

HALIFAX

P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 1

**Budget Committee
April 24, 2018**

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

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Jerry Blackwood, Acting Director of Finance & Asset Management/CFO

Original Signed by



Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 13, 2017

SUBJECT: Shape Your City, Shape Your Budget 2018 – Preliminary Public Consultation Results

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

The 2017-18 Multi-year Budget Process and Consultation Plan was outlined in Information Report No 5 on November 22, 2016.

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. As Council is working on multiyear budgeting, the results of the allocator will be useful not only for 2018-19 but also 2019-20.

DISCUSSION

This is the fifth year for the public consultation on the Budget, where residents of HRM were invited to contribute to the 2018 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 \$6,000 in advertising. Staff were able to utilize the current software contract without any additional expense.

The consultation process began on January 11, 2018 and continues 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 \$447.6 million in the 2017-18 budget, which included:

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

2. Community & Recreation Services
 - a. Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centres, etc.)
 - b. Sports fields and Playgrounds
 - c. Parks, Trails & Open Green Space
 - d. Municipal Compliance / By-Law Enforcement
 - e. Libraries
 - f. Culture/Heritage/Events
 - g. Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre
 - h. Transit

3. Infrastructure
 - a. Roadway Maintenance
 - b. Right of Way and Traffic Management (including Streetlights)
 - c. Snow Removal & Ice Control
 - d. Solid Waste

4. Planning & Property Development
 - a. Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design and Transportation Planning
 - b. Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections
 - c. Economic Development

5. Governance and Support Services

The Budget Allocator provides the opportunity to re-balance the budget of \$447.6 million, based on an individual's priorities. Each service showed the Budget allocated for the 2017-18 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.

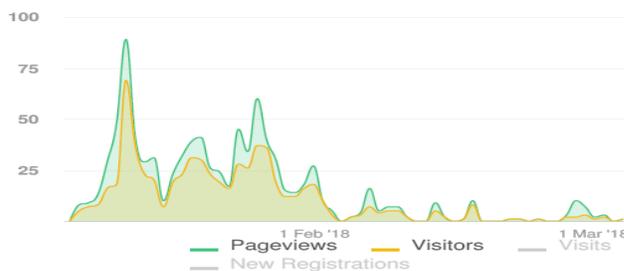
Consultation Findings

This was an open invitation to all citizens of HRM. Current analysis of the Budget Allocation Tool shows that participation to date is below the final results for 2016. The 2017 Budget Allocator was put on line January 11, 2018. As of March 5, 2018, 522 participants have completed the budget allocation tool compared to 130 in 2016. This creates a margin of error of +/-9%.

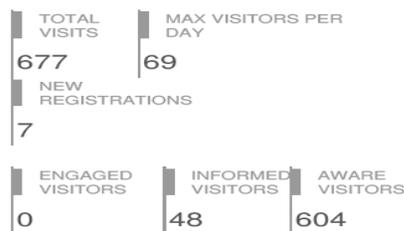
For the 2018-19 and future budgets, staff intends to review options for a wider consultative process. The Budget Allocator is likely to remain an important part of that process but needs to be strengthened through the addition of new tools and means of attracting additional input.

The information found below summarizes participation in the engagement process through Shape your City for 2017/18:

Visitors Summary



Highlights



Summary of citizen participation in the Budget Consultation:

Citizen participation	Budget Consultation		
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Visitors to the Shape your City engagement site	882	635	677
Number of citizens completing Budget Allocator	582	130	522
Percent of visitors, who completed Budget Allocator	66%	20%	77%

1. The average budget calculated was \$433.5m; \$.3m less than the 2016-17 budget of \$433.9m for these services.

2. The citizens varied on decreasing and increasing the budget for current services.
 - a. 77.4% completed their budget priorities below the current spend vs 65% from prior year;
 - b. with none maintaining the current entire budget vs 1% from previous year.
 - c. 22.6% were willing to increase the budget vs 35.6% from previous year. This was voiced in many of the comments as well.

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

More than 50% of the respondent's support an increase to Road Maintenance (55.3%) and over 40% of respondent's support an increase to Transit (44.8%) and Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centres) (44.2%). In addition, Snow Removal (22.5%) and Sportsfields and Playgrounds (39.8%) had support for increased budgets.

Category	Department	Budget Percentage	Values		
			Total Respondants	%	Average
Protective Services	Emergency Measures	Increase budget by 10%	50	9.71	6.28
	Fire	Increase budget by 10%	28	5.46	
	Police	Increase budget by 10%	31	6.04	
	RCMP	Increase budget by 10%	20	3.91	
Community & Recreation Services	Culture / Heritage / Events	Increase budget by 10%	79	15.37	15.09
	Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre	Increase budget by 10%	34	6.61	
	Libraries	Increase budget by 10%	69	13.4	
	Municipal Compliance / By-Law Enforcement	Increase budget by 10%	22	4.3	
	Parks, Trails & Open Green Space	Increase budget by 10%	112	21.71	
	Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centre, etc)	Increase budget by 10%	118	22.78	
	Sports Fields & Playgrounds	Increase budget by 10%	88	17.15	
Transit	Increase budget by 10%	100	19.38		
Infrastructure	Right of Way & Traffic Management (including Streetlights)	Increase budget by 10%	49	9.55	10.59
	Road Maintenance	Increase budget by 10%	112	21.58	
	Snow Removal & Ice Control	Increase budget by 10%	39	7.56	
	Solid Waste	Increase budget by 10%	19	3.68	
Planning & Property Development	Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections	Increase budget by 10%	32	6.23	10.32
	Economic Development	Increase budget by 10%	72	13.93	
	Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design and Transportation Planning	Increase budget by 10%	56	10.79	
Support Services	Chief Admin Office, Corp Communications, HR, Finance, ITC and Legal	Increase budget by 10%	8	1.54	1.54

Category	Department	Budget Percentage	Values		
			Total Respondants	%	Average
Protective Services	Emergency Measures	Increase budget by 5%	88	17.09	17.29
	Fire	Increase budget by 5%	126	24.56	
	Police	Increase budget by 5%	98	19.1	
	RCMP	Increase budget by 5%	43	8.41	
Community & Recreation Services	Culture / Heritage / Events	Increase budget by 5%	66	12.84	17.42
	Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre	Increase budget by 5%	49	9.53	
	Libraries	Increase budget by 5%	100	19.42	
	Municipal Compliance / By-Law Enforcement	Increase budget by 5%	37	7.23	
	Parks, Trails & Open Green Space	Increase budget by 5%	108	20.93	
	Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centre, etc)	Increase budget by 5%	111	21.43	
	Sports Fields & Playgrounds	Increase budget by 5%	116	22.61	
Transit	Increase budget by 5%	131	25.39		
Infrastructure	Right of Way & Traffic Management (including Streetlights)	Increase budget by 5%	85	16.57	18.48
	Road Maintenance	Increase budget by 5%	175	33.72	
	Snow Removal & Ice Control	Increase budget by 5%	77	14.92	
	Solid Waste	Increase budget by 5%	45	8.7	
Planning & Property Development	Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections	Increase budget by 5%	39	7.59	11.54
	Economic Development	Increase budget by 5%	73	14.12	
	Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design and Transportation Planning	Increase budget by 5%	67	12.91	
Support Services	Chief Admin Office, Corp Communications, HR, Finance, ITC and Legal	Increase budget by 5%	9	1.74	1.74

Support for combined decrease in the budget was strongest amongst Governance and Support Services (66.6%), Municipal Compliance (38.7%) and Culture/Heritage/Events (34.4%) and Sports Fields & Playgrounds (20.5).

Category	Department	Budget Percentage	Values		Average
			Total Respondants	%	
Protective Services	Emergency Measures	Decrease budget by 10%	19	3.69	7.90
	Fire	Decrease budget by 10%	17	3.31	
	Police	Decrease budget by 10%	55	10.72	
	RCMP	Decrease budget by 10%	71	13.89	
Community & Recreation Services	Culture / Heritage / Events	Decrease budget by 10%	90	17.51	10.79
	Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre	Decrease budget by 10%	59	11.48	
	Libraries	Decrease budget by 10%	48	9.32	
	Municipal Compliance / By-Law Enforcement	Decrease budget by 10%	82	16.02	
	Parks, Trails & Open Green Space	Decrease budget by 10%	33	6.4	
	Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centre, etc)	Decrease budget by 10%	38	7.34	
	Sports Fields & Playgrounds	Decrease budget by 10%	38	7.41	
Infrastructure	Transit	Decrease budget by 10%	56	10.85	5.67
	Right of Way & Traffic Management (including Streetlights)	Decrease budget by 10%	34	6.63	
	Road Maintenance	Decrease budget by 10%	15	2.89	
	Snow Removal & Ice Control	Decrease budget by 10%	26	5.04	
Planning & Property Development	Solid Waste	Decrease budget by 10%	42	8.12	15.49
	Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections	Decrease budget by 10%	79	15.37	
	Economic Development	Decrease budget by 10%	91	17.6	
Support Services	Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design and Transportation Planning	Decrease budget by 10%	70	13.49	44.02
	Chief Admin Office, Corp Communications, HR, Finance, ITC and Legal	Decrease budget by 10%	228	44.02	
Category	Department	Budget Percentage	Values		Average
Protective Services	Emergency Measures	Decrease budget by 5%	65	12.62	14.48
	Fire	Decrease budget by 5%	50	9.75	
	Police	Decrease budget by 5%	81	15.79	
	RCMP	Decrease budget by 5%	101	19.77	
Community & Recreation Services	Culture / Heritage / Events	Decrease budget by 5%	87	16.93	14.39
	Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre	Decrease budget by 5%	89	17.32	
	Libraries	Decrease budget by 5%	64	12.43	
	Municipal Compliance / By-Law Enforcement	Decrease budget by 5%	116	22.66	
	Parks, Trails & Open Green Space	Decrease budget by 5%	53	10.27	
	Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centre, etc)	Decrease budget by 5%	68	13.13	
	Sports Fields & Playgrounds	Decrease budget by 5%	71	13.84	
Infrastructure	Transit	Decrease budget by 5%	44	8.53	10.67
	Right of Way & Traffic Management (including Streetlights)	Decrease budget by 5%	79	15.4	
	Road Maintenance	Decrease budget by 5%	18	3.47	
	Snow Removal & Ice Control	Decrease budget by 5%	46	8.91	
Planning & Property Development	Solid Waste	Decrease budget by 5%	77	14.89	17.17
	Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections	Decrease budget by 5%	109	21.21	
	Economic Development	Decrease budget by 5%	73	14.12	
Support Services	Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design and Transportation Planning	Decrease budget by 5%	84	16.18	22.59
	Chief Admin Office, Corp Communications, HR, Finance, ITC and Legal	Decrease budget by 5%	117	22.59	

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

Category	Department	Budget Percentage	Values		Average
			Total Respondants	%	
Protective Services	Emergency Measures	Maintain existing budget	293	56.89	54.04
	Fire	Maintain existing budget	292	56.92	
	Police	Maintain existing budget	248	48.34	
	RCMP	Maintain existing budget	276	54.01	
Community & Recreation Services	Culture / Heritage / Events	Maintain existing budget	192	37.35	42.32
	Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre	Maintain existing budget	283	55.06	
	Libraries	Maintain existing budget	234	45.44	
	Municipal Compliance / By-Law Enforcement	Maintain existing budget	255	49.8	
	Parks, Trails & Open Green Space	Maintain existing budget	210	40.7	
	Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centre, etc)	Maintain existing budget	183	35.33	
	Sports Fields & Playgrounds	Maintain existing budget	200	38.99	
Infrastructure	Transit	Maintain existing budget	185	35.85	54.59
	Right of Way & Traffic Management (including Streetlights)	Maintain existing budget	266	51.85	
	Road Maintenance	Maintain existing budget	199	38.34	
	Snow Removal & Ice Control	Maintain existing budget	328	63.57	
Planning & Property Development	Solid Waste	Maintain existing budget	334	64.6	45.49
	Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections	Maintain existing budget	255	49.61	
	Economic Development	Maintain existing budget	208	40.23	
Support Services	Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design and Transportation Planning	Maintain existing budget	242	46.63	30.12
	Chief Admin Office, Corp Communications, HR, Finance, ITC and Legal	Maintain existing budget	156	30.12	

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 Multi Year Budget for 2018-19. 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 2017-18 Budget.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 – Budget Allocator – Budget Distribution

Appendix 2 – Budget Allocator – Comments

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Sandra Billings, Budget Analyst, Finance & Asset Management, 902-490-6493

Original Signed

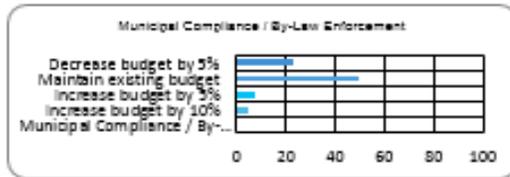
Report Approved by: _____
Bruce Fisher, Manager, Financial Policy & Planning, Finance & Asset Management,
902-490-4493

Budget Allocator-Budget Distribution

Budgets			
Budgets (includes data from unverified submissions)			
Total Responses		522	
Default Category			
PROTECTIVE SERVICES			
Police			
Increase budget by 10%	31	6.04	
Increase budget by 5%	98	19.1	
Maintain existing budget	248	48.34	
Decrease budget by 5%	81	15.79	
Decrease budget by 10%	55	10.72	
RCMP			
Increase budget by 10%	20	3.91	
Increase budget by 5%	43	8.41	
Maintain existing budget	276	54.01	
Decrease budget by 5%	101	19.77	
Decrease budget by 10%	71	13.89	
Fire			
Increase budget by 10%	28	5.46	
Increase budget by 5%	126	24.56	
Maintain existing budget	292	56.92	
Decrease budget by 5%	50	9.75	
Decrease budget by 10%	17	3.31	
Emergency Measures			
Increase budget by 10%	50	9.71	
Increase budget by 5%	88	17.09	
Maintain existing budget	293	56.89	
Decrease budget by 5%	65	12.62	
Decrease budget by 10%	19	3.69	
Community & Recreation Services			
Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centre, etc)			
Increase budget by 10%	118	22.78	
Increase budget by 5%	111	21.43	
Maintain existing budget	183	35.33	
Decrease budget by 5%	68	13.13	
Decrease budget by 10%	38	7.34	
Sports Fields & Playgrounds			
Increase budget by 10%	88	17.15	
Increase budget by 5%	116	22.61	
Maintain existing budget	200	38.99	
Decrease budget by 5%	71	13.84	
Decrease budget by 10%	38	7.41	
Parks, Trails & Open Green Space			
Increase budget by 10%	112	21.71	
Increase budget by 5%	108	20.93	
Maintain existing budget	210	40.7	
Decrease budget by 5%	53	10.27	
Decrease budget by 10%	33	6.4	

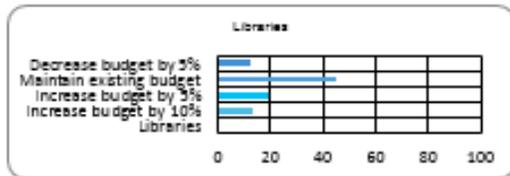
Municipal Compliance / By-Law

Increase budget by 10%	22	4.3
Increase budget by 5%	37	7.23
Maintain existing budget	255	49.8
Decrease budget by 5%	116	22.66
Decrease budget by 10%	82	16.02



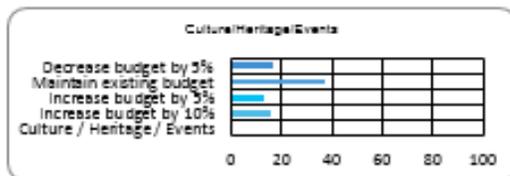
Libraries

Increase budget by 10%	69	13.4
Increase budget by 5%	100	19.42
Maintain existing budget	234	45.44
Decrease budget by 5%	64	12.43
Decrease budget by 10%	48	9.32



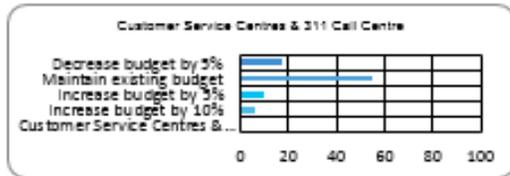
Culture / Heritage / Events

Increase budget by 10%	79	15.37
Increase budget by 5%	66	12.84
Maintain existing budget	192	37.35
Decrease budget by 5%	87	16.93
Decrease budget by 10%	90	17.51



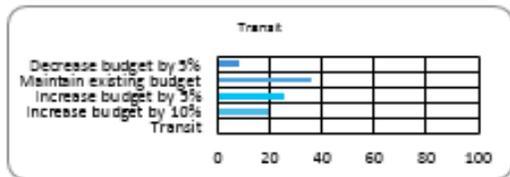
Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre

Increase budget by 10%	34	6.61
Increase budget by 5%	49	9.53
Maintain existing budget	283	55.06
Decrease budget by 5%	89	17.32
Decrease budget by 10%	59	11.48



Transit

Increase budget by 10%	100	19.38
Increase budget by 5%	131	25.39
Maintain existing budget	185	35.85
Decrease budget by 5%	44	8.53
Decrease budget by 10%	56	10.85



Infrastructure

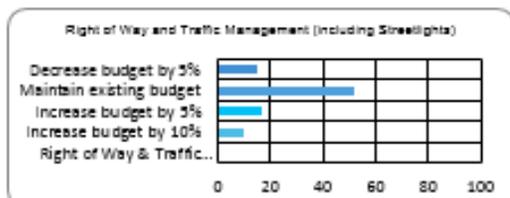
Road Maintenance

Increase budget by 10%	112	21.58
Increase budget by 5%	175	33.72
Maintain existing budget	199	38.34
Decrease budget by 5%	18	3.47
Decrease budget by 10%	15	2.89



Right of Way & Traffic Management (including Streetlights)

Increase budget by 10%	49	9.55
Increase budget by 5%	85	16.57
Maintain existing budget	266	51.85
Decrease budget by 5%	79	15.4
Decrease budget by 10%	34	6.63



Appendix 2 Budget Allocator

Snow Removal & Ice Control			<p>Snow Removal & Ice Control</p> <p>Decrease budget by 5%: ~10%</p> <p>Maintain existing budget: ~60%</p> <p>Increase budget by 5%: ~25%</p> <p>Increase budget by 10%: ~5%</p>
Increase budget by 10%	39	7.56	
Increase budget by 5%	77	14.92	
Maintain existing budget	328	63.57	
Decrease budget by 5%	46	8.91	
Decrease budget by 10%	26	5.04	
Solid Waste			<p>Solid Waste</p> <p>Decrease budget by 5%: ~10%</p> <p>Maintain existing budget: ~60%</p> <p>Increase budget by 5%: ~25%</p> <p>Increase budget by 10%: ~5%</p>
Increase budget by 10%	19	3.68	
Increase budget by 5%	45	8.7	
Maintain existing budget	334	64.6	
Decrease budget by 5%	77	14.89	
Decrease budget by 10%	42	8.12	
Planning & Property Development			<p>Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design, and Transportation Planning</p> <p>Decrease budget by 5%: ~10%</p> <p>Maintain existing budget: ~60%</p> <p>Increase budget by 5%: ~25%</p> <p>Increase budget by 10%: ~5%</p>
Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design and Transportation Planning			
Increase budget by 10%	56	10.79	
Increase budget by 5%	67	12.91	
Maintain existing budget	242	46.63	
Decrease budget by 5%	84	16.18	
Decrease budget by 10%	70	13.49	
Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections			<p>Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections</p> <p>Decrease budget by 5%: ~10%</p> <p>Maintain existing budget: ~60%</p> <p>Increase budget by 5%: ~25%</p> <p>Increase budget by 10%: ~5%</p>
Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections			
Increase budget by 10%	32	6.23	
Increase budget by 5%	39	7.59	
Maintain existing budget	255	49.61	
Decrease budget by 5%	109	21.21	
Decrease budget by 10%	79	15.37	
Economic Development			<p>Economic Development</p> <p>Decrease budget by 5%: ~10%</p> <p>Maintain existing budget: ~60%</p> <p>Increase budget by 5%: ~25%</p> <p>Increase budget by 10%: ~5%</p>
Economic Development			
Increase budget by 10%	72	13.93	
Increase budget by 5%	73	14.12	
Maintain existing budget	208	40.23	
Decrease budget by 5%	73	14.12	
Decrease budget by 10%	91	17.6	
Support Services			<p>Mayor, Council, Chief Admin Office, Communications, HR, Finance, IT, Legal and Auditor General's Office</p> <p>Decrease budget by 5%: ~10%</p> <p>Maintain existing budget: ~60%</p> <p>Increase budget by 5%: ~25%</p> <p>Increase budget by 10%: ~5%</p>
Chief Admin Office, Corp Communications, HR, Finance, ITC and Legal			
Increase budget by 10%	8	1.54	
Increase budget by 5%	9	1.74	
Maintain existing budget	156	30.12	
Decrease budget by 5%	117	22.59	
Decrease budget by 10%	228	44.02	

Comments:

I feel like we could have better services if city Council used its time more efficiently. Work in projects and funds allocation instead of writing 40 page documents about the viability of donairs as the city food. Spend time looking at the Halifax tax plan instead of spending time discussing how much you're afraid of buildings taller than two stories.

The questions asked in this survey are very general, and the language around the necessity of increases lacks detail. The survey should not be taken as permission to proceed with increase, individual councillors in consultation with their constituents need to remain responsible for that process. Another missing aspect of the survey is that it assumes that all areas have the same level of service, and that is not the case. Consideration should be given to a tax package for each residence that takes into consideration only the services provided.

Want to see more money spent on litter clean up. Also, the disgusting fact that this city enforces recycling, but has no plan on what to do with it.

I am okay with an increase in taxes to improve services.

Stop wasting my money

The options do not allow for increased efficiency as an option - It's a typical less tax less service more tax more service model which is very wrong - Government services, including municipal, are synonymous with waste and inefficiency. Maintain current budgets and trim the fat...

Raise taxes by 10 bucks - otherwise I think there are false choices here. Also - don't we end up with small surpluses?.

Would have added 20-25% to investment in economic development and promotion of Hfx for inward investment if I could. Creation of high quality jobs and attraction of highly skilled immigrants and investors should be a priority. Increased revenues from long term Population growth will help offset cuts in less economically critical services in short term. 10% cut in taxes from overall budget is realistic and will make Hfx more attractive as an investment destination. I'm a skilled immigrant, I would not however invest in Hfx as the economy stands.

Stop the pillaging of the city's heritage while pushing for more density. Incentives for developers who lack the vision of preserving our heritage (with a few exceptions, pretty much all of the developers are in this category) for adaptive reuse. Even facadism or integrating new buildings with the existing heritage is far superior than the sad state we are in right now.

Please create more space for recreation and transit improvement.

There is not enough information provided or a sufficient breakdown of budget sub sectors to make this a useful or valid exercise. Also would be good to include a budget head that is unique to sustainability and environmental costs as this is the most challenging and important modern day issue facing our city

Increase the spending on things that make a city worth living in; culture, recreation, green spaces, libraries. Stop wasting time and money on tourism - tourists don't live here! The other areas like road works, transit and emergency services, those people are all over paid and under worked. Yes, we need them but they've gotten raises and increased for years and they're STILL not happy nor are they doing a good job. Meanwhile, library, culture and recreation staff are do excellent work, are top quality in their industries and yet this city under-funds and under pays them. And now this city sucks. When I moved here in 1996 this was a great city to live in. Now it's just dirty and crime-ridden, and the city staff in libraries and culture/recreation centres are the only ones who seem to know or care about doing anything to fix this. Stop looking a gift-horse in the mouth and give these experts the funding to make this city a great place to live again!

Why does picking "maintain the existing budget" for all items add to more than the existing budget? I had to pick a decrease by 5% to allow me to move the next page - and on that page it was not clear how to add more funds to any category. Clearly this challenge needs some beta testing. Given that inflation is 1-2% the existing budget should be increasing by this much as a matter of course, just like my household budget does.

We should be putting more money into transit and infrastructure and culture - this process does not admit any of those options, nor does it account for the increase in property tax revenue over the past year. If this has been made part of the "existing budget" it is not clearly stated.

While this exercise does show the difficulty for Council in making choices it did not let me pick the option of increasing the tax rate.

If the tax rate needs to go up in order to make HRM a better, greener place to live and work, then that should be an OPTION! I firmly reject the notion that taxes can not go up, if that is what it takes to get where we want to go.

We can no longer afford not to maintain or improve services. I do not believe a slight increase in municipal taxes will put many citizens in the poor house. Maintaining or reducing taxes may be a political expedient, but does nothing to maintain or improve service levels. More focus should be placed on reducing costs related to poor planning and political rather than practical decision-making.

A \$17 tax increase for a year will not be that bad, I actually would be happy with a \$20 increase.

Don't be afraid to put the challenge to public services to do more with the same or less

Don't be complacent and start to behave like a commercial organisation

Why did I not see anything about city counselors raises and or possible pay reductions??? Why are we the tax paying public expected to continually tighten our belts,,, counselors do not seem to go with out..

This has nothing to do with the fact that you have to use the same services that excuse will not cut it.. I would like to know what you the city counselors are doing personally or as a group,, are you freezing your wages,, are you going to take a role back ect,ect,ect,????? I eagerly await your reply..

Thank you

Cut the budget back on transit and staff - get more efficient with less!!!! We have plenty of buses, use them properly!

We need to find efficiencies in our service delivery. I see little evidence that adding money on an annual basis has resulted in improved services.

Living within our means in times of commercial and residential development seems like a reasonable goal.

I feel there was not enough information about some of the categories to fully understand what they were.

More green initiatives!

any health care allocations?

Reduce the amount of expenditure for undertakings that do not benefit the majority. A prominent example of this would be bike lanes. Miles and miles of expensive asphalt put down to benefit the few.

Done

Improve efficiency of city staff, reduce waste of money and pet projects.

Your survey is hot garbage, it uses fear mongering to make things far more important than they are, I would actually cut policing even deep and slash your bloated wages and expense accounts.

We as the public must lower our expectations for municipal services, and make the effort to ease the tax burden on all. I'm certain we have adequate police and fire resources, surprisingly easy access to basic services, and we should be quite proud of our parks and community green spaces. The administration of a complex organization such as HRM must continually seek efficiencies within its operations. Detailed auditing of departments and consultants with true expertise should root out inefficient operations and ineffective programs. Let's all try and do more with less. I often quote a councillor who once said "if you're enjoying a stroll through one of our beautiful parks and you see a piece of litter, for God's sake, bend over and please pick it up". I think we as a public can and should do better. It's not all our your shoulders.

stop robbing the people of nova scotia

There are plenty of things the budget a resolve by throwing money at it, but that's not necessarily the best option. Consult your staff, front line workers, and people who are actually involved in doing the actual work to find out if they think there are better, more efficient ways of doing things. Teach you new trainees to question how stuff is done, they might have a great idea that could save tonnes of time and money, using existing resources. It's easy for top level bureaucrats to say +5% here, -10% there, but if they don't know how the work is done...or even work is being done, how can one truly find the best way of using funds? Good luck, and don't fail us!

More investment in public transit and walkable communities please!

It would be nice if this program could also include more detail - what specific projects/programs are delivered where, who/what gets taxed, etc.

Excellent idea for feedback.

Taxes and tax increases aren't wrong nor inappropriate. It's a question of best bang for the buck

I believe that a further investigation into these areas of the government to ensure money is being allocated properly but also spent appropriately.

Great idea!

excellent way for the community to contribute.

I would liked to seen an increase in policing and fire as well as Library and road work. I don't envy those who have to do this budget

Do right by me

That roads in this city are a mess & need to be fixed

As a pensioner I feel we pay more than enough taxes for the services we receive.

Get rid of HRP bring in RCMP, improve transit by giving them more money, and better transit priority in the transportation network.

Stay out of projects like convention centers and stop messing up the downtown area and waterfront.

We need a budget for the majority of the people, not the few. People can not afford more tax increases. Learning to spend wiser and do what is needed, becomes more important than wants.

Maybe politicians could take a pay cut of 5% to offset some of the costs. You make way too much money and with this survey, you are asking the people to your job!

I don't mind a modest increase in taxes & fees to improve services & living conditions.

Improving transit, city transportation infrastructure, and recreation services should be a priority for the health of our city and our population.

Too much money wasted on studies and management. Reduce councillor salaries and benefits, they do NOT deserve or earn what they are currently paid.

How we do things can have a greater impact vs what we spend. Ask those who are doing the work where they see opportunity for efficiencies - not to reduce their budgets but to make available monies for improved/additional service within the respective

Please invest in bicycling infrastructure, low income housing and maybe slow down on the condo craze. Love the fact that Halifax is growing, but maybe lets hold off on construction for a year. Use the guidelines for Amazon's application to build a city that attracts business and young people.

Given the HRM's partnership with United Way to develop a poverty solutions strategy, it is disheartening to see that the budget process does not outline some of the city's potential commitments to this work.

Decrease the number of councillors. Vancouver has 10, Calgary has 15, etc. Why do we have 16? Delete the Mayor position as has been done in some of the forward thinking cities...rule by council.

Not an easy task ahead!

less street checks, more cultural and heritage events.

Thanks for you consideration!

We need to budget money for once in a life time opportunities like blue mountain birch cove making it the largest urban park in Canada and leave a legacy

Appreciate the ability to provide input.

In the future, there should be more realistic options to increase or decrease by 1 to 5 % especially for larger budgets.

With one of the highest property taxes in the country it is time to make cuts and shrink budget for HRM. Have to make HRM a place people want to live in and that means reducing tax. Cannot keep spending and expect people to stay in a area with low paid jobs and no future.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute. I know budgeting is a thankless and seemingly impossible task but listening to what people actually want instead of assuming you have enough awareness of the needs of constituents is refreshing and very important.

There are line items I'd have liked to investigate, such as wages for elected officials and expenses for same. I realize there was a SNAFU with regards to the police wages and arbitration, thus why I was willing to make a 5% cut there, to balance the budget. I also realize this is a fairly blunt tool, just meant to gather opinions, and I accept that.

With the unallocated money I would put into education

There saved myself \$170/yr. Thank you for removing the transit bus saved me more. If transit is not efficient get rid of it. Make user pay for sports fields and other recreation. Police do nothing not efficient only interested in writing tickets. I don't need tickets. Stop catering to special interest groups

Instead of thinking what's in it for us, try to think what's good for the people.

If the Center Plan is approved, no more amendments. The developers have to accept or move on.

Taxes are out of hand! Thank you

Would like to see more of the budget allocated towards technology and increasing efficiencies which will decrease the budget over time and also youth programming.

I would also suggest that any increases to salary of council members/employees be frozen for the next 4 years - a recent increase will handle inflation during this time and ensure that programs and our communities are supported first. I would also suggest that council looks to focus on one area each year, especially if items are backlogged. Look to consolidate efforts and trim waste within as well - everyone in this province is being told to do more with less, to live within our means, etc. - I am not suggesting that council has not already done this. But it is always wise to look within first to see if there are redundancies and reduce those first and foremost.

The budget needs to see very strategic cuts in expenses. We are very administratively heavy in this area. Too many lawyers, PR folks, and general admin staff. No increases in revenue. We cannot afford a tax hike in the rate or total revenues. CUT, CUT, CUT and be responsible to the citizens who have elected the council and pay for the staff. Metro Transit, whose service is only fair at best, needs to be gutted and have operational revamp. Look for private sector options.

I think it's important to ensure that our services and service providers are appropriately funded. Parks, recreation, and family-focused activities are important to us as are safety (transportation, police, fire, etc) and we would be willing to have a small tax increase to cover this.

I'm available next year if you need a hand.

Eliminate the provincial government pension plan all together, let them save for their retirement like the rest of us. Like RRSP's or GIC where they pay for it out of their own pocket. And stop giving your selves a raise every two years and completely eliminate any tax benefit you get like gas for going to work and home, lunches etc. Try not spending money likes it yours personally to spend, maybe you would have enough money without breaking the backs of tax payers.

Bus service changes to route schedules have affected our area of Beaver Bank, greatly. (Many people use the bus to connect to other buses at Sackville Terminal to get to and from work. Weekend bus service, especially Sundays, is greatly lacking. Sunday bus service does not begin until noon! That is not much good when you have to be to work for 9:00 AM.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

we can not keep going in the hole every time sooner or later we have to pay a much high price. we have too many on the payroll now
lets try to reduce this then we will save money.

I saw nothing regarding Parkland Acquisition. Please add funds to this aspect of the budget to insure the purchase of lands to complete the Vision as presented to the public in 2012 for BMBCL Regional Park. We await progress here, without the necessary funds, no progress can be made. In addition, allocate staffing to engage with the public, work on a management plan and the many necessary initial phases of this exciting project.

Recreation Programming - Initiate an access to HRM Rec Programming, using District 10 and 12 as a model. The CGC is not affordable or accessible for a large segment of the neighbourhood. Recently a Facilities Masterplan was completed, but no thought was given to programmes. Mainland north needs to return to a community faculty model to replace the Northcliffe offerings. Schools are closed to the community. Not all residents who might be able to walk to the facility can get past the front door. Seniors, young families and others need programmes, drop in centres, access to services provided by NGO's and government agencies...a local rec centre could provide access to some of this. We need a St Andrews type centre in Mainland North.

Recreation Trail...please fund planning and development of recreation Trail. Currently, the model is linear AT Trails. Recreation Trails, loops and interpreted nature walks, etc. help to keep a vibrant healthy community more active.

My top priority for the HRM is the acquisition of lands for the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park. I realize other budgets have to be trimmed to allow for the funding of new lands that must be purchased or expropriated. Once the boundaries are set after the private lands are purchased, we need funds to develop the infrastructure, like trails, in the new regional park.

I think my biggest concern in the HRM is the state of the streets and overall infrastructure in general. Some of the streets are in a deplorable state of repair.

I see there is no option of paying down any municipal debt. am I to believe there is none.
thanks,

I understand that many of the budget decisions are tied to wage negotiations and contractually mandated. I would however look at ways of increasing efficiency prior to increasing funding. I live in a rural area in Hammonds plains...so for example the collection of green bins over the summer could happen once every two weeks . Indeed in the winter months every three weeks could work.

As a parent of young children, one particular item that I feel is important is the quality and availability of grass fields. A number of sports have been moving to using turf fields due to the poor quality and maintenance of grass. This increases fees for recreational programs and potentially leads to families unable to have their children participate.

Halifax water should have stayed with HRM. Their budgets, pay scale and lack of communication with the public is out of control and their Meetings should be open to the public, with no in-camera time.

I feel that \$17 is a small price to pay, per house hold, for improved services.

Please prioritize the development of a recreational infrastructure and parks, including bike lanes and mountain bike trail development close to the downtown core (e.g. Birch Cove/ Blue Mountain).

Please don't invest municipal dollars in a football stadium.

enough money to staff, enough to managers! Time to get real- Haligonians are not making a killing here, except for Professors, teachers, doctors, all politicians and civil servants. The rest of us are hanging on by a thread. Time to do more cutting, let nature and development take it's own course.

When is the city actually going to allocate enough funds to enable progress on creation of the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park. Perhaps this is the time to find dedicated staff to move this project forward. Does this council want BMBCL to be an amazing legacy for the city of Halifax or not?

Idea to save millions. Make the bridge's free and blanket the cost of mandarinates on property owners in the HRM. This will save millions in antiquated positions, increase the free flow of traffic and reduce maintained on bridge systems through the elimination of tolls.

Transit remains (as I inputted last year) the top priority. I decreased funding to Transit because of the wording, which seems to be either adding or removing buses. In my opinion, we need another transportation system. Light rail seems most feasible, and this year I would love to see progress made towards this.

Lastly, on the subject of transportation, I do not understand why monthly "road permit" parking passes (i.e. parking cars on designated streets) are less expensive than a bus pass? \$20-40/month for a car parking pass but double that for a Bus pass? How does that make any sense at all? I thought the idea was to take cars off the road.

Road maintenance (many are in bad shape and transit issues (no ridership increase in ten years!) need to be addressed!

I personally could deal with a 17% increase

Make affordable decisions instead of giving into complainers. i.e.. <http://thechronicleherald.ca/metro/1332946-halifax-council-votes-down-fire-station-proposal>

The city needs to get a better understanding of it's role.

For the decreases I suggest , a more creative approach to spending in these areas. More effective use of personnel, and resources is a start.

Bogus...

I would decrease fire department funding and police funding however I would allocate more funds to whichever department (Police or transport or planning) that would implement traffic enforcement measures. These measures, whether manual enforcement or cameras and sensors, should include fines that pay for the enforcement measures. The excess money from the measures could be allocated toward transit. I dislike the idea of putting more money into transit for more of the same kind of service as currently exists however if there were plans to make transit more convenient as opposed to just more of the same inconvenient and unreliable current system, then I would allocate more money to transit.

Investing will take care of the need for more protective services. Create space for opportunities through more athletics, arts, and education. If you give people something positive to work with than they will do positive things. Be a city that really cares about its citizens

It seems like a lot of areas have fallen behind our need by a little bit, and so a small deficit now (based on 1% = \$17: an increase of 8.5% giving an average increase of \$12/month) may get the Municipality up to a more stable position and hopefully prevent increased costs later (repair now versus replace later).

Overall, increasing mobility throughout HRM is important to me, as marginalized and financially unstable populations rely more heavily on transit and walking to get around. I'd rather see an increase in the turnaround time for documents and applications than learn someone is physically unable to leave their home/street/neighbourhood, and thus unable to access community supports as often as they require.

We need to improve public transportation access to all communities in HRM. It will cost us more but the payoff is a more accessible city, more access more money flowing .

Thanks, this was challenging and gives residents a better concept of constructing city budget.

Our transit system needs desperate upgrading. HRM Recreation also needs significantly more funding. It plays a key role in enriching the lives of youth, families and seniors in our community, is something used by almost everyone, and creates youth that will become tomorrow's leaders.

We are taxed to the point of exhaustion.
Please hold the line on spending.

I'd cut the police budget even more if it was an option

Police budgets are way too high. Let's cut 'em in half. Maybe then they won't have so much free time to harass minorities

Increase Library budgets by 25%! Those places are the life-blood of the community.

Follow our prime minister. Go more into debt to INVEST in our city and make for a better quality of life.. which would make the citizens happier.. and allow more money to flow.. an extra \$100 a year in taxes is nothing compared to the benefit of investing in our province and city.

More/better Transit is required in more rural areas.

Transit, bus, etc. should be fully costed to user. There should be no cost to a non-user of the service.

Our city planning and support for large companies has been a priority for long enough. The convention center was an enormous waste of money, especially during a hard time due to the big lift. We should be prioritizing non-commercial interests with our tax dollars that will truly benefit those of us living here - infrastructure and snow removal, parks and preservation, and services that will have positive effects throughout HRM and not simply in the downtown core (e.g. argyle streetscaping, convention center, etc.) If you ask the average Haligonian, I believe they would agree that given the choice, they would funnel the money from their bylaw enforcement funding to other services such as parks, recreation, infrastructure, or snow removal. We also do not need a sports stadium/arena. Enough with the tax money sinks!

A Transit budget should be increased to add new routes and to connect most parts of HRM.

A dedicated lane on 102 is required for emergency vehicles.

All schools in the Metro area should open doors to use libraries for public , if public library is not in the area. For Ex Larry Uteck has no access.

Micro Grocery Stores should be opened at walk able distances in all neighborhoods with price of commodities regulated .

Take example from Singapore.

Recycle vending machines required in downtown and commercial areas that dispense coins or water bottles for equivalent recyclable material.

Take example from Germany.

We should not be talking about a CFL stadium while we have homeless people at risk on the streets. It was cold enough to kill last week. Shame on you all for your priorities. Especially if you asked the taxpayers to pay for your own decision not to pay into a pension.

Great tool for people who demand more and more services but complain about paying property tax.

do more with less. Cutting back where possible, status quo everywhere else.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute in this manner. In addition to giving me the opportunity to be heard in an efficient manner, it also provides me with a better appreciation for the challenges the budget decision makers face each year.

HRM must adopt a cost reduction program in all areas!

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views. I hope they are taken into consideration.

By moving towards a more efficient transit (not all buses going down town but other areas of this vast HRM - Bayers Road - Joe Howe) would be a reduction for road maintenance.

too much management

Use money wisely, and don't spend to end year with a 0.00 total.

As a motorist, I chose to drop the transit budget because traffic downtown is a nightmare. Getting some of the buses off the road and out to more rural areas where they are more needed will help. Also, I don't see why buses need to stop EACH AND EVERY BLOCK in the downtown areas; I think those that choose to use public transit in the core can walk an extra block! That will reduce the amount of stops by half, allowing buses to travel their routes more quickly while also holding up traffic less frequently. Snow removal I increased the budget for. It is ridiculous that my neighbours and I have to wait THREE DAYS to get plowed out! Since I am one of only 5 volunteer firefighters at my fire station, this is COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE. Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to provide input into how our tax dollars are spent :)

Biggest priority should be reducing the number of councillors to match similar sized cities in North America. Priority two should be reducing the budget of the police in response to marijuana legalization.

While by budget means more tax for HRM, I am tired of hearing the phrase 'do more, with less'. We cannot move forward without paying for more, so paying for me we must do.

Maybe if HRM spends its money on the things people want and need everyday instead of rebranding to a unpopular logo . How about the walkway between South Woodside and Russell Lake West in Dartmouth plus the walkway going through Northbrook Park in Dartmouth been cleared of snow every winter . Then there is the yearly leaf clean up only in the Halifax Peninsula which places in Dartmouth do not get ., Streetlights that do not work even when they are reported .Then there are the troll farms saying everything is OK ,the Wikipedia trolls . The municipality is suppose to deliver services on a equal playing field according to the rate areas not this foolishness of logos community estrangement HRM needs to be functional to grow

I only decreased the budget on one or two major things and that allowed me to pump up the budget on many smaller budget items. I think the budget on parks, road maintenance and economic development are important.

Efficient transit that gets you where you're going at acceptable travel times. If it can't compete with cars then people won't use it. Look into rail with busses to feed it.

Salaries in the private sector have remained unchanged in the past few years and those on fixed incomes have not received increases equal to the yearly increases in their property tax increases in the past few years. You need to remember these individuals at some point in time. Let them have at least 1year to not see any increases. There needs to be a realization that this never ending spending increases stops.

As a resident of Coles Rd Since 1973 I have lost respect for our local MLA as we are the forgotten street never replaced its a nightmare to walk 15 mins to get our mail in the winter. 90 percent of residents on our street are seniors . If I fall and break my one good leg someone will pay. We paid taxes for street lights before we had them.

I have suggested cutting many areas, mostly due to departments that already claim improved efficiencies, yet provide worse service at higher costs. On transit, rather than cut, try having users pay a higher percentage of the cost. As a driver without a choice, I pay my costs, parking, insurance, bridge etc., AND as a taxpayer subsidize more than half for those that do have a viable choice and can use transit.

This was a fantastic tool and did a great job showing a glimpse of the difficulties involved in planning a budget. If I could put budget money into anything it would be programming to explain the benefits of some longer-term investments like urban planning and public health measures which are usually looked at unfavorably compared to shorter-term projects with a much smaller pay off at a higher cost over time. Thank you to the team that put this together as I have never seen a tool like this before and I will be more likely to follow the developments of the budget for the city now.

I'm OK with a tax increase.

The Police are a joke who lay about in large tubs of fat; usually complaining about the amount of work they claim to do. In the interim, they funnel off the untraceable drugs and cash in their evidence locker. And FFS, leave the potheads alone; crystal meth is coming...

Firemen? Treat them well!

Office staff/management? Cut the fat.

Economic development and shutting down annoying public interest groups (ummm... I'm part of the public and do not support your group).

Good exercise in budgeting!

I appreciate this opportunity to share my ideas about how to budget for HRM services. I would like to add you should be looking at more efficient ways to deliver services at existing or reduced levels. This option did not exist in the survey. I think it's appropriate for all HRM managers to evaluate all expenses related to operating the budget. I've worked in Government and have seen first hand the waste that takes place and I know that departments can be run more efficiently. For example at the end of the fiscal year(March) I've seen managers sending unspent money on stuff that is not really needed. When I asked why not save the money and return to the government, I was told if they did not spend the full amount, their budget the next year would be cut by the unspent amount. Why are we penalizing managers for doing a good steward with the budget?
My thoughts on the issue.

I wish this budget allocation tool could allow me to recommend a 20% increase to the active transportation budget (sidewalks, bike lanes , multi use pathways, signage, maintenance)

Since fire calls are going down dramatically (but they want to maintain "their importance") cut fire and police down, don't bow to their PR pressures, same with Metro Transit - cut the vacation/sick days they get. Community facilities (for sure rinks) should be user pay. You didn't ask about debt servicing - assuming you have lots of that? IF you consider a stadium DO NOT use public funds - let those who want it pay, including the land and development charges. Don't ever again slide something like the correctional centre in Dartmouth onto property tax bills. Every cost you have is paid by residents...use it wisely.

Please contact me for further explanations if required.

I would also decrease Supplementary Funding for Education as it is no longer used as designed. Portions of Sup Funding are used for classroom teachers not enhancement of art, music or library as the fund was sold as. Teachers and the large salaries are a provincial responsibility

Spend less on transit. Expand roads with the taxes you receive from cars. Transit is a money sink

Municipal council pay should be cut to not more than 25 % higher of the lowest paid civic worker, be they municipal employees or contract workers. Councillors should be part time. On each development topic before Council each speaker and council member should have to divulge if they accepted and financial assistance from any developer, designer, constructor at anytime and be allocated a small specific time limit to speak and a short time to offer a rebuttal on all topics. This would apply on every subject and once they have had their opportunity, they not be allowed to speak again on the matter unless it's on an amendment, in which case they have the right to speak on the amendment once and a short rebuttal once.

Establish a moratorium on all development agreements.

Rewrite with explicit requirements and criteria for all future development agreements. With particular emphasis that not lot consideration will be permitted in existing zoned lands.

Allocate budget surplus to additional resources in planning until all existing plans are up to date, and the unplanned areas have plans in place.

No exceptions to any zoned lands

More community outreach, less policing. Halifax Regional Police and the RCMP can focus on sensitivity training instead of doing patrols. Prioritize other initiatives instead of improving roads.

I fully support an increase in the HRM budget if allocated to the correct infrastructure, safety, etc. services. Municipal office staff, support services and sport facilities should take a back seat to infrastructure until economic development in the area support it. We need to support businesses more and make it easier to open/own a business in HRM. Do not make homeowners who run small, home-based businesses pay additional property taxes, eliminate some of the red tape in opening innovative enterprises and support small business more. This will drive up overall incomes and property values making tax dollars easier to come by.

Ultimately I think our choices have to become more investment based rather than maintenance based. For my whole life I've watched the city sit stagnant. Condos go in, we add more car lots, businesses open and close but nothing really changes. We have some of the coolest natural features, we have a growing population but sometimes it feels like we're scared of development. Bloomfield sits empty, Shannonville has been rotting for decades and only recently started sitting empty, and we still have a coal furnace powering our city. It's time to become a part of the 21st century. We can't rely on Pier 21, the Waterfront, and the Citadel forever. We have one of the leading Marine Biology schools in the world, but no aquarium. We have an opportunity to get kids interested in science and turn a profit. We could invest growth in renewable energy, and put some investment and really push the farmers market and local buying. We could work on our education, system and start talking to the province about investing in more vocational schools, and starting the kids who don't care about academia earlier on a path that will lead them to success.

Cost of police and fire services in the long run not sustainable. Must get labour costs, including pensions for these groups, under control.

I believe Halifax's focus should be on infrastructure and it's expansion. It will be a beautiful investment to do because once we put the money into all these things we will have a foundation to support more broad projects. I think Halifax should focus on internet service and also environmental issues.

More family doctors

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion.

Good governance is not always finding new ways to spend money and expanding services.

Work being done in departments such as Planning and Development is a review of building plans, subdivisions and engineering documents completed by professional who stand behind their paperwork with liability insurance and integrity supported by their respective associations. Enormous savings of dollars, time and community frustration is achievable in this area. Transit is in bad need of comprehensive review to include route ridership, growth areas, the selection of vehicle types and how they are deployed. One only has to watch articulated buses trying to navigate narrow downtown streets or turning up Spring Garden from Barrington to know we can do better. Start thinking about all the activities performed by HRM employees that can be more efficiently completed by private companies and then ask yourselves "Why not?" This is a tough area to delve into but if you believe that one of your priorities is to be economical with the tax dollars citizens provide, this sort of discussion is not only needed it is essential. Companies both private and public are constantly trying to do more with less, utilizing technology to improve their delivery of goods and services, placing an emphasis on their staffing competence and ensuring the right people are doing the right things, accountability is paramount. Anticipating the challenges, threats and opportunities successfully is what separates the top and the bottom of all groups engaged in enterprise and HRM can be no different. There must be no departments safe from scrutiny and no policy set aside from review. Encourage citizen participation, ensure their general qualifications, this type of budget review is an excellent start but you must ensure that the collected survey results become public information or the effort will be seen only as public relations effort that did not create a response worthy of the public you are expected to serve. Thanks for this opportunity.

Nothing was mentioned about Halifax Water that is bleeding the system. Someone should find out how and where they are spending our money. Also whoever came up with spending \$100,000.00
On 340 people who supposedly can't speak English in Halifax should be fired and that decision reversed. There is affordable housing and shelters that could spend that money much wiser.

I believe the last thing municipal government thinks about is cost cutting when the economy is getting better. "The monies are there, let's spend it" This is the time when cutting costs of services are best made, during times when we are encouraged to keep the momentum going. Good breeds Better, Better breeds Best.

Interesting tool to show the public what the budget is like. The part I really cared about was decreasing spending on fireworks since they are known to be bad for the environment and wildlife, folks with PTSD and other mental health challenges. That money could be better spent ANYWHERE else. Also, let's give road repairs a bump and solid waste management. Our rat and litter problem is disgusting and the worst I've ever seen anywhere I've lived. I've never had the displeasure of living anywhere with garbage collection every other week and it is truly disgusting.

Let us make this survey more realistic. Allow us to give you feedback on longer term budgeting (over 3 year period). We can refine these numbers better

I hope one day all forms of government will be run by the people, all changes voted on by the people. The effects of cuts on the residents services is felt much more by the typical resident than an appointed government official who makes \$80,000 plus, the insight is just not there when you make double the median income of your constituents, you can pay for the resources you and your family needs to thrive, and many others can not.

Thank you, these would be my current priorities

It was tough but I feel, much like anyone who'd fill this out, my choices to be the correct choices. :)

Inflation in NS last year was listed as 1.1%, so the goal coming into budget planning was to allow an increase of about 1.1%. Priorities were services and/or resources used directly by the general public, starting with Halifax Transit. A revolution was suggested to provide free transit on weekends and holidays, which is affordable at a 6.6% increase from analysis (see digitalcitizen.ca website where I did this). A 10% increase was given to accommodate additional service, maybe a few routes, to accommodate the anticipated increased ridership, and to help it in making transit more appealing. Then services people can go to and use with greater mobility from free transit were given priority with increases. Some services that are minor parts of the budget were also given increases. Services less visible to the public, like preventative fire services and general administrative services were reduced and challenged to find improved efficiency through process improvement and prioritization. Not sure why comments with each budget item did not show up in the summary but hopefully they came through in the submission. Please feel free to contact me for questions and/or clarifications. Good luck! I look forward to seeing the final outcome. Thank you.

p.s. Great tool for public engagement and learning!

We feel here in the rural areas you don't even know we exist. You want our tax money but we get zip. We are very reasonable people who are still able to get around and are healthy..... but we see the elderly the young and the sick in our area and it is a sad state of affairs. It is not equal. We are not the same. If you can't afford us and make us equal then let us go. We were far better off before amalgamation.

I have a concern about the lack of full-time, substantial part-time positions in the public library system, especially the Central Library. If we want to create a base of experts, we cannot do it through 15 hours a week positions.

The amount on money spent on protective services (a large portion of the budget) may be better maintained and any increases to be allocated to sports, recreation, public art and other aspects of urban living that add an intangible benefit to our lives.

Increase in planning, given the firing of a recent planner, would be well-advised, as Halifax is on the road to becoming a concrete jungle. Human scale development appears to be lacking.

Halifax needs to be a livable city, not a world-class one. We do not need sports fields for pro-team or stadiums to hold their events. We need public spaces (see how busy the Central Library is on any given day), we need beautiful architecture (see Central Library again), we need green spaces, we need human scale development and we need to increase transit use. We have the money, now we need the vision to make it happen. May this council rise to the occasion.

An interesting and thought-provoking exercise! Thanks for the opportunity to provide input.

I feel that many services need to be improved but at the current budget. There is much waste and redundancy in many programs that can be trimmed to provide better services at the same cost. Our roads and infrastructure are too often in my opinion, receiving inferior work at too high a cost. Our bylaw enforcement and inspections services are not efficient at protecting the public and too often simply hinder business at an added cost not providing any benefit. Programs need to be evaluated by cost vs. efficiency, and money spent in the wisest manner possible as taxpayers can ill afford ever growing increases.

Enough taxes. We need to do with less. Wages have become over the top. Thank you

Seems to me increased taxes increasingly goes to projects that only higher income families and communities. More should and could be done for the elderly and disadvantaged, something that is not readily visible in this survey.

Would like to see some action not talk appears HRM Council &/or Senior Staff becoming incapable of moving HRM into the 21st century Economics of HRM dependent on the "Centre/Core Plan" yet years and years without any real progress Time for some innovative ideas ... including a total re-evaluation of transit if routes can't carry a reasonable %age of cost then drop or modify them in a timely and cost effective manner Maybe Shared Uber Like Vehicles would be cheaper than Transit Without Development then HRM will die a slow painful death ,, become the old folks home of Canada
Performance based pay scales/bonuses for employees for innovative ideas might help think outside of historical box

I have to be a good steward and spend and save my income according to what I make. These choices are made in a conscious effort to stay within my budget. Many of your constituents have had nominal increases in income levels in the past decades. I expect no less from elected council. Stay within your budget providing you have the funding to spend that budget. Do not borrow from our children adding to the debt.

Do less. Tax less. If you get out of the way and focus on a few things that will lubricate commerce (better education, better roads) things will get better on their own without taking more money every year.

I fail to understand where corporate tax rate cuts have benefits to citizens. This was promised. I say we tax major road projects to corporations that are showing profits. This benefits communities and strengthens corporate commitment in the area.

I also think that all the MLA's, Cabinet members and Premiers etc. need a decrease in salary knock them down to a average working persons salary we would save millions!

You spend too much money on wasteful things that are out of touch with the population of the HRM. You only care about the down town core and tax the hell out of everyone else. You slap all the busses onto Barrington and one for Dartmouth. Waste waste waste

And when council gets a study for wages by the people, and they say no raises. You give yourselves raises. You're all dirt. 5 million for a bike bridge off off the macdonald? How about fix the roads you tax us for instead of spending 5 Mil on less than 200 people. Morons.

Something has to be done about the traffic situation in the downtown core. It is a free for all that is a direct result of nonexistent enforcement. The rules are in place for jaywalking, illegal parking, and traffic violations. The monies collected could go back into policing and other areas.

Cut the bloat

As HRM is severely lacking in infrastructure to support opportunities for more diverse forms of outdoor recreation such as mountain biking, it is important for the municipality to begin allocating funds for this purpose. Investing in mountain bike trails which have a very low cost will not only serve to benefit cyclists but will open opportunities for hiking, trail running, dog walking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, as well as simple nature appreciation. Providing opportunities for more diverse forms of outdoor recreation will also have the benefit of improving both the physical and mental health of HRM residents. Further to this, making the low cost investment in mountain bike trails will make our city more attractive to both the residents we are trying to retain as well as those we are trying to attract. This in turn, will result in positive socio-economic benefits.

I would like to see easier/more access to free public events and services, including inclusion of those with disabilities (ie. New playground being built are great and they look fantastic, however they do not seem to be accessible to those with limited physical abilities). Preventative education, and responses need to start taking place in our city and our province, rather than a reactive approach. Training on mental health concerns and mental illness, as well as how to respond to those facing trauma, and survivors of sexual assault for first responders.

I think our budget amount is fine as is. The problem we have is the city being reactive instead of proactive and the waste of budget money.

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I'm comfortable with paying a few hundred dollars more per year in property tax. Having recently moved home after 22 years away, I have been shocked at how 'far behind' Halifax is vs. other major cities in Canada. The transit system is lacking, the roads are in poor shape, and every ounce of development seems to get bogged down in nonsense (i.e. Willow Tree, Prince Albert @ Glenwood). Halifax needs to assert itself as a progressive, desirable location. Encourage walking, please, and then cycling, and then transit, and THEN the car. Encourage development. Encourage density. Also, and I realize this is small potatoes, why must I pay for the right to pay for my parking? The arrangement with the Hotspot App is outrageous and unacceptable.

I would like to see the wages of MP's. I understand they have a big job but a lot also have other jobs. something has got to give and soon. My family is having a hard time paying the bills. the prices of EVERYTHING has gone up and wages have not.

Thank you

Unfortunately, I feel we have to reduce financing to all the various special interest groups. We can't afford it. Keep bureaucracy to a minimum and make all departments accountable for fiscal responsibility and finding ways to save. Take the savings and start spending it on the outlying areas - Rural HRM needs some attention: schools, roads, arenas & more. Great to see astro-turf soccer fields, 4 pad arenas, new schools being built in Halifax, Bedford, Dartmouth, but what about rural HRM? Our schools and arenas are from the 1960's. We have seen taxes take huge leaps yet we receive fewer services. I understand some of this is provincial but we would have the money to cost share these initiatives with the provincial government. Would also like to see an HRM-wide anti-littering campaign, if there was sufficient funding.

1. The Halifax municipal bureaucracy is way too big for the population served. Many officials are being paid way more than they are worth.
2. Councillors should stop accepting money from developers, it influences their votes on development agreements.

Sometimes you have to do what you have to do.

We need more for rural HRM. It is offensive how little we get for the taxes we pay. In our area you can't even bring up the new Halifax Library.....people are outraged at the opulence of it all when we cant even get a bookmobile. Let's not even get me started on the lack of internet service in rural HRM. You want everyone online saving you money (supposedly) but they can't get online. You love our tax dollars but you don't love us. It's pathetic. Let us GOOOOOOOOOOOO! We were far better off before.

The survey is a bit vague. I believe there is usually always a more efficient way to do things, work smarter, and improvise. Unfortunately the survey doesn't allow for more specifics of what is cost effective for each section. I think we pay too much for taxes already and people want too much. I don't mind paying for something but it should be good value for the money, I can't really see that from the survey any more than I can see who wastes funds at year end etc. It's nice to see some sharing of the budget info and maybe that will get more people involved and really start scrutinizing where and how all these funds are actually spent.

Staying on budget is important. Decreasing fire services gradually due to less fires and increasing funds from this to park and recreation.

We do not need a skating rink in the middle of the Halifax Oval. This is a great idea, but not important. Road repair, snow removal and sidewalk safety, and celebrating cultures in Halifax is important. We must fix what is broken before building new.

The only spot I would decrease funds is for the top heavy executives. Other than that give the fire dept. and police and other services all the help they need!!!!

Where is the additional \$1.7 billion HRM spends of the provincial transfer payments each year?

I am very disappointed with this challenge. Nowhere was there any place to increase funding to rural areas. Even increases in budget wouldn't mean more services for rural communities.

I have no problem with a small increase in municipal taxes.

Increase in property assessments will be taken from homes valued at 800K+ first. They will receive a 2X increase in municipal taxes first. Then remainder shared at all properties below 800K

I believe in increasing the budget 10% for all low cost/high impact programs. With these programs, you can have a tremendous positive impact with little additional funds. These programs are in a growth phase and should be supported as such. In contrast, allocating 10% more to high cost programs may actually have little additional effect. For these, rejigging expenditures and becoming more efficient would be more beneficial than increasing funds, which may not amount to much change. These programs are in a stability phase.

This can be likened to a typical household budget. The three big expenditures for most are food, transportation, and housing. Re-evaluating these areas is more important to long-term budget success than the dribs and drabs caused by other occasional expenditures. Support the low-cost community-oriented programs to tangibly increase health and well-being in residents and improve their belief in the government at the same time. Add more to the police, transit, and firefighters with no tangible outcomes or benefits to residents and decrease morale and belief in the system while such large programs merely absorb the extra funds as a matter of course.

Didn't see section for health care, new hospital and doctors

Please stop wasting money on the police. We are over policed but have poor public transit system. I bike to work everyday because the buses are stuck in traffic. And OMG...ya gotta get a bus to Prospect to serve the 333 hwy. Thanks, 4K in taxes per year just from me

Libraries, culture and recreation are so important even though some may not see them as essential services!

HRM streets, roads & are aging and deteriorating. More funding and effort needs to be put into Capital work and maintenance to realign the capital to maintenance percentages. The less funding for Capital work puts an increased strain on maintenance. Capital and Maintenance seems to be either cut or expected to function within the existing envelope. Development accept new assets on our behalf and the OCC funding doesn't seem to cover the ever increasing work responsibilities for ROC. We are often tasked with maintaining more with no additional funding and sometime even less funding.

Why waste money on repairing roads & sidewalks which are so far past their life expectancy. We are repairing the same roads year after year with ineffective methods because the deficiency rating should be placing them on the capital list. The capital list is so long it falls back to maintenance. Ideally maintenance should focus on assets which are approximately up to 60% deficient. Once an asset exceeds 60%, it should be reviewed for full or partial capital replacement. We are often band aiding assets with a deficiency rating anywhere between 60 - 80% and up.

Slow down the large developments which are taxing the already aging surrounding infrastructure. Take care of what we have first.

I would also like to make a suggestion pertaining to HRM gardens. They do a fantastic job and always look fabulous. However, I've often wondered why HRM doesn't use more perennials in the various gardens around the municipality. The majority of plants are annuals. Perennials would still require maintenance but may decrease the cost of purchasing annual seeds and the growing time/space involved. This could free up space in the greenhouses to allow for them to expand the amount of consumable plants/trees produced. More community vegetable or multipurpose gardens would benefit many. Offer basic information/training sessions to residents interested in learning to grow their own fresh fruit and vegetables. Any type of gardens are beautiful and could increase residents interest in 'Going Green(er)'. They could partner with Solid Waste to include education/awareness of

Work smarter. To much waste in government programs.

A passenger train from Sackville Bedford area and fewer bus routes would aid in easing traffic on the Bedford highway and magazine hill and save on parking as well as co2 emissions in Halifax proper

Whatever I went over in budget can be taken from a 5% cut to Justin Trudeau's salary, not tax payers pockets.

Transit is granted far too much money. They must stop building unwarranted infrastructure. Buses run empty far too often.

Would be nice to get a break somewhere! As a tax-payer on a fixed income, I experience the persistent negative effects of increased costs (for just ordinary living), affecting our family 'bottom line'. Already support ailing mother, adult child who has a disability; contribute regularly to community and support local economy wherever possible. Please 'pinch' in the right spots!!!!
Thanks