

From: Keith Moen <keith.moen@nsbasask.com>
Sent: Friday, November 22, 2019 10:08 AM
To: City Council
Subject: Form submission from: Write a Letter to Council



Submitted on Friday, November 22, 2019 - 10:08

Submitted by anonymous user: 204.83.204.174

Submitted values are:

Date Friday, November 22, 2019
To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council
First Name Keith
Last Name Moen
Email keith.moen@nsbasask.com
Address 1724 Quebec Ave, 9
City Saskatoon
Province Saskatchewan
Postal Code S7K 1V9
Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable) NSBA
Subject Preliminary 2020/2021 Civic Budget
Meeting (if known) CITY COUNCIL AGENDA - PRELIMINARY BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET
Comments
Hello,

Sorry for the double communication, but please accept this speaking request to accompany the NSBA's written submission regarding the 2020/21 Preliminary Civic Budget.

Thanks in advance,

Keith Moen
Executive Director
NSBA
Attachments

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

<https://www.saskatoon.ca/node/398/submission/350130>

From: Brent Penner <brent.penner@dtnyxe.ca> on behalf of Brent Penner
<brent.penner@dtnyxe.ca>
Sent: Sunday, November 24, 2019 10:27 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Form submission from: Write a Letter to Council



Submitted on Sunday, November 24, 2019 - 22:26

Submitted by anonymous user: 96.125.245.227

Submitted values are:

Date Sunday, November 24, 2019
To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council
First Name Brent
Last Name Penner
Email brent.penner@dtnyxe.ca
Address 242 3rd Ave S
City Saskatoon
Province Saskatchewan
Postal Code S7K 1L9
Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable) Downtown Saskatoon
Subject General Budget Comments 5.1.3
Meeting (if known) City Council Corporate Business Plan and Budget
Comments
Hello,

I would like an opportunity to make some general comments on the 2020-2021 budget.

Thank you,

Brent Penner
Executive Director
Downtown Saskatoon BID
Attachments

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

<https://www.saskatoon.ca/node/398/submission/350366>

From: Darla and/or Margot Lindbjerg and/or Orr <advocacy@saskatoonchamber.com>
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2019 9:57 AM
To: City Council
Subject: Form submission from: Write a Letter to Council
Attachments: 2019_11_24_preliminary_budget_letter_to_city_council_.pdf



Submitted on Monday, November 25, 2019 - 09:57

Submitted by anonymous user: 207.47.161.163

Submitted values are:

Date Monday, November 25, 2019
To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council
First Name Darla and/or Margot
Last Name Lindbjerg and/or Orr
Email advocacy@saskatoonchamber.com
Address 110-345 4th Ave S
City Saskatoon
Province Saskatchewan
Postal Code S7K 1N3
Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable) Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce
Subject 2020/2021 Preliminary Business Plan and Budget- Municipal Budget Task Force Report Meeting (if known)
Comments
Please see the attached submission from the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce regarding the 2020/2021 Preliminary Business Plan and Budget. Please also accept this submission as our request to speak at the City Council meeting during the budget deliberations from November 25-27th.
Attachments
2019_11_24_preliminary_budget_letter_to_city_council_.pdf

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

<https://www.saskatoon.ca/node/398/submission/350414>



110-345 4th Ave S
Saskatoon, SK S7K 1N3
☎ 306-244-2151
✉ chamber@saskatoonchamber.com

November 24, 2019

To: City Clerk
City of Saskatoon

RE: 2020/2021 Preliminary Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget- Municipal Budget Task Force Report

The Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce is the voice of business in Saskatoon and is a meaningful and impactful advocate for our membership.

In preparation for the Municipal Budget deliberations, the Chamber's Advocacy Committee set up a Municipal Budget Task Force comprised of a cross section of Chamber members in the aerospace, human resources, marketing, professional services, research and real estate, technology, accounting and economic development sectors.

The purpose behind the formation of this Task Force was to measure and assess the 2020-2021 Preliminary Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget in comparison to the Chamber's three advocacy pillars:

- A **COMPETITIVE** local business environment
- **EFFICIENCY** of processes for doing business
- Opportunities for business **GROWTH**

The Chamber's Municipal Budget Task Force Report is attached and is broken into two sections.

Section one contains a survey that was sent out to our membership entitled City's Civic Satisfaction and Performance for the Multi-Year Budget Survey. The second section outlines the Municipal Budget Scorecard.

The business community identified three main areas that they considered to be the most important issues facing the City of Saskatoon today, therefore should receive the greatest amount of attention:

- Public Safety/Crime/Policing
- Taxes/too high
- Downtown Development

The Municipal Budget Scorecard measures the 2020/2021 Preliminary Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget against the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce's three advocacy pillars competitiveness, efficiency and growth.

We have prepared a scorecard for each pillar. The average score for Competitiveness is Fair, the average score for the Efficiency is also Fair, the average score for Growth is Poor. The subcategories under each pillar provide a rationale for the respective scores.

On behalf of our membership, I would like to thank City Council and your administration for the opportunity to comment on your budget.

Sincerely,

Darla Lindbjerg
Chief Executive Officer

From: Chamber Advocacy <advocacy@saskatoonchamber.com>
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2019 10:16 AM
To: Web E-mail - City Clerks
Subject: 2020/2021 Preliminary Multi- Year Business Plan and Budget- Municipal Budget Task Force Report
Attachments: 2019_Municipal Budget Task Force Report_Final-compressed-2.pdf

Good morning,
 I have attached the Municipal Budget Task Force Report as part of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce's submission and request to speak at the Budget deliberations from November 25-27, our letter was sent previously.

Please do not include this email as part of our submission, just the attached report.

Thank you very much,

RECEIVED
 NOV 25 2019
 CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
 SASKATOON



MARGOT ORR
 DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

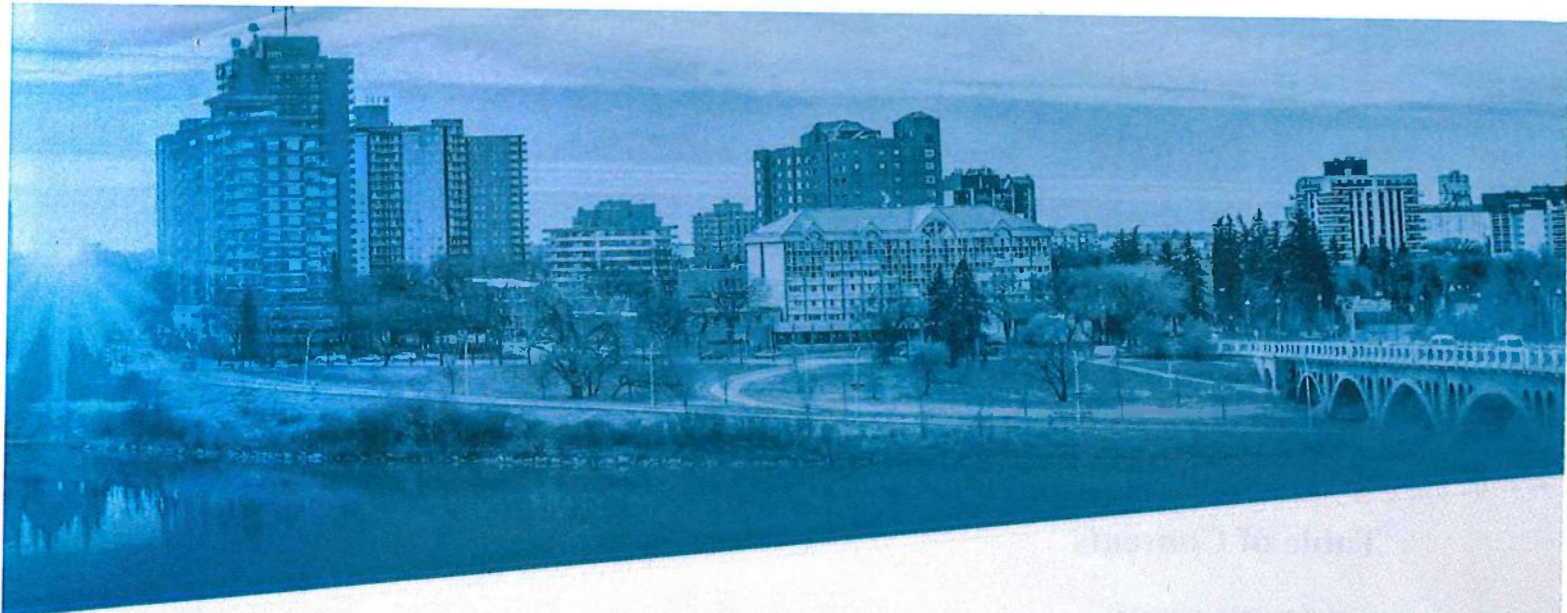
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the Chamber

saskatoonchamber.com



Municipal Budget Task Force Report

the Chamber
GREATER SASKATOON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Municipal Budget Task Force Report

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INTRODUCTION

The Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce is the voice of business in Saskatoon and is a meaningful and impactful advocate for our membership. In preparation for the Municipal Budget deliberations, the Chamber's Advocacy Committee set up a Municipal Budget Task Force comprised of a cross section of Chamber members in the aerospace, human resources, marketing, professional services, research, real estate, technology, accounting and economic development sectors.

The purpose behind the formation of this Task Force was to measure and assess the *2020-2021 Preliminary Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget* in comparison to the Chamber's three advocacy pillars:

- A **COMPETITIVE** local business environment
- **EFFICIENCY** of processes for doing business
- Opportunities for business **GROWTH**

The following report is broken into two sections. Section one contains a survey that was sent out to our membership entitled *City's Civic Satisfaction and Performance for the Multi-Year Budget Survey*. The second section outlines the Municipal Budget Scorecard.

SECTION ONE

Survey Introduction

Part of the *2020-2021 Preliminary Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget* analysis questions were adapted from the *City's Civic Satisfaction and Performance Survey*, conducted in 2018. The City's survey was conducted using a series of phone and online surveys. A number of public outreach events were held as a validation mechanism for the initial surveys. Although the method that was used for the selection of the initial participants in the survey was random, the public outreach site selections were highly focused on residential participants. The three locations cited were the University of Saskatchewan - Campus Expo, the Saskatoon Farmers Market and the Broadway Street Fair. The Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce wanted to ensure the business community is represented and heard throughout this process. The City's

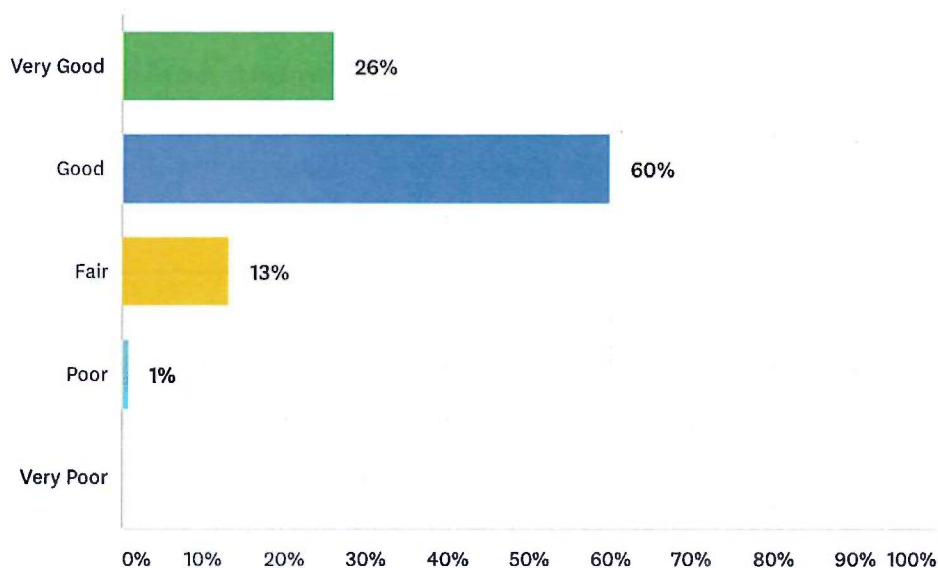
original survey was adapted, keeping the line of questioning the same, while omitting questions that may not be pertinent to the business community.

It should also be noted that another survey was conducted on behalf of the city in 2018, that was noted in the proposed budget, the *Civic Services Survey: Performance, Priorities & Preferences*. This survey focused on community and public services and was not replicated for the purposes of this Task Force analysis.

The following is a question-by-question breakdown of the results of the *Civic Satisfaction and Performance Survey for the City's Multi-Year Budget*. The survey was released to our membership on Thursday November 14, 2019 and closed on Thursday November 21, 2019. There were 228 respondents.

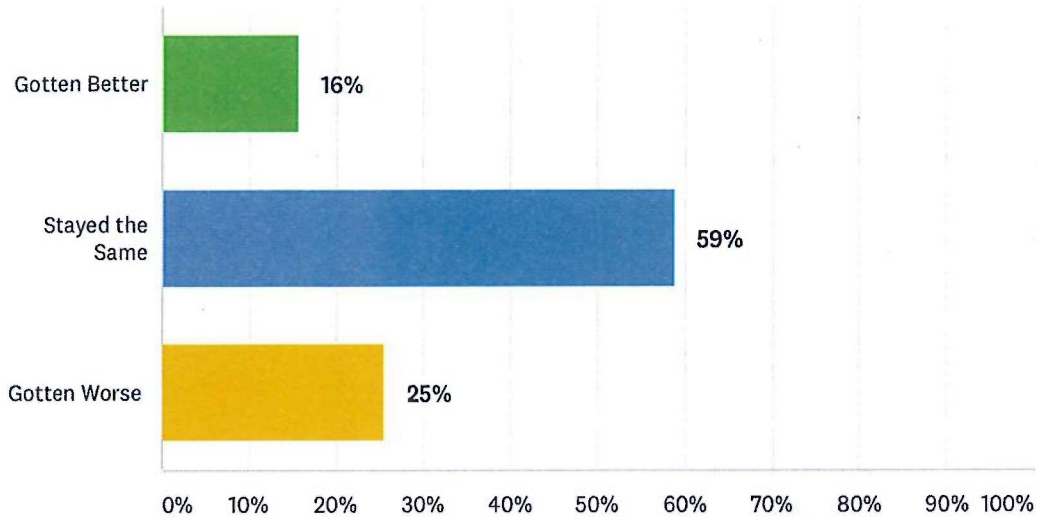
Detailed Findings

Q1: How would you rate the quality of life in Saskatoon?



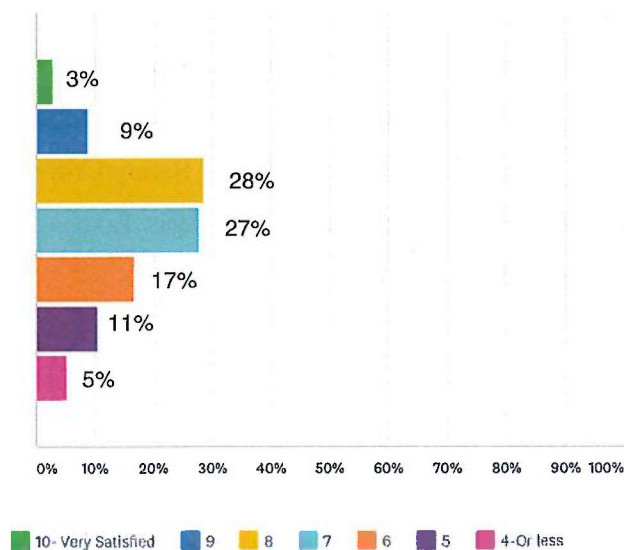
This question was based on a five-point rating scale. The majority of respondents, at 60%, ranked the quality of life in the city as “good.” 86% of respondents ranked the quality of life in Saskatoon in the “good/very good” categories.

Q2: In your opinion, over the past three years, has the quality of life in Saskatoon...



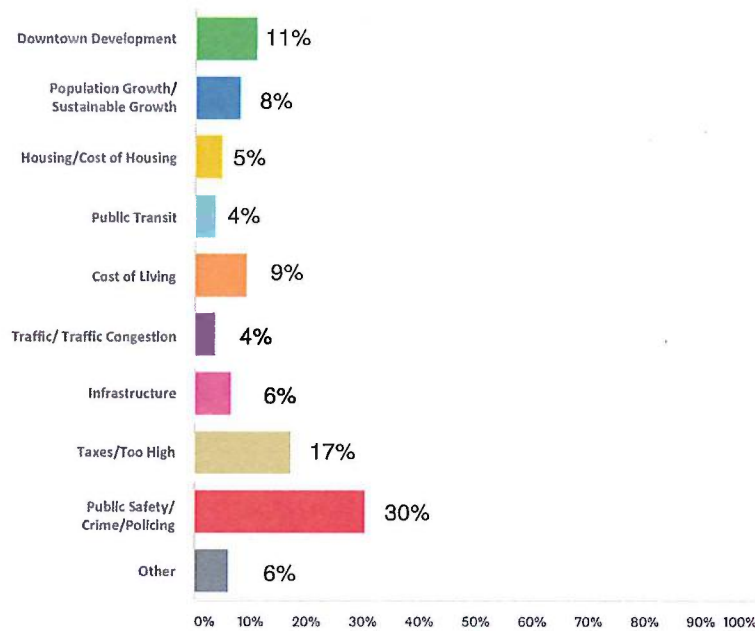
59% of respondents stated that the quality of life in Saskatoon has stayed the same over the past three years, 25% of respondents stated that the quality of life has gotten worse and 16% stated that it has gotten better.

Q3: Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of the services provided by the City of Saskatoon?



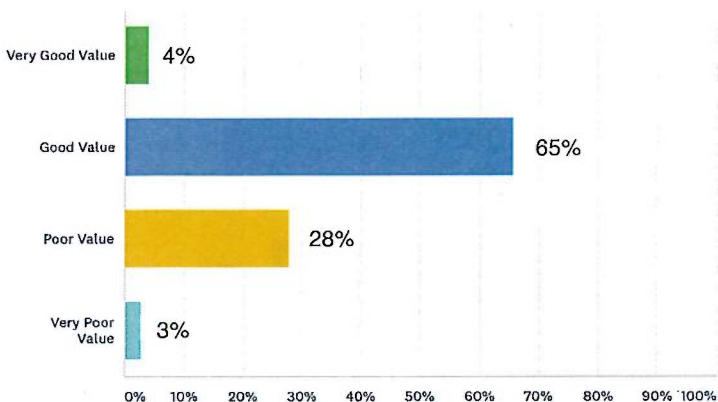
This question was weighted on a 10-point scale with 10 being very satisfied. The majority of respondents, at 55%, ranked the City at 7 and 8 on quality of services provided.

**Q4: In your opinion, what is the single most important issue facing the City of Saskatoon?
That is, the one issue you feel should receive the greatest attention?**



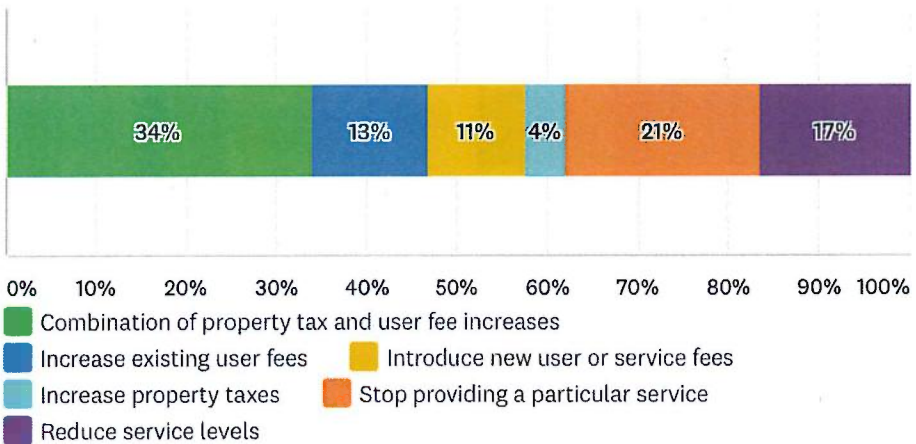
Participants were asked to pick from a list of items and select one that they would deem the most important issue facing Saskatoon and should receive the greatest attention. The results show that the majority of respondents choose the category Public Safety/Crime/Policing with 30% of respondents selecting this option. The second highest area was Taxes/too high at 17% followed by Downtown Development at 11%.

Q5: Thinking about the services provided to you by the City of Saskatoon, what value, if any, do you receive from these services?



The majority of respondents, 65%, declared that they received “good value” from the services provided by the City. The next highest percentile, at 28%, stated that the value for services was poor.

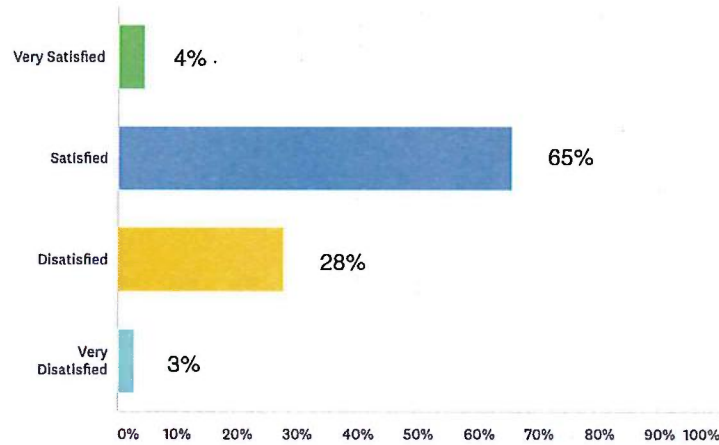
Q6: Occasionally, the City needs to make choices on how to balance its operating budget. Which of the following approaches, if any, would you most prefer?



When asked which approach should be taken to balance the operating budget 34% of respondents choose a combination of property tax and user fee increases. The second highest

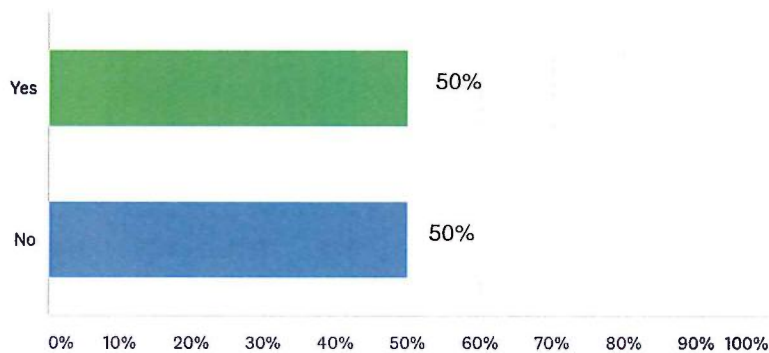
option, at 21%, indicated the City should stop providing a particular service to balance the operating budget.

Q7: Overall , how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of City communications?



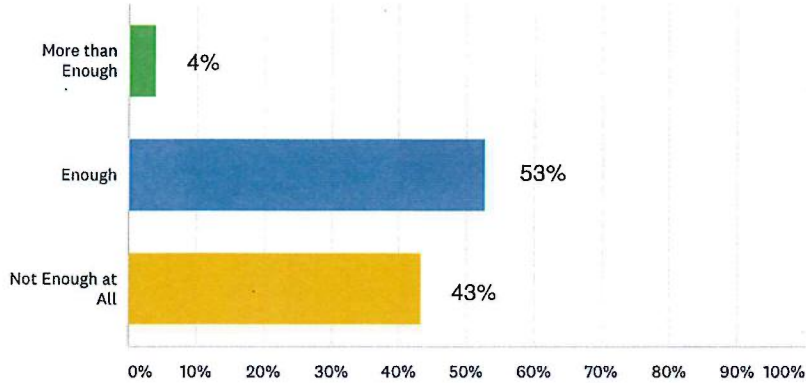
69% of respondents were satisfied/very satisfied with the City’s quality of communications whereas 31% were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied.

Q8: In the past twelve months, have you contacted the City of Saskatoon or one of its employees for a business-related reason?



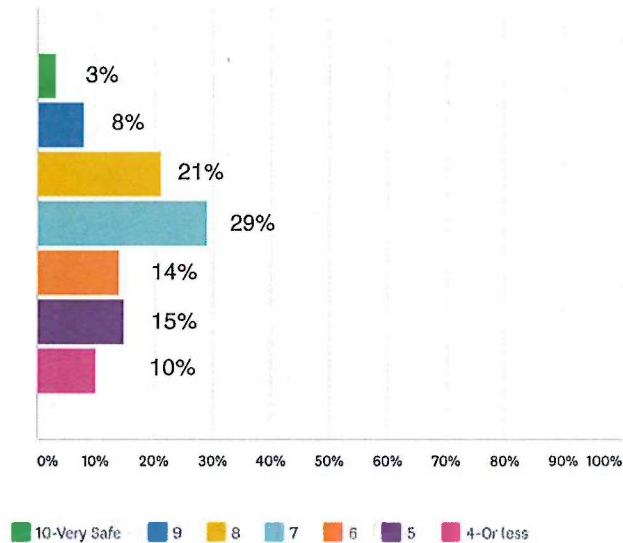
When asked if the participants had contacted the City for a business-related reason over the last twelve months the results were split evenly with 50% stating yes and 50% stating no.

Q9: Do you think the City does enough, or not, to get the public’s input on the decisions it makes?



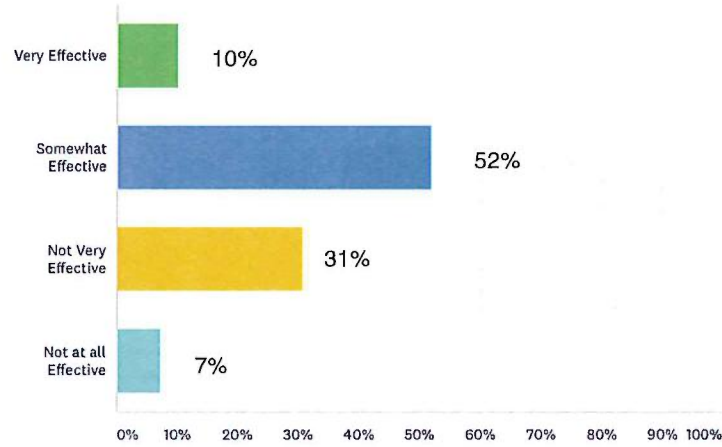
53% of respondents stated that the City is getting enough public input on the decisions it makes and 43% stated that the City was not getting enough input.

Q10: If you were to ask a family member, or colleague, how safe they feel living in Saskatoon, how do you think they would answer?



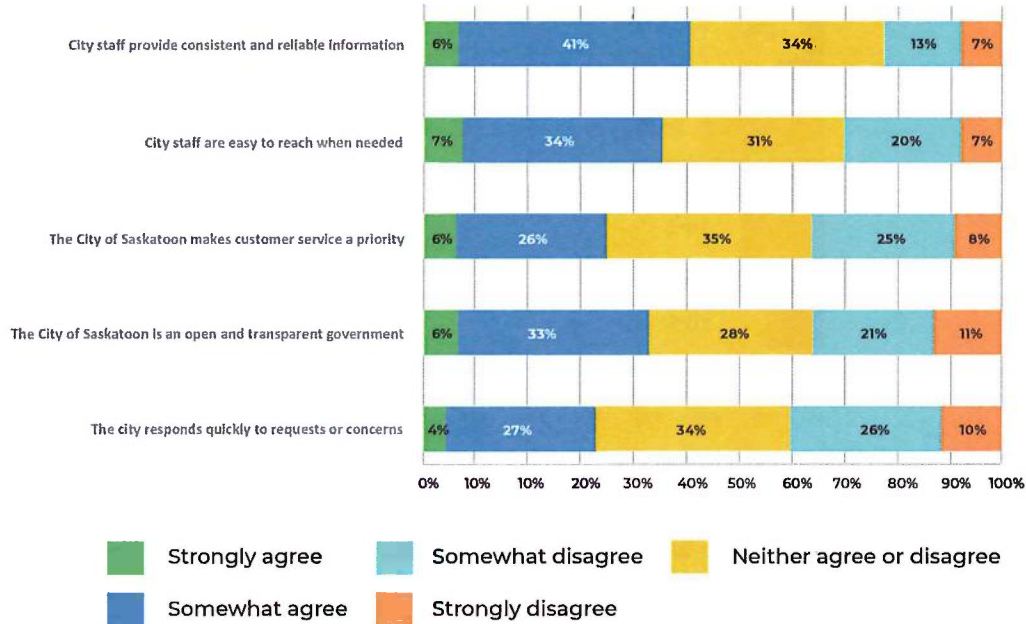
29% of respondents stated that they would answer at the ranking of a 7.

Q11: In your opinion, is the City of Saskatoon on the right path or the wrong path toward making downtown an appealing destination?



52% of respondents said that the City is on a “somewhat effective” path towards making the downtown an appealing destination and 31% stated that they are on a “not very effective” path.

Q12: For each, you may strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, or strongly agree.



Overall, there are a high proportion of respondents that indicated they neither agreed or disagreed. When asked if the city responds quickly to requests or concerns, 36% of respondents either somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked if the city makes customer service a priority, 33% of respondents either somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Q13: Any other comments:

The following is a selected sampling of comments that came from the online survey. The comments represent the key themes that were found throughout the comment section;

“Things have improved greatly with the current administration and more collaborative, transparent approaches. Still a work in progress but progress being made.”

“I personally live in a safe neighborhood, and do not face safety concerns, but I know this is not the case for many people in other neighborhoods. As a retail business owner, I've also noticed a large increase in theft - which feels like both a product of a difficult economy, but also an increased boldness in those who engage in criminal activity.”

“As a business, when trying to contact the correct department of the city is very difficult. It seems you have many barriers, and divisions, and they do not talk to each other or coordinate. I think more teamwork is necessary to improve customer service”

“The downtown district is hampered severely by the Lighthouse location. If there is another location that can be found, our downtown will be much more appealing, and I believe development will be greatly enhanced.”

“The City is good at seeking input. Not so good at listening and/or implementing. The City appears afraid to change - they get studies, then studies on studies, then engagement, then another study. The amount of both time and money spent on studies, reports, and engagement would be worthwhile if action followed. Once something is studied and engagement has

happened, take action. Another study is wasting money on consultants and on staff who sit and wait for results.”

“City council should stop worrying about bike lanes and start trying to reduce expenditures. They don't need to fund every social program out there.”

“The administration should continue to audit and actively pursue greater efficiencies with the services it is currently providing prior to looking to raise the mill rate as the first solution to budget shortfalls.”

Analysis

Satisfaction/Quality of Life

The results indicated that the quality of life in Saskatoon is perceived positively across the business community with 86% ranking quality of life at “good/very good.” This answer correlates positively with the City’s findings, where their respondents indicated that 85% of telephone respondents fell into this category and 83% of online respondents. Using question 1 data, it can be concluded that the opinion of the quality of life over the last 3 years is perceived as positive and having stayed the same among the business community.

Satisfaction in the quality of services provided by the City among the respondents is high with the majority falling into the upper half of the 10-point scale.

Most Important Issues

The business community identified the following three issues to be the most important issues facing the City of Saskatoon today, therefore should receive the greatest amount of attention:

- Public Safety/Crime/Policing (30%)
- Taxes/too high (17%)
- Downtown Development (11%)

According to the City's survey the areas of Public Safety/ Crime/Policing and Taxes/too high are also ranked as two of the highest priorities in the online survey. Downtown Development was not targeted in the City's results but remains an important issue to our membership.

When asked if the city was on the most effective path towards making the downtown an appealing destination results were varied with 10% stating very effective, 52% stating somewhat effective 31% stating not very effective and 7 % stating not effective at all. Considering Downtown development has been targeted as a priority area by our membership through this engagement and various others, a clear path for development of the downtown core and communication of this path to the business community is a necessity.

Perceived Value and Budget

The majority of respondents stated that they received good value from services provided by the City, but it should be noted that a large percentage (30%) of respondents believe that services provided have poor value.

Approximately one third of respondents prefer a combination of property tax and user fee increases in order to balance the City's operating budget. The next highest represented group, at 21%, prefer the City stop providing a particular service in order to balance the budget.

Communications/Customer Service

65% of respondents are satisfied with the quality of communications put out by the City of Saskatoon.

When asked about public engagement and if the City does enough to get the public's input on the decisions it makes, the results were split with 43% stating that the city does not do enough at all to get the public's input on the decisions it makes.

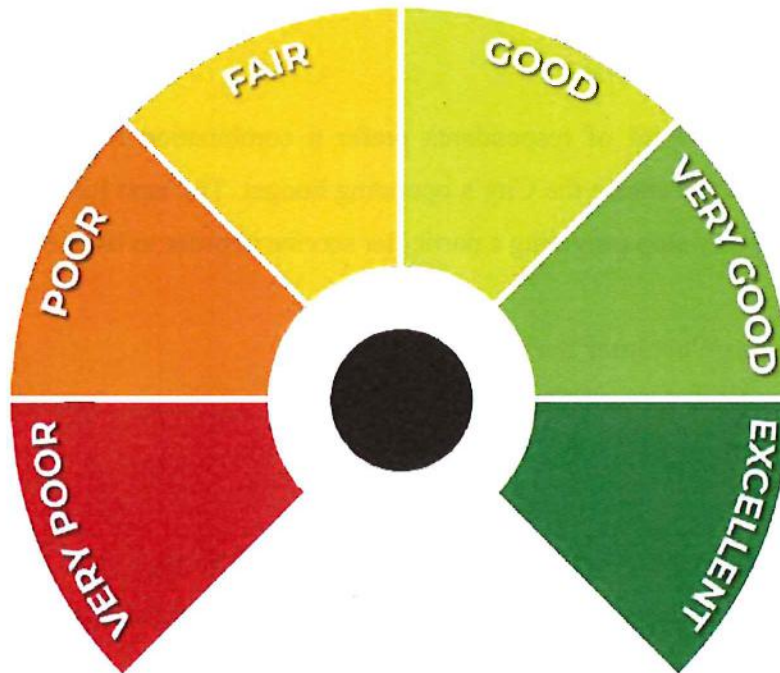
As identified in the agree/disagree line of questioning there is room for improvement particularly in the areas of making customer service a priority and responding quickly to comments and concerns.

SECTION TWO

Municipal Budget Scorecard

The Municipal Budget Score card was developed by the Municipal Budget Task Force that was formed solely for the purpose of measuring the *Proposed Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget* against the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce three advocacy pillars competitiveness, efficiency and growth. The following score card is a reflection of this.

Scorecard Measurement Matrix



COMPETITIVENESS

Ensuring that the local business environment remains competitive and a top location for doing business.

AVERAGE SCORE



TAXATION

WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP:

Rising tax rates can threaten business competitiveness and stability of a region, raising taxes weaken local businesses capacity for growth.

• PROPERTY

Tax increases should be closely correlated with inflation. The proposed tax increase of 3.15% in 2020 and 3.52% in 2021 are cited as being calculated by inflation plus growth.

The Chamber understands that correlating tax increases strictly in alignment with inflation may be difficult for our growing city. However, we also believe that efforts to find efficiencies and savings within the organization and keep the tax increases low is possible and recommended.

SCORE



• BUSINESS

Commend Council for taking a step in the right direction by reducing business license renewal fees for Cannabis retailers from the original planned \$10,000 now to \$85 per year. We encourage this parity of licensing to be consistent across the board with regular licensing fees.

Currently, a new business license for cannabis retailers is \$20,000 while most others are \$125.

SCORE



COMPETITIVENESS

Ensuring that the local business environment remains competitive and a top location for doing business.

AVERAGE SCORE



▶ TRADE AND TRANSPORT

WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP:

We continually hear of the need to relocate rail lines outside of city limits. The presence of rail through major arteries in the city slows traffic in the affected area, deters business by disincentivizing selling of goods and services in these neighborhoods and impacts the attractiveness to new investment dollars.

Investment in roadway infrastructure over the last year has been substantial and has increased the quality and longevity of Saskatoon's roadways making transport easier. Increased Investment is necessary to keep this infrastructure strong.

• RAIL

We do not see any evidence of the rail re-location in this budget.

SCORE



• ROADWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

The City of Saskatoon has invested more than \$61 million in 2019 for road rehabilitation and maintenance to make Saskatoon's streets, bridges and sidewalks smoother, safer and longer-lasting. The Chamber commends the City for their continued investment in these infrastructure projects. This amount has remain consistent for the last three years.

SCORE



The Multi-Year Budget includes the Building Better Roads Program which will continue the strong emphasis on roadway infrastructure improvement.

COMPETITIVENESS

Ensuring that the local business environment remains competitive and a top location for doing business.

AVERAGE SCORE



BUSINESS SUPPORT

WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP:

Our membership expressed the immediate need for the revitalization of the downtown core through incentives and local support initiatives. The business community also requires more clarity in the bidding process for procurement, equity of opportunity in the procurement process and increased access to the city's administration.

• PROCUREMENT

Access to City administration, and knowing who to contact is a struggle facing the business community.

While there may not be any evidence of this, the business community felt that the outcome of many of the procurement processes were predetermined.

SCORE



• INCENTIVES/PROGRAMS

Downtown stimulus efforts such as the Vacant Lot and Adaptive Reuse Strategy and the continued efforts of downtown revitalization are progressively improving.

We commend the City for putting forward such a strategy, we support and encourage City Council to move quickly on this strategy.

SCORE



COMPETITIVENESS

Ensuring that the local business environment remains competitive and a top location for doing business.

AVERAGE SCORE



FISCAL MANAGEMENT

WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP:

The City must promote and embody the principles of strong fiscal management to decrease the risk of uncertainty and increase the economic stability necessary for businesses to invest.

• BUDGET

We appreciate that the City had budget discussions in advance of the comprehensive preliminary budget release. This allowed for organizations to give input prior to the budget deliberations.

SCORE



• FINANCIAL REPORTS

The City is projecting a \$1.6 million deficit by year end, we encourage Council to reduce this deficit and come in with a balanced budget.

SCORE



EFFICIENCY

Supporting initiatives to reduce red tape and streamline processes for doing business.

AVERAGE SCORE



MUNICIPAL EFFICIENCY

WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP:

Local government and municipal affairs have the most direct impact on local business. Regulatory red tape on the municipal level has a very large impact on local businesses.

• BUSINESS LICENCE AND PERMIT WAIT TIMES

We thank the City for their work to reduce Building and Development Permit wait times. We are encouraged to see that the City has heard the concerns of the Business community and has set a target of 2 to 5 weeks for the review of typical commercial building and development permits, which is a 50% improvement over current service levels.

We encourage the City to continue to find efficiencies in the Permitting and licensing process.

SCORE



• MUNICIPAL INSOURCING VERSUS OUTSOURCING

Our membership has expressed concerns around the City's practice of insourcing operational functions that were once outsourced.

We encourage Council to continue to find more efficiencies within their current operations using current staffing levels without adversely affecting the private sector (i.e. eliminating outsourced projects).

By outsourcing more, the City would be able to transfer risk. This will allow the city to work on other areas where they are unable to transfer risk.

SCORE



EFFICIENCY

Supporting initiatives to reduce red tape and streamline processes for doing business.

AVERAGE SCORE



MUNICIPAL EFFICIENCY

WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP:

Local government and municipal affairs have the most direct impact on local business. Regulatory red tape on the municipal level has a very large impact on local businesses.

• ACCESS TO ADMINISTRATION

Our members said that information can be hard to find, and administration not easily accessed. More focus given to the customer care center, should be considered.

SCORE



• WASTE DIVERSION UTILITY

The Chamber is aware of the changes that will be coming soon with the organics program. We do not want the business community to be caught off guard. For 2020, \$10 million has been allocated for the city wide residential curbside organics program.

The Chamber is willing to help facilitate the discussions regarding waste diversion.

SCORE



GROWTH

Promoting local growth through workforce development, innovation and investment.

AVERAGE SCORE



INVESTMENT

WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP:

Our membership want to build and grow a modern, livable city that fosters business development and attracts investment.

• DOWNTOWN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

The Chamber encourages the City to select locations for the Downtown Entertainment District, including a Convention Center, Arena, and other elements and infrastructure to be included. Once a plan has been put in place and locations determined, then provide the transportation infrastructure by way of the BRT to these sites.

By setting these sites and communicating the Downtown Entertainment District plan, the public's buy-in for the BRT will be greater and the planning will be more logical.

The Chamber also encourages the City to incorporate the Downtown Library plans into a Downtown Entertainment District as a whole. The creation of such a district would have massive economic growth spin-offs for the City.

There is currently no allocation of funds in the budget to start on the Downtown Entertainment District. We encourage the city to move along at a faster pace. The District will be a large draw and investment incentive for those wanting to invest in the City.

SCORE



• BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

There is nothing in the proposed budget set aside for attracting and retaining businesses. We encourage the City to continue with land development and to consider what it takes to attract and retain business.

SCORE



GROWTH

Promoting local growth through workforce development, innovation and investment.

AVERAGE
SCORE



► CRIME AND SAFETY

WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP:

Our membership has expressed concern in relation to the increase in crime and the sense of insecurity that has become prevalent in the downtown core. Crime also appears to be spreading to other parts of the City.

• CRIME AND SAFETY IN THE DOWNTOWN CORE

The concentration of the city's vulnerable population in one given area is a strain on resources

Within the budget we do see an increase in policing by 15 FTE in 2020 and 5.8 in 2021 as well as strategic goals to continue partnerships with various key community stakeholders. The Chamber feels that this increase in policing as well as the active community partnerships are steps in the right direction.

We implore the City to explore alternative options to address the Crime and Safety issue.

SCORE

