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Town of Aurora  
**Memorandum**  
Finance

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**Re:** Review of Proposed 2026 Budget Survey

**To:** Finance Advisory Committee

**From:** Jason Gaertner, Manager, Financial Management Services

**Date:** May 20, 2025

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## **Recommendation**

1. That the memorandum regarding the Proposed 2026 Budget Survey be received; and
2. That the Finance Advisory Committee comments regarding the Proposed 2026 Budget Survey be received and referred to staff for consideration and further action as appropriate.

## **Background**

An important component of the Town's annual budget engagement strategy is its public stakeholder budget survey. This survey provides important feedback from the Town's residents as to where their budget priorities lie. To ensure the Town is gathering this valuable input in the most efficient and effective manner possible, it will regularly revisit the tools it uses for this purpose.

## **Analysis**

Specifically, the Town's online budget survey feedback tool has been well received by residents. In 2025, the Town experienced a significant increase in participation compared to previous years; seeing its total respondents grow from 200 in 2024 to 308 in 2025. This has been attributed to two main factors: a change in the survey's creative design to a more engaging visual presentation, coupled with a specific outreach to the north-eastern part of Town which has traditionally been under-represented in past surveys.

In its ongoing quest to ensure that this tool's value is maximized, staff will regularly review the feedback received from its stakeholders on past surveys. The following key takeaways were identified from the 2025 budget survey feedback:

- The offering of a pizza dinner prize to a randomly chosen survey respondent was appreciated.
- There is a knowledge gap of the municipal services that the Town is responsible for providing versus others.
- There is a knowledge gap of how municipal budgets are built and funded.
- The connection between the cost of maintaining expected levels of service in an inflationary and growing user environment need to be strengthened.
- The importance of asset management and its large sticker price is not appreciated.
- Some questions were perceived to be biased toward a desired input (i.e. why didn't you ask me for areas where budget should be cut?).

With this feedback in mind, staff undertook a review and update of last year's budget survey. The revitalized 2026 budget survey is attached for the Finance Advisory Committee's feedback.

## **Attachments**

1. Draft 2026 Budget Survey
2. 2025 Budget Survey