

From: "Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>
To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"
Date: 8/24/2020 4:36:38 PM
Subject: Answers to questions regarding city budget survey

Good afternoon Mayor and Council,

Please see below answers to the questions of Councillor Boyle regarding the Budget 2021 engagement that our Civic Engagement and Communications Department put together. Given that the survey is live, Civic Engagement and Communications would not recommend changing any of the questions as we would then have multiple data sets, complicating reporting and analysis, but this is helpful feedback for next year.

If you have any further questions, let us know.

Q: On tax increase questions, we are only asking about support for an increase up to 5%, but the staff budget outlook outlined a need for a 7% increase to maintain services. Why are we only asking up to 5%? And would it not be helpful to include in this question some context about what each of these numbers mean in terms of \$ amounts and in terms of services? So that the responses are more informed/meaningful?

A: Per the June 2020 Council report, staff were directed to balance the budget within a tax increase of 5%, so we limited options to within this range. We have asked this question for several years and the per cent tax increase options historically have been 1 to 4%; that was changed this year to align with Council's direction of "up to 5%". Historically the majority of resident and business property owners have been willing to pay a 1% tax increase to keep services at current levels (2020 Budget, p. 438; 2019 Budget, p. 380). We could consider including higher percentages as an option in future surveys but based on history we would expect the public support for increases over 5% to be very low.

Prior to the draft budget being developed, it would be very difficult to align dollars and initiatives to the tax increase amounts. We could help to educate the public that a 1% tax increase is equivalent to about \$8 million and give examples of City costs that total \$8 million, but at this stage of the budget development we are not able to outline what different percentage increases could look like, especially as Council will be providing that direction in the coming months.

Q: On the demographic questions, under gender it lists "transgender", but my understanding is that the city has been using language of "Trans, Gender Diverse and Two-Spirit" - why aren't we using that language here?

A: We recognize the language around gender, race and ethnicity is imperfect, and are in the process of reviewing as part of the City's Equity Framework. The options listed are the standard ones that we've used in Talk Vancouver for several years based on feedback from the previous 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee. In addition to transgender, we also provide an open-ended option that people can use to describe themselves in their own words: "None of the above. I identify as: _____".

Q: On the demographic questions, why is "Canadian" and "American" listed as an ethnic origin?

A: The current language for ethnicity is based in part on Statistics Canada Census Profile and what we hear from people when asked about ethnicity as an open-ended question. We include Canadian and American as ethnic groups because this is a way that people commonly identify themselves when asked to identify in their own words. As mentioned above, this question is the process of being reviewed and updated.

Best,
Sadhu

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Begin forwarded message:

From: "Boyle, Christine" <Christine.Boyle@vancouver.ca>
Date: August 22, 2020 at 11:32:54 AM PDT
To: "Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>, "Impey, Patrice" <Patrice.Impey@vancouver.ca>
Cc: Direct to Mayor and Council - DL <CCDTMACDL@vancouver.ca>
Subject: Questions from city budget survey

Hi Sadhu and Patrice,

Below are a few questions I have on the recently released city budget survey. Thank you,

Christine

1. On tax increase questions, we are only asking about support for an increase up to 5%, but the staff budget outlook outlined a need for a 7% increase to maintain services. Why are we only asking up to 5%? And would it not be helpful to include in this question some context about what each of these numbers mean in terms of \$ amounts and in terms of services? So that the responses are more informed/meaningful?
2. On the demographic questions, under gender it lists "transgender", but my understanding is that the city has been using language of "Trans, Gender Diverse and Two-Spirit" - why aren't we using that language here?
3. On the demographic questions, why is "Canadian" and "American" listed as an ethnic origin?

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