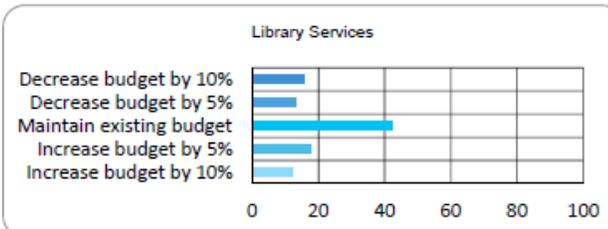
Halifax Transit

Increase budget by 10%	201	23.62
Increase budget by 5%	238	27.97
Maintain existing budget	254	29.85
Decrease budget by 5%	83	9.75
Decrease budget by 10%	75	8.81



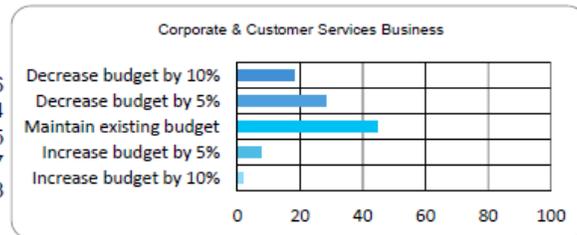
Library Services

Increase budget by 10%	101	11.85
Increase budget by 5%	148	17.37
Maintain existing budget	358	42.02
Decrease budget by 5%	113	13.26
Decrease budget by 10%	132	15.49



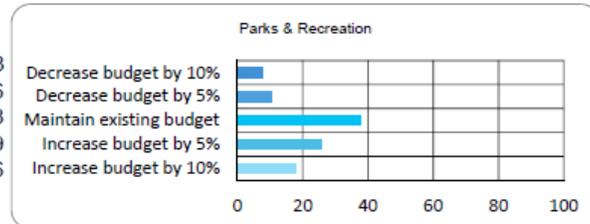
Corporate & Customer Services Business

Increase budget by 10%	15	1.76
Increase budget by 5%	65	7.64
Maintain existing budget	380	44.65
Decrease budget by 5%	238	27.97
Decrease budget by 10%	153	17.98



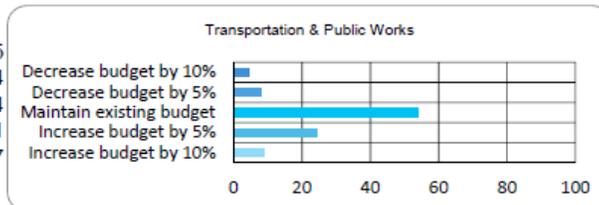
Parks & Recreation

Increase budget by 10%	153	18
Increase budget by 5%	219	25.76
Maintain existing budget	322	37.88
Decrease budget by 5%	90	10.59
Decrease budget by 10%	66	7.76



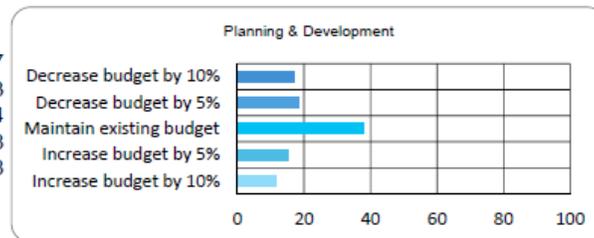
TPW

Increase budget by 10%	77	9.05
Increase budget by 5%	208	24.44
Maintain existing budget	459	53.94
Decrease budget by 5%	69	8.11
Decrease budget by 10%	38	4.47



Planning & Development

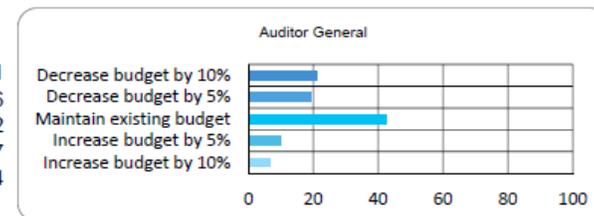
Increase budget by 10%	99	11.67
Increase budget by 5%	130	15.33
Maintain existing budget	320	37.74
Decrease budget by 5%	155	18.28
Decrease budget by 10%	144	16.98



Governance & Support Services

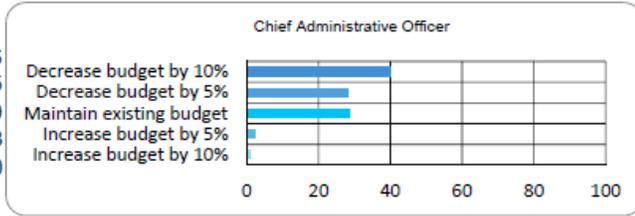
Auditor General

Increase budget by 10%	58	6.81
Increase budget by 5%	84	9.86
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Decrease budget by 10%	181	21.24



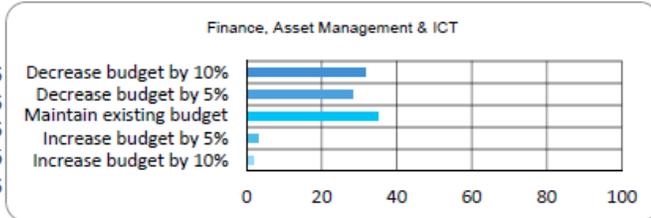
Chief Administrative Officer

Increase budget by 10%	9	1.06
Increase budget by 5%	20	2.35
Maintain existing budget	243	28.59
Decrease budget by 5%	238	28
Decrease budget by 10%	340	40



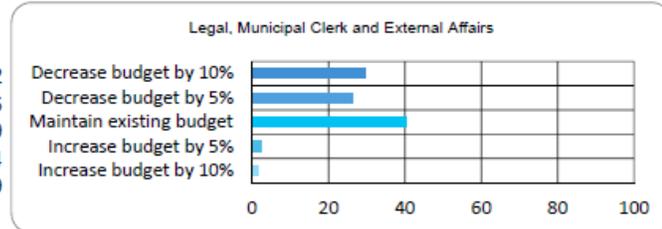
Finance, Asset Management & ICT

Increase budget by 10%	15	1.76
Increase budget by 5%	26	3.06
Maintain existing budget	298	35.06
Decrease budget by 5%	241	28.35
Decrease budget by 10%	270	31.76



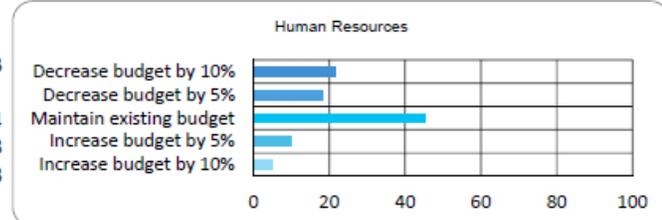
Legal, Municipal Clerk and External Affairs

Increase budget by 10%	12	1.42
Increase budget by 5%	20	2.36
Maintain existing budget	340	40.19
Decrease budget by 5%	222	26.24
Decrease budget by 10%	252	29.79



Human Resources

Increase budget by 10%	41	4.83
Increase budget by 5%	84	9.91
Maintain existing budget	385	45.4
Decrease budget by 5%	155	18.28
Decrease budget by 10%	183	21.58



**Appendix 2
Budget Allocator**

We need way more money invested in active transportation, bike lanes, transit priority lanes, and public transportation generally.

I want to stress—I might sound annoyed in my comments, and I am sometimes. I look at the way that this city is operated on a day-to-day level and am frequently disappointed. Municipal government isn't about "big ideas"—it's about the little pieces that let citizens impact and engage in their communities. This means: meaningful and effective public transport (no more buses, please! Major thoroughfares can't handle more traffic); snow removal that makes sense—it snows, we get it. Focus on the roads and delegate the sidewalks to citizens; and most importantly: road conditions are so poor throughout the city that I suspect they affect emissions, travel time, quality of life, public health, the cost of public transit (buses idling on the road use gas), and more. I know the city has over 4000km of roads and frankly, this is not a "me" problem. Roads are the fundamental arteries that link this community; if they're this bad, what else is falling apart? These are the priorities that I wish I could see council take forward.

The police budget consumes way too high of a percentage of our overall budget. That should be the first place we look for cost-savings and reduced spending.

Affordable housing needs attention in this city!!!!

The municipality need to stop wasting money on building bike lanes, instead to focus on improving the road infrastructure of highly congested intersections and roadways. More money should spend on adding more sports fields, and adding portable bathroom in these sports fields during the peak season. Policing resource need to be better utilized to focus more on the protection and crime prevention than the services side.

There was no option to increase debt repayment. I call foul on this survey.

TAX THE RICH AND CORPORATIONS!!!!

I always find this tool coarse and hamfisted.

Active transportation infrastructure, public transit. Cheaper than catering to commuter culture!

The police and fire are important and need to be paid accurately for the services they provide. The rest I have indicated to decrease based on lack of public use, councilors do not require a raise when the rest of the city/province are not seeing their wage increase. We don't need bike lanes especially set up the way they are now, its not safe for the cyclist or the motorist so forget it if you cant fix it.

If we lower the spending at city couesllor and mayor salaries we would have funds to finance the sections that are of importance. Counsellor and mayor salaries that outweigh those of larger nor populated cities such as Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton should not occur and there should be oversight to prevent this misappropriation of public funds.

We all have to start living within our means. Taxes cannot continue to increase even if that means we do with reduced service.

Cut police service budget by more than 10% so that no tax increase is necessary.

As the city grows, the budget needs to grow--esp. re: transportation and fire protection.

Police officers are paid much more per person than any other comparable or benchmark city, and more than most large cities. Get a handle on it or its just going to continue to balloon. You need to fix the housing crisis. That needs to be item number one.

You need to offer more options.

These kind of budget reductions (max 10%) are routinely faced by well run business, no reason a well run administration could not do the same.

I did not see a place for special emphasis on issues related to the climate crisis. If proposals were made that showed how Halifax could increase our contribution to alleviate our carbon foot print, I would support an increase in the budget and subsequent increase in taxes. For example, could we plant more trees? I live on North Ridge Road. A few trees were added last summer to the strip of land that faces the bridge. These trees act as carbon sinks from all the exhaust from the bridge traffic. More trees could be planted there. I imagine there are many other places where this would be possible and this is not a huge cost. What about along Dunbrack? What about that moonscape out in Dartmouth Crossing? Also, is there anything the city can do to work with NS Power to coordinate burying power lines so that the trees are not the cause of so much power outages? How about a planned approach whenever a street is being repaved?

Priority is improved public transit, snow removal, environmental design in planning for climate change, more green space and recreation opportunities.

Thank you for involving the public.

You need to start investing in mental health programs and initiatives with your workers. A public suicide JUST happened at the Worker's Compensation Board this week. How long do you think it will be before it happens within your business units?

Spending is far too high for a city the size of Halifax. Salary and compensation for police, fire, and council members are way too high. Efficiencies need to be found immediately so that my taxes are reduced. Start by cutting wages. Wages are too high given the willing supply of labour in the city. Cut taxes and cut spending to reduce the tax burden on businesses so that they can create jobs in the city.

Stadium yes, figure out a way

I don't like that you made this grouping "Chief Administrative Officer (senior leadership, Mayor's Office, Councillor Support, Public Safety Office and Diversity & Inclusion)" I think the cuts should come from the top but not at the expense of Public Safety or Diversity & Inclusion.

The city should invest in transportation and planning in order to keep pace with growth and keep this city a place people want to live.

You don't need more money, per se, but vision to use it better

As a taxpayer, my fundamental issue is the lack of oversight in how HRM is run from a cost of services point of view. I know that senior staff and elected officials work very hard but more must be done on a value for taxpayers money.

What a chore! Good luck with the real thing.

Striving for a balanced budget.

If a submission does not spend all funds the default option should not be a tax reduction. There should be space to identify new priorities such as more free transit.

Animal husbandry routes, noise reduction/animal barriers along highways. Environmental efforts, Shoreline defence, Underwater landscaping and harbour cleanup, water visibility, turbidity, quality reporting. detailed air quality reporting. Ambient noise reporting.

The spending for mayors office seems high. It would be nice to see the breakdown of snow removal vs trash etc

Fair taxes for condominiums. Please lower taxes charged to condominiums.

Property assessment is up. Again !! This increase with the tax rate held or lowered would mean more money for HRM. Taxes go up every year except the year when elections are held. people are not stupid and see through this. We are spending too much in HRM

Stop giving people like the mayor unwarranted raises. Stop making bike lanes when there's communities like East Preston that still don't have sidewalks. Make the busses more user friendly. Stop increasing the meter parking rates when people already pay taxes. Fix small potholes when reported before they become such a big problem that you have to waste the money repaving the entire street, small problems are easier to fix than big problems.

I am sure there are more reductions possible but would need to see more detail in individual departments to determine or suggest where more money could be saved. We need to have a serious reversal in the spending by those tasked with day to day operations.

Thank you for providing this survey. It was very informative.

Teach cops who they serve. Eliminate prejudice. Remove the RCMP from native land. No more exploitation of the environment. No more protection of corporate interests. Serve the people and the planet. Raise taxes, and ***** revamp the Metro Transit work hour system already. They're a necessary public service and they have to get over it.

Increase Police Budget hire more uniformed Police Officers equip them with body cameras and long rifle carbines

Please do not increase taxes. Adjust spending accordingly. Prioritize public safety, stewardship, etc.

I believe this will improve quality of life and general well being in the community. Over time, increases in these areas will lead to reduced need for policing and other corrective services. As an important point, this does not include wasting money on a sports stadium that will ultimately see funds withdrawn from HRM to fill the pockets of snake oil salesmen type business persons who are not willing to invest their own capital to realize their aspirations.

More money needs to be added to account # CP180004 - parkland acquisition

Stop wasting money on useless bike lanes!!!!!!!!!!!!

I don't want to see money wasted on football stadiums, infrastructure that contributes to visual pollution like the atrocity over the railway cut near Quinpool Rd and the massive signs approaching the Armdale roundabout, or widening roads so that more vehicles can drive too fast.

No need to raise taxes

The key to a vibrant, safe and prosperous (not just Halifax Peninsula) is a modern, efficient comprehensive and fully integrated public transportation system, ultimately expandable to the whole province, so that we can become global leaders in redefining a sustainable future for our children.

I would hope the auditor general be given much more funding for better oversight and ability to enforce laws. I would also like to see more bus lanes and priority to allow them to move quickly through traffic at all hours including rush hour, to finally make them a true alternative to driving, especially in the core. Finally it would be nice to have sidewalks cleared and salted to allow for all citizens to be mobile including those with poor accessibility.

The city must start treating dollars more wisely. These never ending rate increases must stop!!!!!!

More transportation planning and more transit! Please!!! Halifax police are terrible. Cutting their budget won't likely improve situation, but neither would increasing it. Redirect funding somewhere more useful.

I would love to see continued investment in Active Transportation infrastructure and animated wilderness areas with trails and amenities. In particular I would like to see significant investment in Mountain Biking infrastructure as outlined in the Halifax MTB Strategy which is before council. This could act as a significant draw for tourism and a revenue stream for local businesses.

Please cut some spending

Uh - don't you think by making it a game to try to balance the budget, showing big red numbers and dialogue boxes asking you if you're sure, you're not skewing the results by...a lot?! Did you legit just gamify the budget to reinforce the status quo?

Our city councillors make way to much money. They should not be paid more than the median income of their constituents. Politicians should be politicians not for a good paycheque or pension, they should be into it to make a positive difference in the community. By taking home so much you are essentially saying our work is more valuable than the median citizens in their districts. It is insanely wrong. Also, take the cops that are out catching speeders and have them try grass roots policing not sitting out on highways in the car. They will receive more respect from the public and maybe earn back the respect they have to a large degree lost!

Thank you for allowing this opportunity.

The only services that should see increases or maintain status quo are first responders and the road works and libraries and transit... government officials and agencies DO NOT NEED more money

This was a challenge as the smallest increase allowed in this exercise was 5 %. My priorities are to upgrade public transit to electric, increase accessibility for parks, recreation and transportation.

I would like to see more recreational facilities (ie swimming pools/ice rinks) in rural areas. Better road maintenance (ie pot hole removal). Rural public transportation.

Although this is a strategic overview, there can be cost savings in removing duplication of services with the RCMP/HRMP. Additionally, infrastructure and corporate holdings are a massive expense and should be examined to see if there are any savings - and follow through with them.

Brilliant idea and tool to gauge and engage the public

With crime down it would seem like a good time to remain status quo, however the contract with police basically ties the hands of council and ratepayers

More money needs to be spent on affordable Seniors housing, there aren't enough, and/or, a very long wait list. Not everyone can afford the many high end apartments that are springing up everywhere, especially in the Baker Drive area.

Stop increasing taxes and wasting money on things we don't need! Get your priorities straight for a change! We can't afford your wasteful spending, wages aren't going up at the same rate as our taxes unfortunately.

My best effort..

Make it work ladies and gentleman

This breakdown of the budget, and opportunity to provide input, and information regarding how it is spent is very useful. Thank you!

Improve Public Transportation to rural HRM communities like Sambro. Bring back the 402.

A 5% increase or decrease is too much at this time in our economy. A more realistic percentage, increase or decrease, would be 1-3%, if you really wanted citizens input.

Transit and planning services to address climate change mitigation strategies and reassess seriously light train downtown loop option as well as via rail connections to main cities in HRM Bedford, sackville etc

No stadium! Up the costs to participants for rec facilities and be more cost-conscious with rolling out these community focused rec plans. A lot of money being lost to providing things free or at 50% of cost. Should be more options depending on people's ability to pay. Not everyone NEEDS a free gym membership.

Raise taxes if they will be well spent

Get serious about the climate change emergency by increasing transit services substantially

Thanks for this opportunity. I believe that in the long run police and fire budget requests will eat us alive, unless we keep them on a short leash.

I would have reduced the RCMP/HRP budgets to 0 if I had the chance. It is disgraceful that we continue overspending on a racist, transphobic, classist, colonialist organization like the HRP over improving living conditions for our houseless population. The 80 million I "chose" to allocate to policing (with a reduction of only 10 percent) could be MUCH better used cracking down on the corporations turning our city into a rental wasteland.

Please do not spend 20 million on a stadium. That should allow for balance budget. Focus on core service.

I am very concerned we have debates about spending money we don't have, especially on the topic of a football team. Spend money more wisely, improve roads, garbage pick up, no issue spending on police and emergency first responders but stop trying to be Toronto, Montreal, Calgary. We have a aging population with limited income, we like security, good roads and garbage pickup

Council must cease tax and spend ideology. Water bills are a tax too. Other costs are rising on taxpayers, HRM wage increases are higher than most other sectors, unacceptable. HRM also likes funding things outside mandate which we are already paying for and wasting money on infrastructure such as bike lanes that will never be effective in reaching targets for use. council has no real respect for collective total tax and fee burden on taxpayers residential funding 75% of revenue and willingly accepts a 2% tax increase

as just fine, thinking this is acceptable, it is not. Provincial taxes are rising through bracket creep, environmental fees are increasing, power and water rates will rise and the carbon tax will cause increases in everything. The city is not acknowledging this burden, it is increasing and contributing to a decreased standard of living and affordability.

Please upgrade Lake Echo Beach as planned even though I listed cut 10% and Snow removal really should be increased at least 5%

Don't decrease taxes based on this small difference, instead use it to reduce the debt.

Please look at bus service to Montabello, Westphal Port Wallis area. We have seen no improvement just loss of service to this area. Why does Portland and Bedford Sackville have express buses but not us.

Please reduce HRP spending, including eliminating the new armoured vehicle. We need more community resources which is more effective in reducing the crime rate, not more policing.

Learn to do more with less just like a private business.

It's time to look at decreasing the overhead at the city and re-deploying the funds to providing services.

I think this is a great tool to educate people on the budget process.

Don't hurt those in poverty who will never be able to catch up.

Take care of the poor!

Additionally, I believe that all Councillors and the Mayor should take a 25% pay cut for the duration of their term in office. Also, all high level supervisors should take a reduction of 20% and all city employees across the board should have a 10% reduction in pay for the foreseeable future.

Interesting, however, to really be valid the explanation of what some of offices covered by the budget really need to be expanded.

Although I did state for a some a min - max amount of increase due to rise in population while others I stated the same because they get to much money for there department and I feel as though they don't do enough with it

DO NOT put money into a stadium. It's needed in too many other places.

Public transportation methods and modes must be priority. Budget is the con (short term only). Pros benefit all community and necessary greening growth.

Decreasing the budgets of departments that have continually fallen behind in quality of service, and reducing staff and, especially, management in those departments, would allow for a more streamlined government. Our municipal government is top-heavy with management . There is no need of multiple layers of redundancy in management and the money can be far better spent in hiring more people in those positions which result in an increase in staffing where they are most needed - doing actual outside work in communities within HRM. The many departments where there are problems with quality of work include building and street inspection, enforcement of existing by-laws and in areas of public safety. One such area is management's continued refusal to put in traffic lights that allow for left turn signals on streets where making a left turn, without a dedicated left turn signal, endangers drivers and pedestrians and disrupts the flow of traffic where more than one lane exists in each direction. An example is Portland Street at Manor Park. There should be left turn signals, in each direction, before the light turns green for all traffic.

Get some electric or hydrogen busses and make them run on time. Don't buy that stadium it's a money pit.

I know people are demanding more services however we knew to keep our spending within budget and look to be more creative with the money we have to spend. Find ways to do things in a more creative way/cost share with other municipalities on solutions.

Parking Rules are delusional in this city

I think we need to reduce top management positions in all departments, tax large organizations like the Irving Shipyard, and other bold moves.

Stop spending our money frivolously, cut council salaries by 20%!

Essential services such as fire and police should increase. Road repair and public infrastructure are also essential. Parks and ball fields are in terrible shape and need improving.

Every year taxpayers have seen an increase in costs, albeit all believe there is never ending pot of money, in reality there is only one source, the taxpayer. Adjust to a downward focus justify each budgeted dollar and then accept a workable level of service, assess the reality against the need.

We need a new concert hall and stop wasting money on studies for stadiums. Please do not spend another penny of our dollars on private enterprise!

Focus more money on buses and bus lanes. Invest money in red light cameras, our high collision rates are costing all of us and cracking down on dangerous and aggressive drivers is a win for everyone. Focus on pedestrian oriented initiatives. For the love of god stop allowing developers to take sidewalks so they can park their trucks. Toll all the arteries coming into the city to decrease SOV's at rush hour, especially TRUCKS. No need to commute in an F-350. Model European cities, not American cities. Encourage buses/bikes/walking; discourage cars (peninsula). Reduce speed limits in the city. Encourage smaller stores, less of the big box malls where you have to drive. Start a Vision Zero campaign but actually mean it, not just talk. There is no need for a pedestrian to die because they are crossing a residential street. If they are, it's the city's fault. Period. Your streets are unsafe. Reduce speeds, ban right on reds (did you know European cities have never allowed it????) and reduce vehicle size through taxes. Make our streets safe, a city is more than drivers.

There are always ways to cut or maintain budgets. Needless spending on non necessary things (coffee, lunches, allowances)

Let's be conservative to the upcoming year and maintain the status quo. That is live within our means. Cut salaries of those that make over \$100,000.00 per year, or at best hold salary increase for that group. Simply tell each dept. to make due for the next 12 months. Mind you that does not mean a large increase in 2021 to make up. Start saying NO to some projects like football stadium. The Forum project are you nuts?

All departments are financed well from what I see, there needs to be more accountability on staffing, spending and gross waste .. fire and emergency management staff are overpaid for what they and have way too much funding. I agree the front personnel earn their money.

Halifax has grown we need more technology.

The cost savings should be allocated to the debt or reduction in taxes.

Time to trim the fat from all services, too much administration vs brick & mortar services

El Jones is right, if police can't keep us safe with the budgets they have, they shouldn't have more. They need to change. We have a brand spankin new tank, and no plan for mass forest fires which are a far more likely scenario. Your priorities as our councillors are so far out of balance it is putting us in danger every day.

Green energy and environmental protection

Is this a joke??? No cutting of your pensions

Spending more on policing and less on the problems that cause the crime is a downstream approach. Put money into parks, recreation, transit, libraries, employment centres, the things that make life easier and your crime rate will go down, no extra officers or armoured vehicles required.

I really want to see the changes needed to tackle the housing crisis. I would also like to see investment in public spaces. I do not think that our police need to be put on paid leave after numerous accounts of shoplifting and other (worse) crimes. So there is a nice budget cut to pay for our housing crisis.

Thank you for the chance to participate.

Increasing property taxes in a climate where the costs of existing housing are prohibitively high seems counterproductive, especially when we are talking about affordable housing.

Cuts should not be made to services that directly affect low income persons, children and seniors. Transit, libraries, parks and sidewalk/road maintenance should be priorities. Further, public safety and fire services should also not receive cuts. There should be ways to balance the budget without too large of an increase in municipal taxes.

I've researched public employee compensation at municipal, provincial and federal levels and HRM employee benefits are at the top of the list. HRM employee benefits are too rich and need to be brought under control!!

I believe the Halifax police budget is too high. How can we keep giving them more money when there is no accountability in the force. They have been downgrading public confidence in our community for far too long. RCMP should be increased to support the positive leading work that they do and help with their delivery of community policing. Parks and recreation should be pumped up slightly to make our city a more inclusive space for everyone with our growing city. Everything else should be stagnant and try and save as much money as possible in these hard financial times. Great work Halifax! You can make positive changes!

I appreciate the idea of gathering opinions from the public about budget. I'm more interested in reassessment of wages and how these systems operate in many of these departments instead of cuts to their budget and what they can accomplish.

Reduce spending entirely. All of these organizations need some pressure to find and correct internal inefficiencies

Nice initiative, thanks for this!

The key here is to reduce police budgets and increase transit budgets because transportation is a bigger issue than the crime rate.

Stunning to see how much we spend on policing the public compared to much more helpful resources. I suspect we'd see net gains in employment and other areas if we weren't so punitive. Especially after all the studies showing how ineffective the police have been by wasting time and resources on carding and

arresting innocent people in Walmart's. We should be cutting way back until they can prove they will be using the resources they have responsibly.

HRM spending is out of control. I notice this did not include capital projects which are equally out of control. The bureaucracy has become far too large and too expensive. Many initiatives (smoking bylaw, bike lanes to name a few) have been very wasteful and need to be curtailed or eliminated. There seems to be a lack of respect for the taxpayer at HRM.

Reduce administrative spending on council and other municipal bodies (merge administrative services). HRP are over funded as is - public has seen no added value returned for (any) all increases over the years, other than a new armored car.

Halifax is the single most important city north of Boston and east of Montreal and is a major transportation terminal for international trade and tourism. It is also the major health and commercial center of Eastern Canada. Ergo infrastructure must be the main priority along with encouraging greater growth off the peninsula, both toward Bedford and Dartmouth. Wasting money on things like planting trees under power lines and non-essential services needs to be considered along with curtailing "business travel" at all levels within our municipal government - teleconferencing can achieve the same results and sets a good public image. There should be focus on the front line workers, be they in public works or fire and police services and, perhaps, looking at only hiring to replace those who retire or otherwise leave public employ. Short and long term planning including budget controls is essential.

Make decisions for all not the few. balance and proper choices will lead to better future.

Would rather have rated each item instead of groupings under headings.

Have a good day! :)

Cut police budgets until the public had Restored faith. Improve health care !!!!

I would also like to voice my opinion about the new proposed stadium. I feel the money ear marked for this should be used for more important issues, such as affordable housing or health care.

Reduce administrative costs

If an increased budget means faster, more efficient transit services, books, bike lanes or other community services I'm all for it.

2 items Let Uber and Lyft I with no class 4 licence No cfl stadium support

Public services that enhance the life of all residents desperately need resources. The municipality also desperately needs to prioritize addressing the climate emergency in real and specific ways. Halifax Transit is woeful, libraries are under-resourced, community health programs are atrophied, and accessible, inviting public spaces and events have been replaced by condos and privatized spaces. Far, far too much money is directed to the police budget in this city without any significant improvement to the underlying conditions that actually cause crime and associated social problems (addictions, homelessness, social decay). Police and prisons do not make for inclusive, just, engaging, and democratic societies. They serve only to protect existing property rights and ruling class interests and this is quite simply not in the public interest or good enough at this stage of the game. Commit HRM to real social development modeled on a vision of a society that is ready and willing to address entrenched forms of inequality that perpetuate injustice. Anything less is simply more of the same and only doubles down on the failures of the status quo to deliver social justice.

Stop giving public monies to convention centers, sports franchises, and supporting a vehicle based infrastructure. Invest in public spaces and invest in public transport / bike/walk infrastructure.

Thanks for communicating with the public. I would like to see more of this.

I was sickened by the salary increase for the mayor. His financial compensation is extravagant.

Hi. I know I didn't fill out every area. I simply don't know enough to say in a lot of cases. But I lived in Korea for years and I travelled around Asian countries, and I'd like to share an idea which always comes to mind when I come home to NS. I would love to have more public exercise parks, as are common place in Asian countries. In DeWolfe park in Bedford, NS, there is an exercise set-up, and although I believe it could be expanded upon, I really value its presence as someone who wants an affordable option which allows me to get much needed daylight and activity to cope with issues such as aging and depression (I'm 33, but even now I realize it's harder to sustain a healthy physical level of fitness without accessible outlets to encourage regular exercise). As a quick comparison, while in Korea on a tight budget in recent years, I traded identification at public Free Bike Rental stations throughout the city. I would ride my bike and by either seeking them out, or often finding them accidentally due to their frequency, I would find small parks to do chin-ups, stretch, do sit-ups, lift weights, etc. These parks were used by all age groups. On hiking trails, I often found such parks as well. They were often enough that in new neighbourhoods on lunch breaks, I could look up directions to the nearest exercise park and do my daily exercises easily. I found similar ideas in Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam where I travelled. When I return home to NS, my budget and my likelihood of exercising decreases when only indoor, pay to use exercise facilities become available (in the majority of cases). If anyone ever wants more info on the subject, I'm happy to provide more specific info through email... but then again I'm one person sharing an idea and I don't expect a response really. Regardless, if you've read this, thanks for taking the time :)

Halifax is a booming city. Why not look at the mistakes of Toronto and Montreal in the 60s to 70s and see what they wish they had done. Ps. Halifax is a peninsula so you can't create new ways in and out of the city. Time to build on that abandoned line that literally go by all the high density areas currently. The hardest part of LTR? Buying the land. It's there and Halifax can't afford subway yet

Cut spending

I support more money for services to the public, affordable (non-profit) housing, public transportation, and managing growth. I do NOT support more money to administration, corporate interests, politician or administrator salaries, or for wooing private housing developers.

Thanks for the opportunity to share our opinions.

The budget should be increased to reflect inflation cost increases and distributed over all departments.

Roads need improvement and city lawn maintenance etc. Entering highway from jo how looks like weeds are taking over. Larry Uteck towards west Bedford is never mowed. Also public transit needs Apple Pay, credit card tap pay etc. Less and less people carry change and people don't want to buy a bus pass !

Thank you for giving residents the opportunity to give their opinion in a simple way.

We have to stop the frivolous stuff, celebrations and the like. Corporations and fundraising should be used to pay for these I was under the understanding the councillor pay went up so they worked full time, hmmm, I wish I had time to enjoy the city but I actually work, I don't think they put in 40 hr weeks. Also, compared to a lot of professionals the level of education is much lower so the pay should be lower. All I ever hear is free bus for kids, low income, seniors. I'm a childless middle class person. While I agree with the senior free bus, which is actually just a smoke screen to make the city look good because 9-3 on a Tuesday, who can schedule their outing around that especially if you are going downtown from suburban areas, to be frankly honest I'm tired of paying for everybody else. Again those who work hard to afford a home are being penalized. Non home owners use all the services as well. Therefore the costs of things like libraries, rec centers, parks lies solely on the home owners, a majority of which are middle class who are really struggling.

Nothing at the present time, other than stop wasting money promoting stupid things, such as signage promoting that stupid overpriced H/LIF/X logo.

It is time to start cutting back our spending. Staff resources are going to kill us , ridiculously high staff numbers, salaries and benefits needs to be confronted. Resident of Dartmouth North.

I think it is unacceptable verging on out right greed that our Mayor is one of the highest paid mayors in the country with municipal and provincial taxes incredibly high compared to other municipalities.

I believe public transportation is very important, it let's people be productive and contribute in our economy that cant afford vehicles or taxi's. And public parks and libraries help to relax and release stress to maintain productivity in a segment of our population.

I would have liked to allot \$ also within each individual category. Also would like to see City of Halifax oversee housing/homelessness issues as it is very apparent provincial government doesn't care about its citizens unless of course they are financially well off.

Maybe a slide bar for how much we'd like to add/withdraw from each budget would help with more balanced budget. Perhaps I'd like to withdraw 3% from one and add 2% to another instead of 5%.

Will anyone read this? It would be nice to hear a follow up of the results and effects of this survey on the municipal budget.

Overall, I find Halifax to be a dirty city that is not well maintained.

We need more business, less call centres , less big business and more entrepreneurs and local business

Please improve public transit. We need to compete with other cities to try to increase our population and increase the amount of tax payers. From my experiences in any city one major topic is public transportation and can greatly improve the attractiveness of the city.

less government spending .help the seniors with lower drug cost. lower taxes .would be helpful etc.....

Thank you for allowing input.

Reduce the police and RCMP budget to reduce their capacity to patrol and terrorize those in marginalized communities.

Taxes have to increase at some point, we can't improve this city the way we need to through status-quo budgets or cuts.

Excellent idea creating this form - gives people some perspective of what things cost and how our tax dollars are being spent. For some constructive criticism, I think there should have been an optional box to provide a postal code (or FSA at least) to help identify what parts of the city participants are from. This would be useful as I'm sure the results would vary drastically between high density and low density areas.

Defund the police

Remove red tape. Improve efficiency.

Resources need to be allocated to addressing both the impacts of climate change and dramatically decreasing emissions. Public transit should be free.

Tough choices have to be made on where to spend tax dollars given that many people are already struggling to make ends meet. Increasing the taxable income by opening the way for more commercial and residential development will go a long way to improving the bottom line. I am not as inclined to support the huge budget for planning. I feel that it is inflated for what we're getting.

It's time to save residents of HRM money!!!!

Focus on things to improve the lifestyle of people in and around Halifax. An easy win is Uber. The CFL team would be great but the real win would be the venue so we could attract other performances like musicians on the weekend. We're also the only province without a major music festival I.E. Cavendish Beach Music Festival. Also an improvement in transportation. Traffic is only getting worse and will continue to get worse. Especially the bridges.

I'd also cut the mayor/councils salary by 50%, not their staffers or other lower lever city employees. They mayor and council make far too much!

We need to stop de-funding mental health services in our community, as a lack of these services leads to widespead effects over time, which can have financial and social costs in the future. Also, Halifax transit really needs to get its act together (we have to deal with stuffed busses that arrive late or early), and we need more maintenance regarding snow and garbage on our streets.

As a senior I would like to have provincial rent control introduced and have landlords held more accountable for their buildings. It seems we have no recourse and no one listens to our financial and rental needs. If we want to remain independent and eat a healthy diet to stay away from hospital care we need the funds to do it.

Please hire more doctors.

Pursuing improvement and greenification of our energy infrastructure would have measurable impacts on Halifax's quality of life. Improving access to public transit would further greenify our streets, while ensuring that everyone can access their jobs and amenities.

More funding for housing first philosophy. Target spending on low income housing and community supports. Sell it to the public that it is a long term investment that will help decrease our health care expenditures and reduce crime. Advocate for a new hospital in Halifax.

I think this is a great democratic method to get input from the general public on budget priorities, while at the same time, helping to inform city residents how their tax money is spent. Giving context to proportional spending helps address the misinformed opinions that call for unreasonable cuts, or conversely, increases. I am much more likely to accept a tax increase when I know where the money is going, and feel like I (and my fellow Haligonians) had some input.

Need to reduce excess top heavy management and conduct timely reviews of spending habits so funds can be allocated where your public needs.

Specific Item Comments PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Halifax Regional Police (criminal investigations, crime prevention, officers on patrol, emergency preparedness, victim services, and crossing guards):

Decrease budget by 5%.

I don't have an issue with the current level of service, however I do believe the crossing guards are a waste of city resources. Would like to see crossing guard costs be reallocated to cover rising costs of other police expenses

Fire & Emergency Services (fire prevention, fire suppression and rescue, technical rescue, and emergency preparedness): Decrease budget by 10%

None of the above seems like an issue in Halifax

Public Services - Halifax Transit (public transit services; bus, ferry & access-a-bus and park & ride): Increase budget by 5%

Public transit in Halifax is its own worst enemy. Public transit in Halifax is not cost effective for its users, and because many routes have few buses on them, they are not able to be used by potential users out of fear of missing their bus and becoming stranded

Corporate & Customer Services Business (customer contact centres - 311, building design & construction, building operations & maintenance, fleet maintenance, and corporate communications): Maintain existing budget

I don't really understand what this is based on the above description, and can't give meaningful feedback on it

Parks & Recreation (recreation programs, accessible programs, civic events, picnic areas and playgrounds, outdoor pools, spray parks, sports fields and skateboard parks) : Increase budget by 5%

I believe investing funds in these areas improves the overall health of those living in HRM, specifically in the resident dense city core. I hope a healthier city would be less demanding on the already strained public healthcare.

Transportation & Public Works (solid waste, snow removal, traffic management & construction): Increase budget by 5%

Throwing money at this mess won't solve anything. I suspect that similar to many regions in the US, funding for road maintenance here is underfunded.

Transportation & Public Works (solid waste, snow removal, traffic management & construction): Decrease budget by 5%

Stop funding sidewalk snow removal for everyone. If there are people who require it, perhaps they could opt in, or just pay a kid to do it. But, sidewalk snow removal is a waste.

Planning & Development (regional and community planning, urban design, heritage planning, land development and regulation, infrastructure planning and growth analysis, transportation planning, energy and environmental management, licensing, compliance and building standards): Maintain existing budget or decrease budget by 5%

I really like the idea of urban planning, but it seems like we spend money on urban plans and then don't follow through. So that's why I suggest cutting.

Governance & Support Services - Auditor General (audit programs and accounts of municipality and municipal bodies): Decrease budget by 10%

It's important to have some oversight, but I think the costs for these outweigh their benefits to tax payers. This is especially true since the city also employs external auditors.

Chief Administrative Officer (senior leadership, Mayor's Office, Councillor Support, Public Safety Office and Diversity & Inclusion): Decrease budget by 5%

It would be nice if those working for the city were primarily interested in improving the city, not their paycheck

Chief Administrative Officer (senior leadership, Mayor's Office, Councillor Support, Public Safety Office and Diversity & Inclusion): Decrease budget by 10%

Diversity and Inclusion offices need to be reviewed because there are well researched institutions that had these offices achieve none of their stated objectives.

Finance, Asset Management & ICT (financial stewardship activities, asset management, corporate planning, corporate real estate and information technology): Decrease budget by 5%

Don't even know what this is

I think things like real estate could be done by contract and not through full service.

Legal, Municipal Clerk and External Affairs (solicitor services, litigation, prosecutions, insurance, Municipal Clerk, government relations and intergovernmental partnerships): Maintain existing budget

I'm not sure what this is based on its description above

Human Resources (employee services, labour relations and health safety & wellness): Decrease budget by 10%

Probably time to switch new government employees to defined contribution plans instead of defined benefit plans