



BUDGET 2026 ENGAGEMENT REPORT

November 2025



This report was developed for the Town of Morinville in November 2025 with full objectivity, free of pre-conceived notion or bias, and with the intention of supporting the Town's goals and priorities through this process.

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Executive Summary

The 2026 Budget Engagement survey was launched through the Town's EngageMorinville.ca portal in June 2025, with participation from **481 respondents**.

This year's survey is a continuation of a multi-year initiative to establish consistency across budget engagement, conserving core components of the survey from one year to the next, while addressing budget year-specific items individually. This allows for year-over-year trends to be identified, providing greater insights to Council and Administration on public sentiments, perceptions, and opinions in the short-, medium- and long-term.

This year's participation rate approached that seen in 2024 and 2023, each of which garnered input from 523 survey respondents. This year's rate of 481 responses represents a decrease in participation of 8%, though the actual difference of 42 responses is considered minimal, and does not impact the statistical validity of this year's survey. Based on the Government of Alberta's reported 2024 Morinville population of 10,753, the accumulation of 481 responses represents a response rate of 4.47%, exceeding the minimum valid sample size of 372 responses by a significant margin. This is based on a $\pm 5\%$ margin of error, appropriate for

a community of Morinville's size. All three years of the current budget engagement process have now proven statistically valid.

Council's 2022–2025 Strategic Plan addresses six core strategic priorities. Under the umbrella of "Community Building," Council stated a clear desire for the organization to ensure "residents and businesses are actively engaged in and are aware of decision making and planning our future." This budget engagement was developed in alignment with that strategic direction, with the survey developed against best practice and local circumstances, framed objectively and analyzed without bias.

Additional focus was placed on Council's strategic priority of "Financial Stewardship," focusing on the following key goal:

Public engagement results are used as an input in Council's budget deliberations, with results providing Council Members and Administration with valuable insights into residents' and business owners' priorities in service delivery, amenities, and organizational direction.



The survey was developed to secure meaningful results by providing an appropriate, yet manageable, level of context and information throughout. This helps to create a consistent baseline of understanding of current state and budget considerations for those completing the survey, helping to ensure consistency in response value from an analytics perspective.

This report looks at survey responses in the aggregate, with trends identified to place appropriate emphasis on the overall opinion obtained through engagement. This year's report is bolstered by a multi-year trend analysis, with this being the third year through which a consistent path has been taken. In this third iteration, the multi-year data begins to carry significant value in analyzing public perceptions, and changes therein, with value only increasing each year that follows.

Satisfaction Level Overview

Service and program level satisfaction rates act as an important indicator of resident experiences and perceptions around the services they receive, and often aligns with perceived value for taxes paid.

This year's highest-rated service areas, amongst all survey respondents, include Waste, Organics and Recycling Collection (86% satisfaction), Utilities (78%), and Parks and Open Spaces (75%). Meanwhile, the lowest satisfaction levels, by those who specifically used those services, include Economic Development (43%) and Winter Road Maintenance (50%).

One of the positive stories in this year's survey results stems from recorded improvements in year-over-year satisfaction levels, with only a few satisfaction decreases during that time (*Table 1*). Last year's survey saw five services/programs score a satisfaction level below 55%, compared to just two this year. Five services/programs held scores above 85% satisfaction.

For clarity in question framing, Budget 2025 survey questions branched so only those who used a service were asked about their level of satisfaction; Budget 2026 questions simply included a response of "Don't know/Didn't use this service," but all respondents were given the opportunity to share their satisfaction levels. This change reflects that while some respondents may not have used a service directly, they could still hold a valid opinion on service levels.

Most Significant Service/Program Satisfaction Level Changes YOY (2025–2026)	
Service/Program (# of respondents 2024/2025)	% Satisfaction Level Change
Wellbeing & Referral Services (26/34)	29%
Summer Road/Sidewalk Maintenance (523/188)	25%
Morinville Leisure Centre (264/426)	19%
Morinville Community Cultural Centre (241/52)	17%
Recreation Programs – Youth (249/41)	16%
Recreation Programs – Adults (145/52)	12%
Waste, Organics, Recycling Collection (523/417)	11%
Parks & Open Spaces (441/363)	10%
Recreation Programs – Children (249/66)	10%
Winter Road Maintenance (523/342)	10%
Economic Development (523/20)	–50%
Bylaw Enforcement (523/81)	–22%
Emergency & Protective Services (523/62)	–10%

Table 1. Overview of significant ($\pm \geq 10\%$) satisfaction level changes between Budget 2025 and Budget 2026 surveys.

Budget Feedback Overview

Finally, the Budget 2026 Engagement Survey included questions on municipal budgeting, including tolerance for a potential tax change, and associated financial allocations. Respondents expressed comfortability with a minimal increase, with the potential of increasing user fees to potentially offset taxes. Residents are overwhelmingly seeking maintained or increased service levels.

Why Engagement Matters

In addition to Council's 2022–2025 Strategic Plan identifying a commitment to resident engagement, this process aligns with current industry trends, driving increased municipal public engagement country-wide, as trust in local government sits at approximately 54%, nationally.

Studies point to the top reasons for reduced trust including a perceived lack of transparency, and the perception that resident voices are not heard or that they are not appropriately considered in decisions and operations. Each is inherently tied to communications and engagement, emphasizing the importance of processes like this engagement effort.

The survey was developed in alignment with the IAP2 spectrum of public participation, and the *Engagement With Intent* framework, with an emphasis on meaningful engagement that secures valuable results. It is for this reason that, when providing options for potential tax increases, for example, no option was given for a 0% increase; answers are realistic, and residents must consider the best response available, even if they do not necessarily agree with all potential outcomes. Further, this approach pushes the inclusion of contextual information alongside questions, ensuring a baseline understanding.

Efforts of this nature are critical to fostering a positive relationship between Morinville and the community, with a foundation of transparency and accountability.

Budget surveys of this nature encourage the reflection of community priorities in local resource allocation through the budgeting process, while also contributing to more informed and equitable decisions. Engaging the public allows Council to understand the diverse needs, concerns and desires of residents.

Finally, involving the public in these discussions enhances civic education, empowering residents by creating space for them to be active participants in governance. This collaboration can bring perspectives into the fold which would not otherwise be considered. Ultimately, effective public engagement is key to municipal success, stability and sustainability.

How We Engaged

The Budget 2026 survey was developed in June 2025, and then hosted in June and July 2025, through the EngageMorinville.ca public engagement portal.

The survey provided Morinville residents, business owners, and others of impact, with the opportunity to engage in Morinville's budgeting process, ahead of Council deliberations. The survey's timing coincides with Administration's drafting of departmental budgets.

Survey results being confirmed as statistically valid is not arbitrary; instead, it is rooted in sound data analysis, aligned with best practice in survey design, localized to Morinville's local context:

Confidence Level: 95% = $Z = 1.96$

Margin of Error: $\pm 5\% = e = 0.05$

Population Proportion (p): 0.5

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}{e^2}$$

Yielding a sample size of 384, corrected for finite population of 10,753:

$$n_{adj} = \frac{n}{1 + \left(\frac{n-1}{N}\right)} = \frac{384}{1 + \left(\frac{383}{10,753}\right)} \approx 372$$

Numerous methods were used to promote participation in the Budget 2026 Engagement Survey. Public communications were designed to reach people in all parts of the community.

A concerted effort was made to ensure survey communications effectively conveyed the importance of community participation, and encouraged responses from community members across Morinville.

Communications tools included:

- Morinville's website
- Morinville's official social media and other digital platforms
- Paid digital and print advertising
- Posters
- On-street signage and other physical materials



In My Morinville, I want a community that is adaptable & ready for the future.

RESILIENCE

Build a resilient, future-ready community to achieve economic sustainable practices, efficient infrastructure, and proactive emergency preparedness.

Enhance financial management practices to ensure the community's existing needs.

Support agriculture to ensure environmental, economic, and social security and strengthen community resilience.

WHAT IT MEANS



EXPLORE URBAN AGRICULTURE

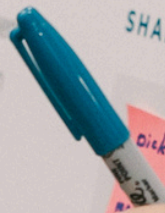


UTILIZE EFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE



PLAN FOR PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS:



pick up for

MORE

PLANT HERBS + VEGETABLES

SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS



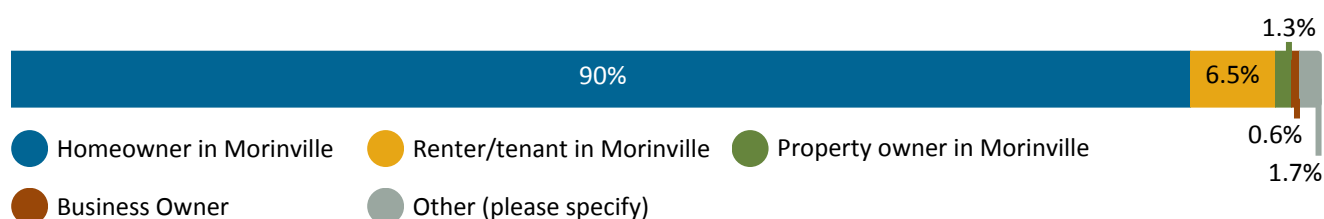


Section 1 – Demographics

Respondent demographics were collected to provide context to budget questions of pertinence, and focused on two core areas: age and living situation. The first three digits of participants' postal codes were also collected, allowing results to be appropriately framed geographically within the community. Additional demographic information was not deemed necessary for this process.

1.1 Local Connection

Respondents were asked what “most ties” them to the Town of Morinville. This means that someone who is both a property owner and a business owner in the community, for example, would have to choose one or the other. This approach helps establish the relevance of survey question responses.



Those who selected “Other” represented just 8 responses; those participants were asked to expand on their current connection to Morinville, resulting in the following information:

- Live elsewhere, but access/use Morinville stores, infrastructure, and amenities (3)
- Work in Morinville (3)
- Family lives in Morinville (1)
- Homeowner and business owner (1)



1.1.1 Postal Code Disclosure

As noted, participants were asked to provide the first three digits of their postal codes to help align satisfaction levels with specific areas throughout Morinville, in certain situations. This can be helpful, for example, in identifying where residents have a higher or lower level of satisfaction with services such as snow removal or waste collection, so that these inputs can be reviewed at a deeper level for potential causation or geographic correlation. In this case, however, little insights can be gained due to the constrained geographic area of the vast majority of survey respondents.

This was an opt-in question, for which there were 176 valid responses. Of those, 170 respondents claimed a postal code beginning with the digits “T8R.” Other three-digit codes included T8N (2), T9R (2), T8T (1), and T1A (1).

1.2 Age Demographics

Collecting age demographics ensures a deeper understanding of service/program perceptions based on potential participant needs. For example, someone in the age category of 25–34 will not have much of an opinion on programming for older adults or seniors. A shift in demographic participation from one year to the next is also important to note when looking at multi-year trends.

Budget 2026 Survey Respondent Age Demographics and Comparators				
Age	Budget 2026 Survey Representation by Age	Budget 2025 Survey Representation by Age	Budget 2024 Survey Representation by Age	Community-wide Representation by Age (Census 2021)
Under 18	0.2%	0.1%	1.0%	Combined 15–34: 31.7%
18–34	12.7%	18.6%	15.7%	
35–54	55.5%	51.2%	56.0%	35.6%
55–74	29.9%	28.2%	25.4%	26.1%
75+	1.7%	1.9%	1.9%	6.5%

Table 2. Age demographic representation amongst respondents of Morinville's Budget 2026 Engagement Survey, along with multi-year and census comparators.

1.2.1 Analysis

It is not surprising to see the highest level of participation amongst Morinville community members aged 35–54. This is typical in local government, and is often the result of the fact that this age demographic tends to be the most impacted by all areas of municipal services and programs, including as homeowners, parents, and children of aging parents.

Year-over-year age representation has remained relatively constant, with a slight decrease at both ends of the spectrum, both for those under the age of 35 and those over the age of 75. Meanwhile, there has been an annual rise in representation amongst those aged 55–74 — the group most proportionally aligned with Statistics Canada demographics.



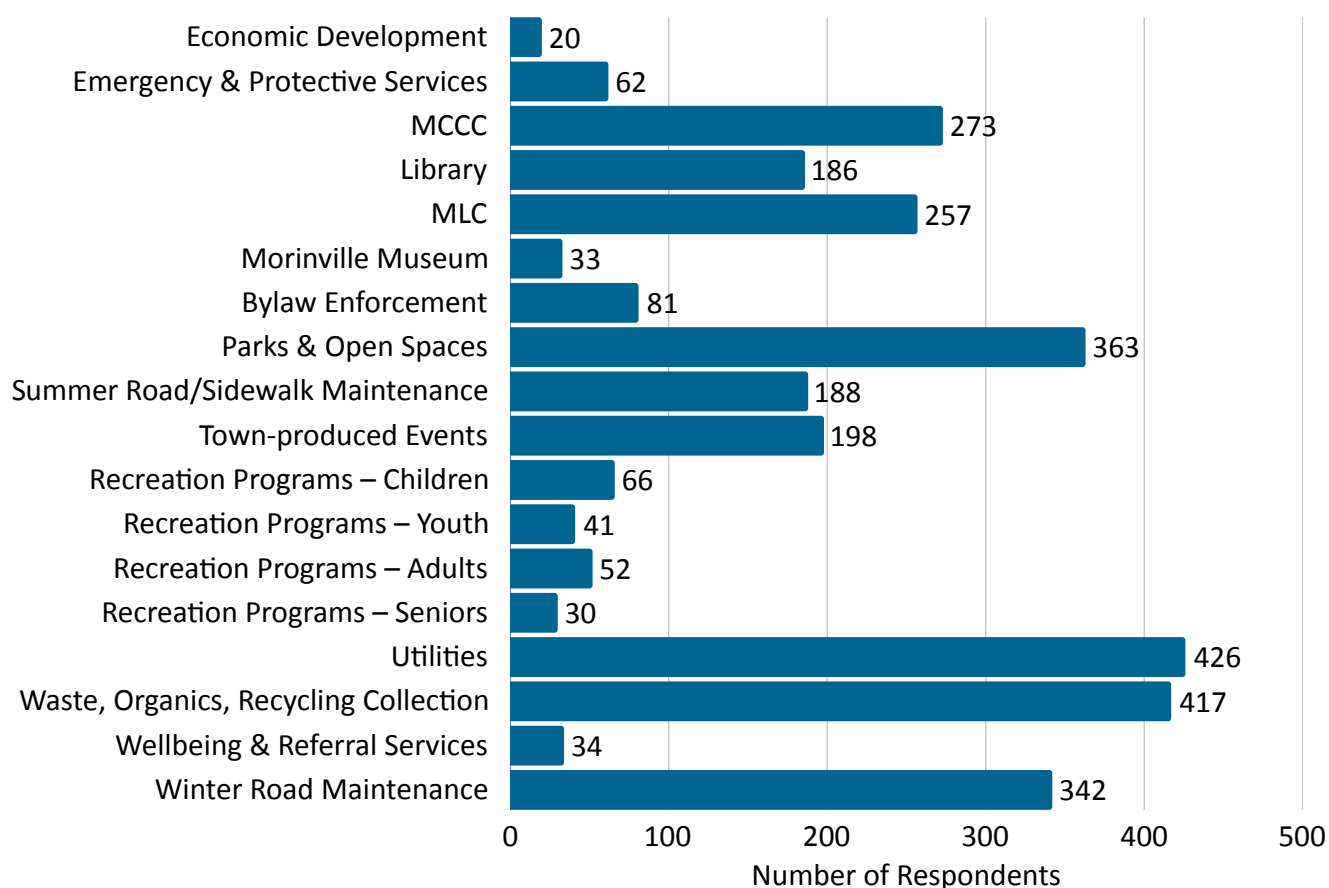


Section 2 – Service Level Perceptions

The following questions focused on services, programs, and amenities offered by the Town of Morinville, including respondents' experience in interacting with those Town offerings.

2.1 Service Usage

For each municipal service addressed through this engagement effort, respondents were asked whether they have used the service within a one-year (12-month) span leading up to survey completion. Those responses are outlined below, in the aggregate.

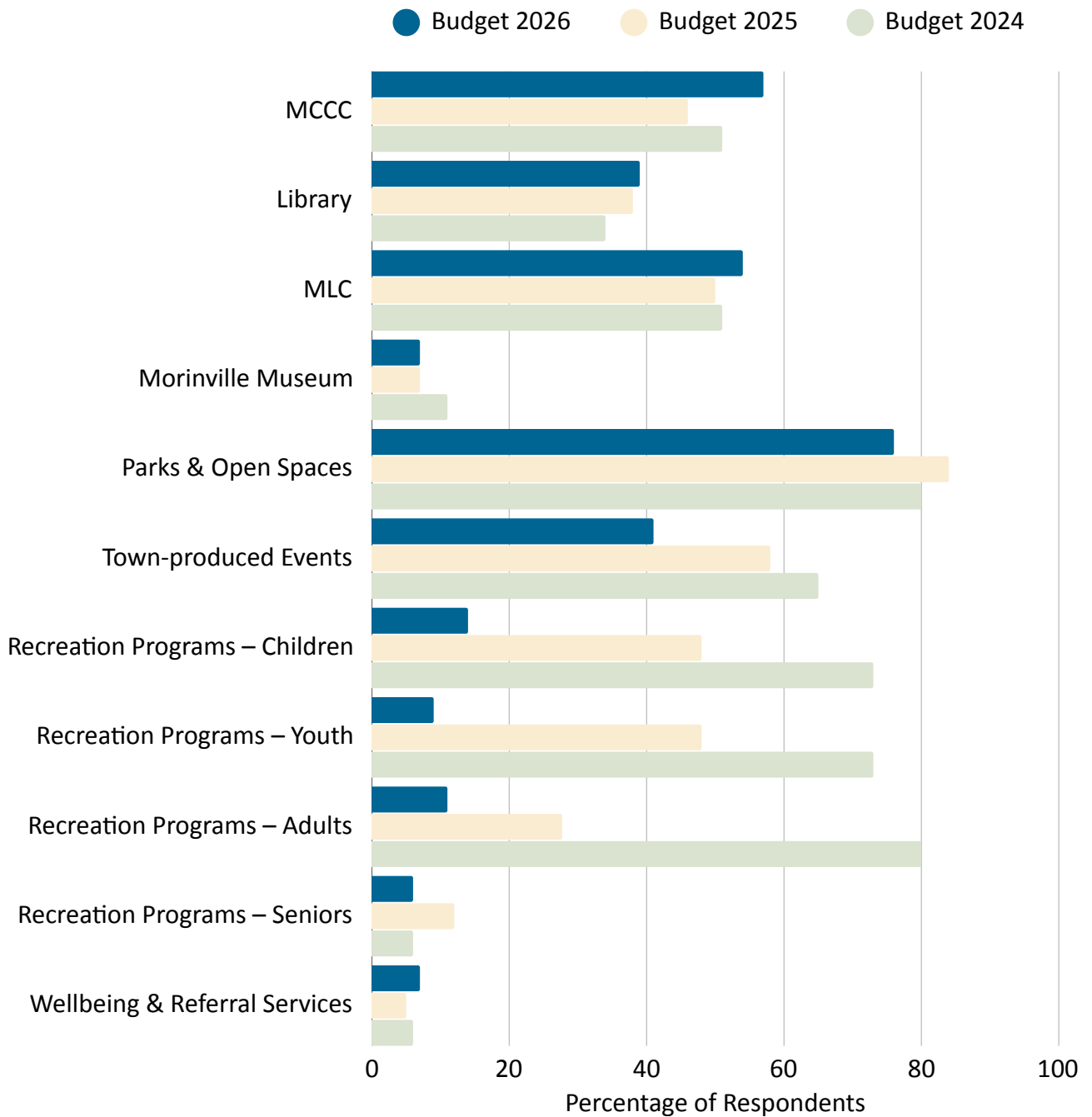


2.1.1 Analysis

It is typical that the most used services are those which impact the greatest proportion of a population, which holds true for Morinville, as seen through high usage rates of blanket-service or community-integrated services such as utilities; waste, organics and recycling collection; and road maintenance; as well as through high-use facilities and amenities, and public parks and open spaces. It is unsurprising, too, that the lesser-used services/programs are those which are directed at specific demographic subsets of the broader population, such as programming specific to different age groups; and those which are interest-specific, such as economic development, museum, and FCSS services.

The following chart represents service and program usage rates obtained through the Budget 2026 engagement survey, against levels identified through responses to the two previous iterations of this process (2023, 2022). Those services that were not evaluated for usage in previous years were not included in this chart, as they do not hold YOY comparisons; these typically represent those categories for which there is naturally a higher usage rate, such as those previously-mentioned blanketed services (ie. road maintenance, utilities).

Multi-year Service Usage Comparison (%)



2.2 Resident Satisfaction Surveying

Service and program satisfaction levels are an important indicator of resident perceptions around Morinville's community-facing operations. The results from the Budget 2026 Engagement Survey show that current satisfaction levels are notably high. There is no service or program for which the majority of respondents are dissatisfied, when looking at satisfaction levels amongst all survey respondents (including those who selected "Don't Know/I Haven't Used This Service"). When eliminating that neutral opinion, however, Economic Development stands alone in having a higher percentage of those who are dissatisfied, than those who are satisfied. The next closest split in satisfaction levels, when only considering those who are decidedly satisfied or dissatisfied, is a 50/50 divide around Winter Road Maintenance

Highest-satisfaction Services	
Service	Satisfaction Level
Waste, Organics, Recycling Collection	86%
Utilities	78%
Parks & Open Spaces	75%

Table 3. Top-ranked Morinville services by satisfaction level (%).

With this being the third consecutive year of the current consistent approach in survey development and analysis, it is now possible to begin to identify any significant shifts in service and program satisfaction levels year-over-year, as well as over an extended period of time.

This is complicated by a slight change in how survey responses on satisfaction levels were collected within this three-year span; in the past, satisfaction rates were only sought in alignment with those who stated they had used a service or program. This year, all respondents were asked about each service level, regardless of whether they've used the service or program. As expected, this resulted in a significant uptick in the ratio of neutral responses ("Don't Know/I Haven't Used This Service") received across all areas of service and program delivery. However, it ensures a statistically valid and proportionally representative evaluation of current satisfaction levels.

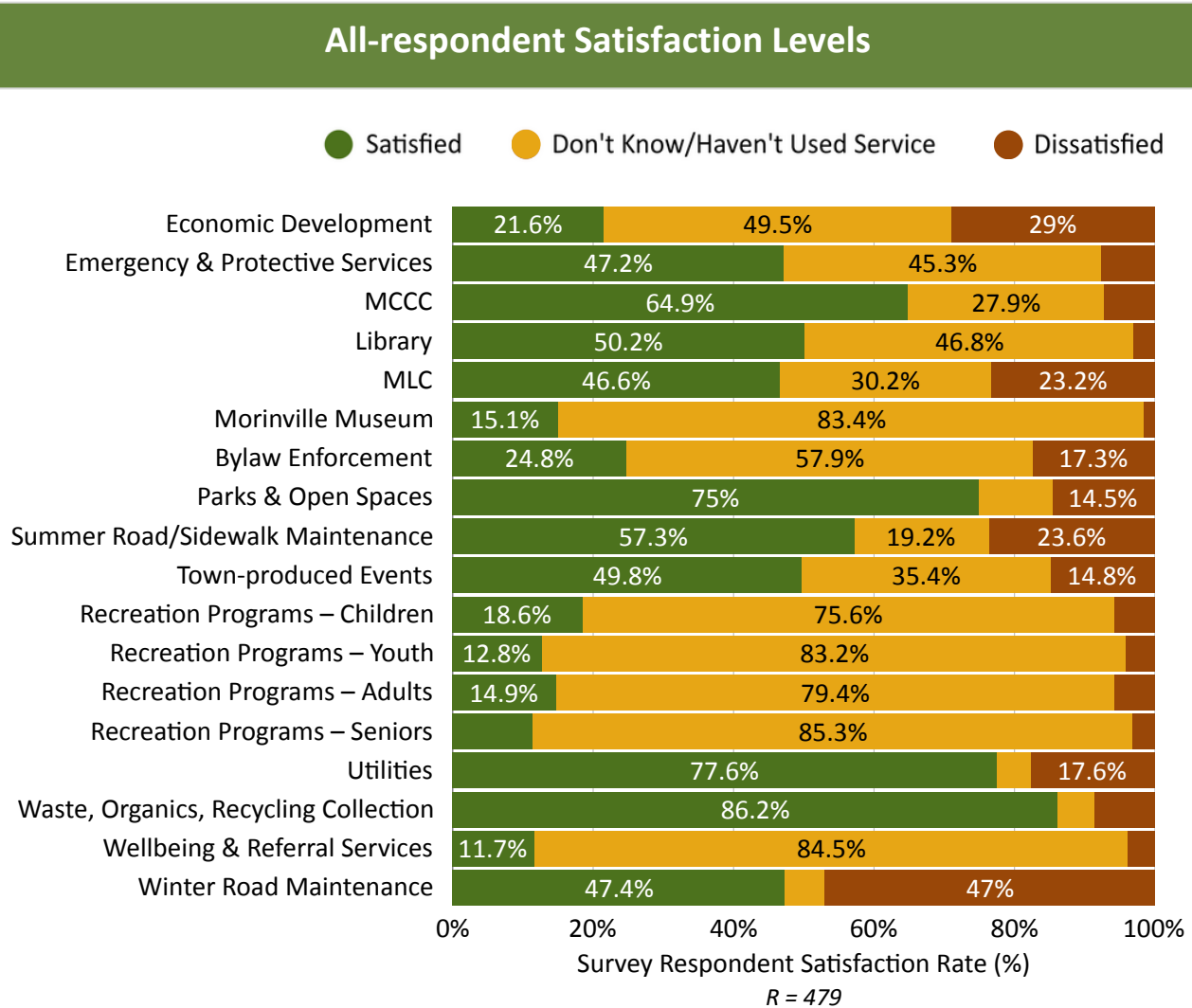
For example, the current satisfaction level associated with the Morinville Museum is just 15% amongst all survey respondents, when including the neutral response. When isolating the scope of service level satisfaction only to those who are either satisfied or dissatisfied, however, the Museum has a satisfaction level exceeding 90%. This discrepancy is easily explained through previously-stated usage rates. The 33% of respondents who used the Museum within the past year were satisfied with their experience. However, 77% of respondents did not use the Museum over the past year, reflected through the 83% of all respondents who selected "Don't Know/I Haven't Used This Service."

To account for such discrepancies, the multi-year comparison of satisfaction levels was conducted in consideration only of those who explicitly stated they are either satisfied or dissatisfied with a service or program, to varying degrees. This eliminates the inclusion of the neutral voice, which can be reincorporated in future years as the current approach to surveying is standardized. Certain services and programs, such as Utilities, are not included in the multi-year comparator chart, as they was not surveyed for resident satisfaction levels in previous budget engagement processes (but will continue to be included in future years).

2.2.1 Service and Program Satisfaction Levels

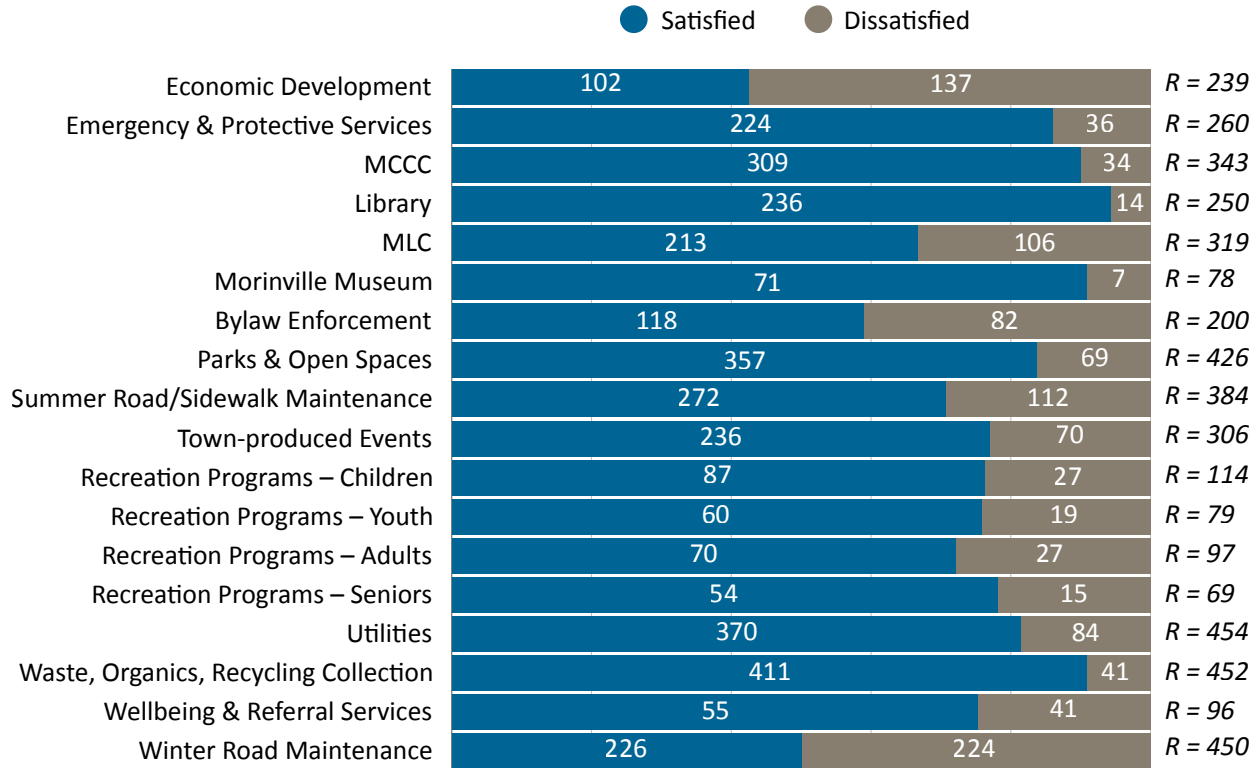
In reflection of satisfaction levels amongst all respondents, the following chart has been presented in two ways, with the first model accounting for all responses (including the neutral tone), and the second including only the satisfied/dissatisfied sentiment. This ensures an appropriate understanding of proportional representation amongst residents, and spread across service and program users, specifically.

Respondent Service Satisfaction Levels



Respondent Service Satisfaction Levels

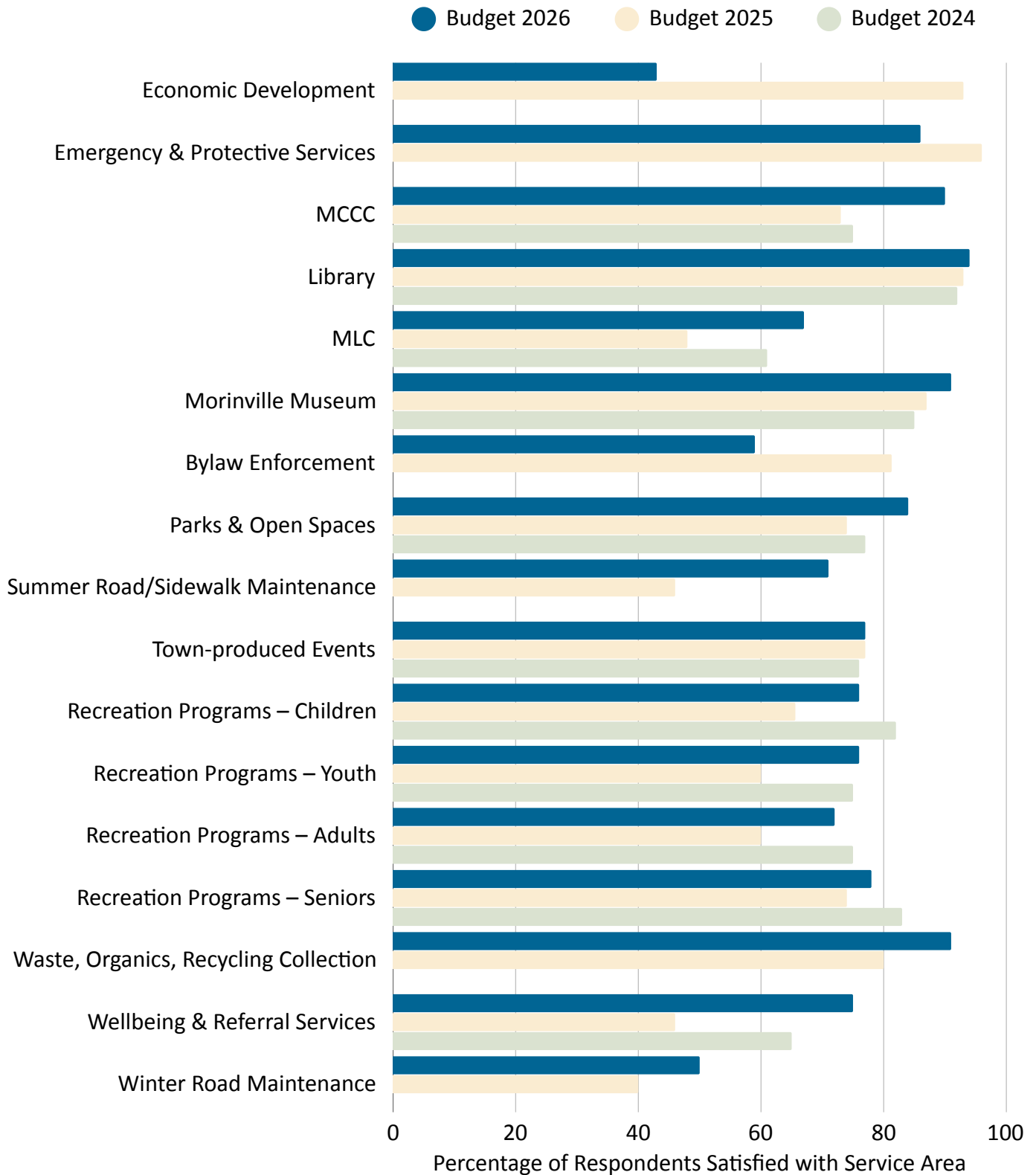
User-specific Satisfaction Levels



Survey Respondent Satisfaction Rate (# of respondents)



Multi-year Service Satisfaction Level Comparison (%)



Looking strictly at satisfaction/dissatisfaction rates, there are significant successes which have been identified in resident perceptions of services provided by the Town of Morinville year-over-year, looking specifically at rates identified in the Budget 2025 engagement survey, and those uncovered in the Budget 2026 survey. Many of these have included satisfaction level increases of more than 10%.

Most Improved Satisfaction Levels YOY (Budget 2025 – Budget 2026)	
Service	Increase in Satisfaction Level (%)
Wellbeing & Referral Services	29%
Summer Road/Sidewalk Maintenance	25%
Morinville Leisure Centre	19%
Morinville Community Cultural Centre	17%
Recreation Programs – Youth	16%
Recreation Programs – Adults	12%
Waste, Organics, Recycling Collection	11%
Parks & Open Spaces	10%
Recreation Programs – Children	10%
Winter Road Maintenance	10%

Table 4. Morinville services which saw an increase in satisfaction level of 10% or more between surveys conducted for Budget 2025 and Budget 2026, and the corresponding percentage change.

The biggest leaps in satisfaction level are seen in perceptions around Wellbeing and Referral Services, and for Summer Road/Sidewalk Maintenance. The latter of these two is notable, based on the level of dissatisfaction often seen for these services in local government. A similar story can be told for Waste, Organics and Recycling Collection, and Winter Road Maintenance.

Despite the multiple wins, there are a few service areas which have seen significant negative shifts in satisfaction rates. When this occurs, analysis is conducted across survey responses to see where other changes may have influenced satisfaction rates. For example, if age demographics were to shift dramatically from one year to the next, that can have a significant impact on satisfaction rates, based on what's most important to the dominant respondent group, which services are most important to them, and so on. No such correlation has been identified for Morinville's Budget 2026 survey results against those from the previous two survey iterations.

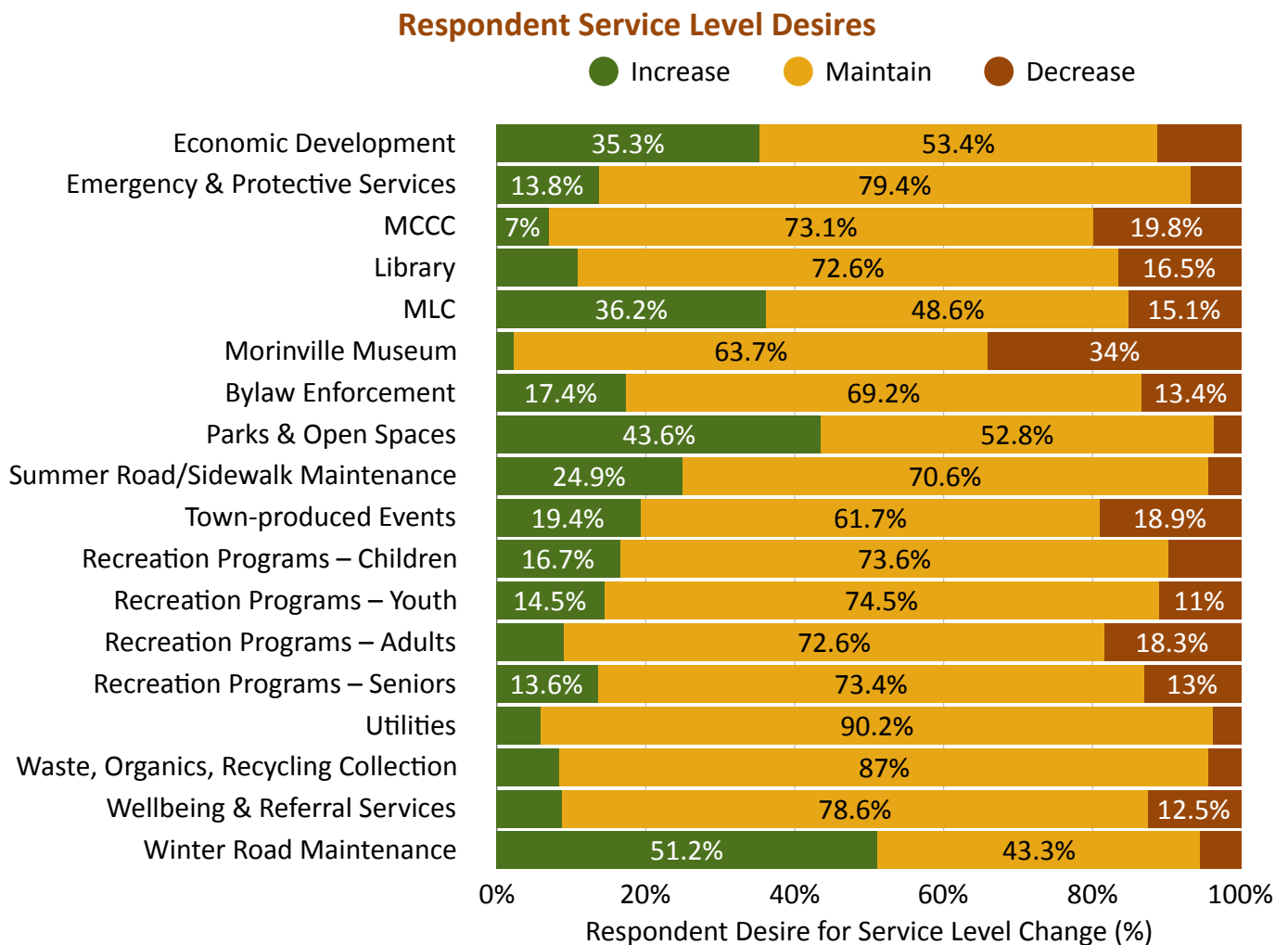
As such, there are notable shifts in satisfaction rates in a few areas that deserve greater attention, to determine if one year or another was an anomaly, or whether a driving factor in changed satisfaction rate can be identified. This is particularly true for those services which have seen the most year-over-year change in satisfaction level.

Notable Decreases in Satisfaction Level YOY (Budget 2025 – Budget 2026)	
Service	Decrease in Satisfaction Level (%)
Economic Development	–50%
Bylaw Enforcement	–22%
Emergency & Protective Services	–10%

Table 5. Morinville services which saw a decline in satisfaction level of 10% or more between surveys conducted for Budget 2025 and Budget 2026, and the corresponding percentage change.

2.3 Service Level Desires

The following chart represents the opinions of respondents on whether service levels should be increased, maintained, or decreased across the same service areas already explored through satisfaction levels.



2.3.1 Analysis

It is quite typical, as is the case in Morinville's Budget 2026 survey results, that the majority of respondents want funding levels to be maintained. It is equally common for very few services to carry a respondent desire for reduced funding levels; the lone exception in this case is the Morinville Museum (34% in favour of service level reduction). This appears to largely be tied to utilization rates, with only 33% of respondents stating they accessed the museum within the past year. Still, there are areas in which a significant percentage of respondents voiced a desire for increased service levels.

Areas of Highest Respondent Desire for Increased Service Levels	
Service	Desire for Service Level Increase (%)
Winter Road Maintenance	51%
Parks & Open Spaces	44%
Morinville Leisure Centre	36%
Economic Development	35%
Summer Road/Sidewalk Maintenance	25%

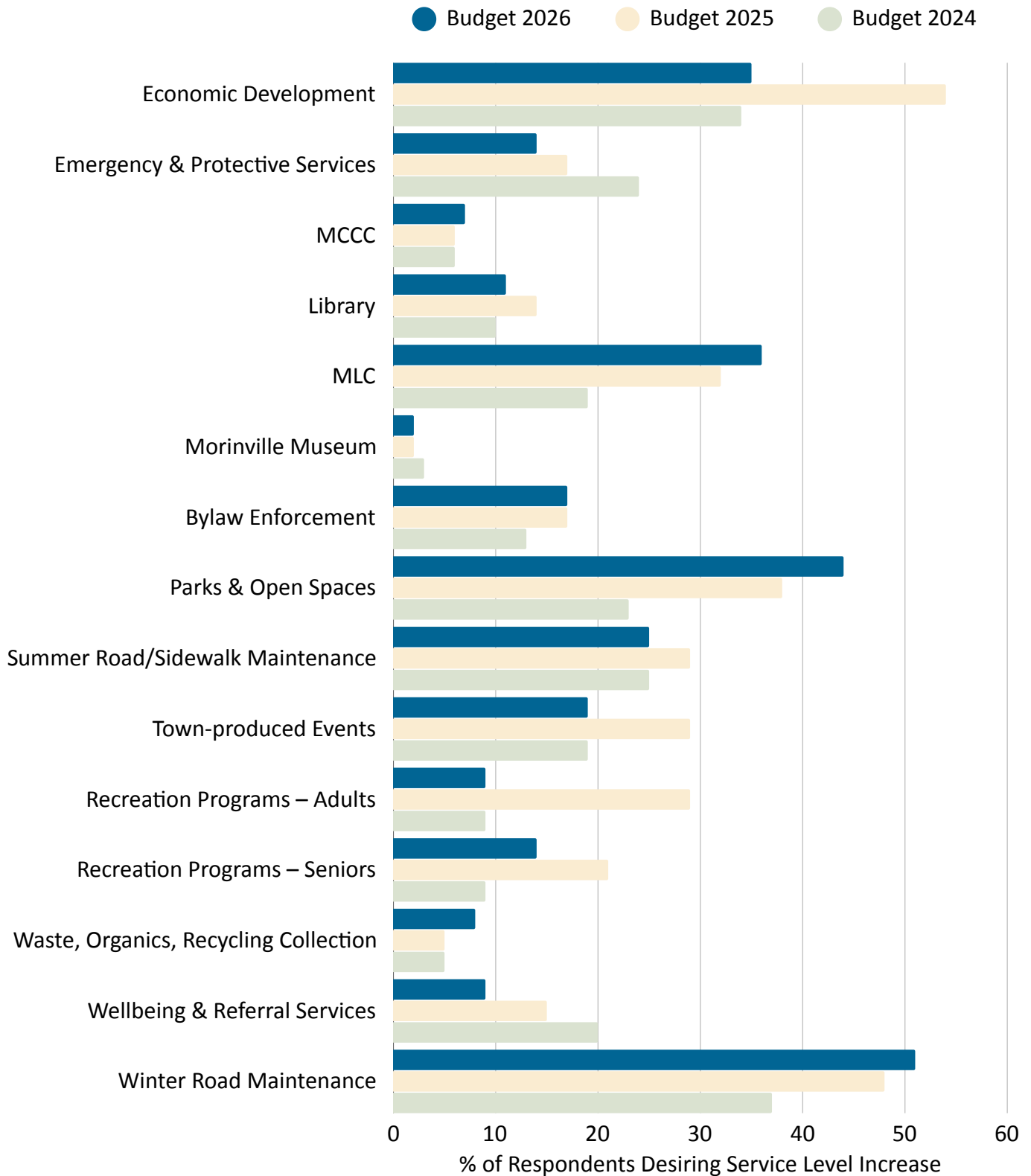
Table 6. Morinville services which saw the highest number of survey respondents who stated a desire for increased service levels, of 25% or more.

Interestingly, many of the services for which respondents expressed a desire for increased service levels, also saw high satisfaction levels (with the exception of Economic Development), and a strong year-over-year increase in satisfaction levels.

Multi-response View of Top Areas of Desired Service Level Increases			
Service	Desire for Service Level Increase (%)	Satisfaction Level (%)	Change in Satisfaction Level (%)
Winter Road Maintenance	51%	50%	10%
Parks & Open Spaces	44%	84%	10%
Morinville Leisure Centre	36%	67%	19%
Economic Development	35%	43%	-50%
Summer Road/Sidewalk Maintenance	25%	71%	25%

Table 7. Multi-response comparison associated with those service areas for which survey respondents expressed the greatest desire for an increase in service levels.

Multi-year Desire for Increased Service Levels (%)



2.4 Trended Service Delivery Feedback

Residents were asked to express any additional feedback they have on Morinville services and programs through long-form, open-ended responses. This question was optional, receiving 215 individual written responses, all of which were reviewed and analyzed to identify trends. Those trends are presented in the aggregate below, including a ranking of key trends which received a comment share reaching or exceeding 10%.

Trended Service/Program Feedback Identified in Qualitative Responses		
Theme	Share of Comments (%)	Overview/Description
Winter Road & Sidewalk Maintenance	39%	Feedback included concerns around street clearing frequency, snow removal practices in cul-de-sacs, and route prioritization.
Property Taxes & Perceived Value	28%	Feedback included dissatisfaction with tax rates, relative to perceived service value.
Swimming Pool	27%	Feedback included a repeated desire for a public pool.
Leisure Centre and Cultural Facilities	22%	Feedback included concerns about limited hours, and perceived programming gaps, with some stating the MLC is too “hockey focused.”
Fiscal Responsibility/ Operational Efficiency	20%	Feedback included concerns around perceptions of operational inefficiencies and administrative costs.
Road & Infrastructure Maintenance	18%	Feedback included reports around the condition of residential sidewalks, potholes, and drainage issues.
Bylaw & Enforcement Services	16%	Feedback was mixed, with some respondents claiming too many officers doing too little, and others claiming there’s not enough enforcement. Many comments focused on the need for enforcement of Community Standards Bylaw. Additional recurring themes included a desire for increased officer presence to help combat speeding, vandalism, and nuisance behaviours.
Economic Development and Business Attraction	13%	Feedback included a desire for increased downtown revitalization, a greater variety of retail options, and fewer liquor and vape shops.
Inclusive and Accessible Programming	10%	Feedback included requests for more programs on evenings and weekends, and an expansion of programming specific to youth and for people with disabilities.

Table 7. Trended respondent feedback associated with Morinville services and/or programs, identified through open-ended qualitative responses and ranked based on percentage of comment share.

Though less frequent, additional recurrent themes include:

- A desire for enhanced event and program promotion, through the use of physical billboards and signage, and outreach efforts to improve attendance/participation.
- Varying opinions on the Library included some advocating for increased funding, and others voicing a desire for less municipal support.
- Environmental maintenance, including a desire for increased tree planting, adjustments to Morinville's mowing practices, and increased availability of and access to garbage bins in parks and open spaces.

"Snow removal only once this past winter was unacceptable."

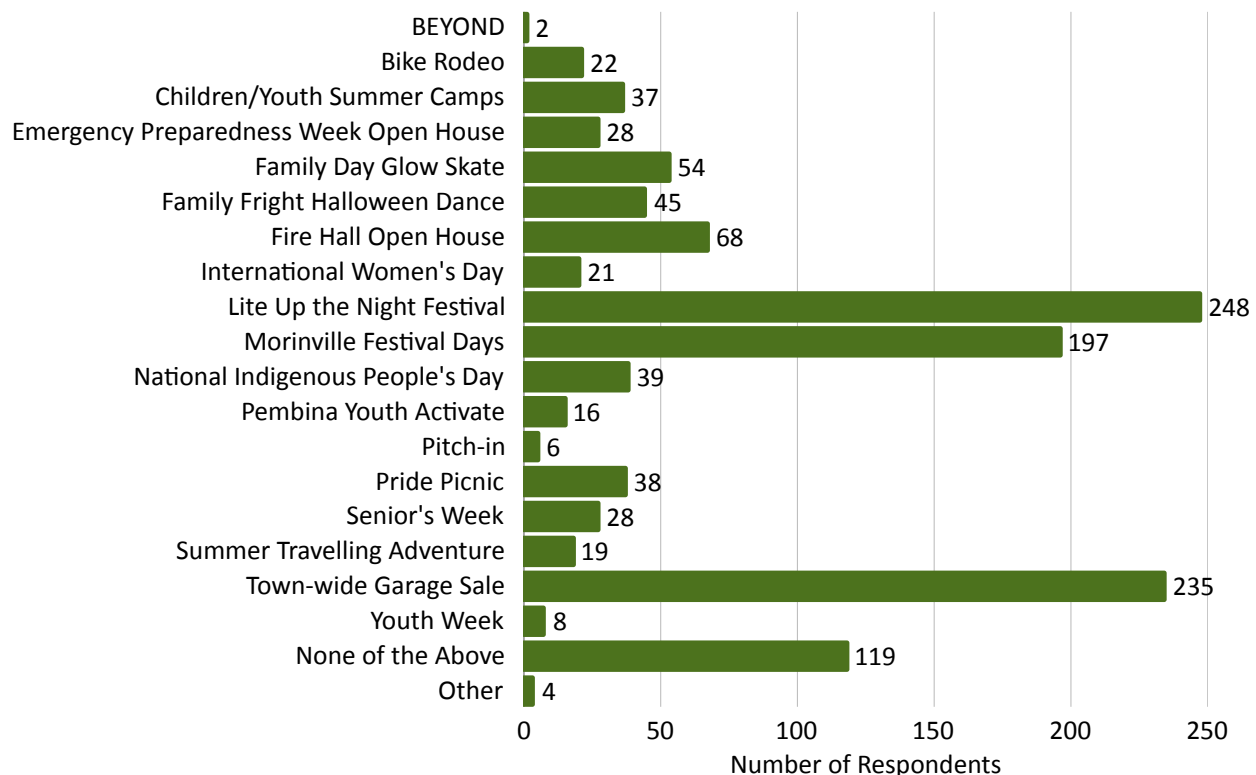
"The rate of property taxes for the size of property... (and) the services we get is extremely high."

"It's affordable now, but getting to where it's not (and) could see a decrease in population growth."

"Introduce minimum standards of curb appeal and building maintenance and upkeep."

2.5 Programs and Events

This year's survey explored opinions and insights on Morinville programs and events to a greater degree than has occurred in the past, in an attempt to delve further into these areas to a degree that proves beneficial in future operational planning. This includes, first, an evaluation of which programs and events are attended by respondents.



Those who selected "Other" were asked to specify additional programs/events attended, with responses including Large-item Pickup Day, Canada Day, the Farmer's Market, and opinions unrelated to the question.

As is the case with service usage rates, it is typical to see the trends evident here, where the more prominent events that bridge multiple demographics and user groups (ie. Lite Up the Night Festival) tend to attract higher levels of participation. Demographic-specific (ie. youth programming) and initiative-based events (ie. Pitch-in) provide great value to the community, but garner a lower level of participation.

2.6 Trended Town-produced Event Feedback

Similar to the approach to gathering feedback on municipal services, survey respondents were asked to express additional feedback on Morinville’s events. This question was optional, receiving 101 individual written responses, all of which were reviewed and analyzed to identify trends. Those trends are presented in the aggregate below, including a ranking of key trends which received a comment share reaching or exceeding 10%.

Trended Event Feedback Identified in Qualitative Responses		
Theme	Share of Comments (%)	Overview/Description
Event-specific Suggestions	32%	Feedback included suggestions for specific events and event types, including requests for more age-specific events (ie. adults-only, youth, teen, and toddler) and event types (ie. local run, Easter Egg hunt, and additional volunteer cleanups); and specific activities, such as a Midway, parade, and lumberjack challenge at Festival Days.
Ideological Concerns	21%	Feedback included some comments that carried anti-government sentiment, including concerns about “wokeness” and event politicization. Others supported continued inclusivity in events.
Fiscal Responsibility	13%	Feedback included some comments that event funding could be reallocated to higher-priority items such as infrastructure investment.
Increased Event Promotion/Advertising	10%	Feedback included that respondents don’t always know about events until after they’ve occurred, with some noting a lack of clarity on where to find event information.
General Appreciation of Events	10%	Feedback included a high level of praise to Morinville for hosting events that build community and encourage participation.

Table 8. Trended respondent feedback associated with Morinville events, identified through open-ended qualitative responses and ranked based on percentage of comment share.

Though less frequent, additional recurrent themes include:

- A desire for increased event accessibility, with some respondents sharing concerns of events being scheduled at times that don’t accommodate working families, including suggestions to hold them later in the day.

“The Community Services and FCSS teams do a fantastic job.”

“I love the events we have here. It really brings the community together and I try to attend as many as I can.”

“By the time we hear about these events, they’re already over.”

“As a child-free couple, it is hard to make connections with people at child-focused events.”

“I loved the Pride Picnic and am glad that the town has at least one event to celebrate Pride Month.”

“I believe many local events should be paused or significantly reduced to help prioritize affordability.”

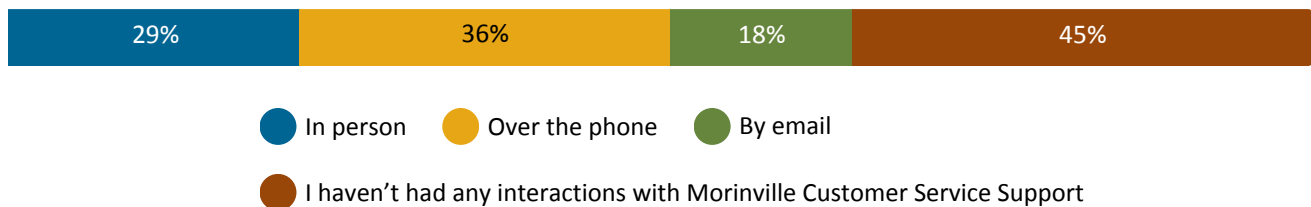


Section 3 – Customer Service

The nature of customer service has shifted in local government over the past five years, with many organizations beginning to focus on customer experience (CX) over customer service (CS), where CX Strategies are being developed to focus on consistent service, interactions, customer journeys, and overall experience throughout the organization.

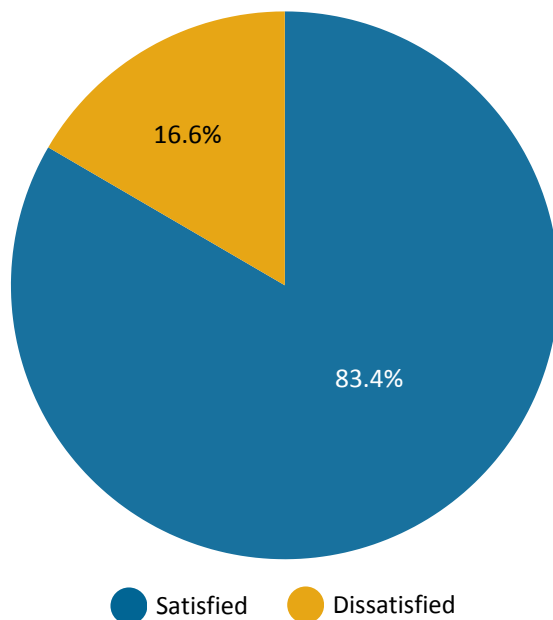
3.1 Customer Service Usage

As is the case with services, programs and events, this year's survey explored respondents' interactions with customer service over the year (12-month span) prior to service completion, including the manner in which customer services interactions occurred:



For those who accessed customer service through either in-person, phone, or email means, respondents were polled on their satisfaction levels in doing so, with nearly 85% of respondents selecting that they were either somewhat or very satisfied. This was not parsed out to identify satisfaction levels based on the manner in which customer service occurred (by phone, email, or in person), or the location/facility at which customer service delivery occurred, with the notion that the experience should be consistent regardless of method of interaction.

Customer Service Satisfaction Levels



3.2 Trended Customer Service Feedback

Similar to the approach to gathering feedback on municipal services, programs and events, survey respondents were asked to express additional feedback on Morinville's customer service. This question was optional, receiving 75 individual written responses, all of which were reviewed and analyzed to identify trends. Those trends are presented in the aggregate below, including a ranking of key trends which received a comment share reaching or exceeding 10%.

Trended Customer Service Feedback Identified in Qualitative Responses		
Theme	Share of Comments (%)	Overview/Description
Lack of Follow-up or Resolution	27%	Feedback included frustration that concerns, emails, or calls were not acknowledged or returned, and/or that concerns were not resolved.
Staff Friendliness	24%	Feedback included descriptions of frontline staff as pleasant, friendly, professional, and polite, even when issues weren't fully resolved.
Technological/ Website-specific Challenges	13%	Feedback included that respondents had trouble finding information on the website (ie. facilities, bylaws), or found navigating the website to be confusing. Others shared challenges in using the phone system, including making incorrect selections, or being disconnected while being transferred.
Rude or Unhelpful Staff	11%	Feedback included that some respondents felt dismissed, or that they were treated unfairly by staff.

Table 9. Trended respondent feedback associated with Morinville customer service, identified through open-ended qualitative responses and ranked based on percentage of comment share.

Though less frequent, additional recurrent themes included:

- Constructive suggestions, such as adding suggestion boxes, providing lunch-hour service coverage, ensuring that customer service representatives are informed of programs and initiatives happening across the organization, and overall improved communication with customers after a concern or request is submitted.
- An acknowledgement of not having known there was a way to access Morinville customer support.

"Staff are always pleasant... I am not always satisfied with the results."

"Great work when reporting a bylaw and had it taken care of quickly!"

"They take concerns under advisement and that's the last anyone hears of it."

"I found glass at the playground... didn't get a response but it was cleaned up in a few days."

"Pleasant conversation and received the information I needed."

"Phone lines never connect you to the right person or division."

"I had to speak with one of the people at the counter and she was very friendly and helpful."



Section 4 – Municipal Budgeting

In addition to exploring different areas of municipal service delivery, survey respondents were provided context going into, and asked questions on their preferences related to, various considerations tied to Morinville’s Budget 2026. Included within this is an assessment of current public priorities, as follows.

Ranked Respondent Priorities		
1	Minimizing property taxes in the future	42.0%
2	Economic development and business attraction	15.3%
3	Ensuring future growth is well planned	12.6%
4	Addressing local infrastructure needs	9.5%
5	Ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability	8.6%
6	Maintaining or increasing service levels	8.6%
7	Other	3.2%

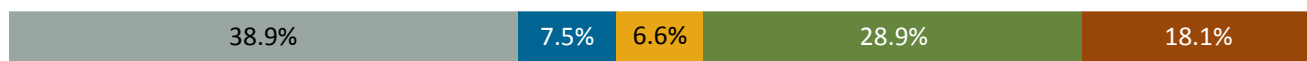
Table 10. Ranked respondent priorities identified through the Budget 2026 engagement survey.

Those who selected “Other” were asked to expand by specifying their priority, with the following areas of focus specified by those respondents:

- Combination of multiple ranked priorities (5)
- Increased service levels (1)
- Swimming pool (4)
- Fiscal responsibility (2)
- Road maintenance and repair (1)
- Family-oriented community planning (2)
- Maintaining “small-town feel” (1)
- Community Standards Bylaw (1)

Prioritization is also identified by looking at areas of focus associated with potential changes to taxation.

Tax change tolerance aligned with budget focus (%)



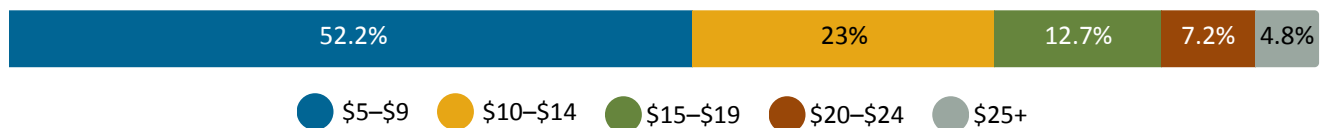
- I would like to see service levels maintained and immediate infrastructure needs met. I understand this could still require a small tax increase.
- I would like to see service delivery reduced and infrastructure costs pushed to future years, to minimize or eliminate any tax increase now. I recognize this could result in higher tax increases in the future.
- I would like to see priority given to service delivery over infrastructure needs. I understand that could reduce the short-term tax increase, but could result in higher infrastructure demands (and costs) in the future.
- I would like to see priority given to infrastructure needs over service delivery. I understand this could reduce a potential tax increase, but that it could result in service decreases.
- I would like to see service level improvements and appropriate infrastructure funding. I understand this could require a moderate tax increase.

The previous and following questions were supported by a fair amount of context on municipal budgeting:

Over the past several years, Morinville—like all municipalities across Alberta and Canada—has faced growing financial pressures, including rising infrastructure and maintenance costs, inflation, emergency preparedness needs, and changes in funding responsibilities across orders of government. Municipalities are legally required to balance their budgets each year, meaning every decision about maintaining services or investing in infrastructure must be weighed against available funding and the potential impact on taxes. We know the following options may not perfectly reflect your views, but please choose the one that comes closest to your perspective on how Morinville should approach Budget 2026.

Over time, the costs to deliver services and maintain infrastructure continue to rise due to inflation, aging infrastructure and changing responsibilities between levels of government. Simultaneously, Morinville is working to reduce its infrastructure deficit and ensure we can fund future growth. A property tax increase—however modest—is part of Morinville’s long-term financial strategy to maintain service levels and address critical infrastructure needs. For this reason, options starting at \$0 are not included as they would not reflect a sustainable or realistic approach to budgeting. In alignment with your response to the above question, what increase would you be most comfortable with to see services maintained or improved, and/or infrastructure adequately funded, in terms of monthly dollar spend?

Dollar value tax change tolerance (\$/month)



This dollar value tax change tolerance marks somewhat of a departure from what was seen in years past. While those expressing a willingness for an adjusted monthly rate of \$25+ remained relatively constant, the percentage of respondents who selected \$20–\$24/month rose by 1.2% and \$15–\$19/month rose 1.3%. This year’s survey introduced a new category of \$5–\$9/month, in response to those respondents last year who believed that a starting value of \$10 was too high. With this new option added, the percentage of respondents who selected \$10–\$14/month fell from 77.5% to 23%. This final figure is considered significant, given that 47.8% of respondents selected a monthly dollar value increase of \$10 or more. Additionally, where only 22.5% of respondents to the Budget 2025 survey selected a monthly dollar value increase of \$15 or more, that number rose to nearly 25% of respondents for Budget 2026.

Specific to this year’s survey, respondents were also asked whether they support “modest increases” to user fees, if increasing these fees would reduce Morinville’s reliance on property taxes, or offset potential tax increases. Overwhelmingly (64.2%), respondents said they support such action. When eliminating the 11% of respondents who selected “No opinion,” and looking only at those who said they do or do not support fee increases, the ratio of supporters increases to 72.1% of respondents.

Monetary value tax change tolerance (\$/month)



4.1 Trended Budgeting Feedback

Similar to the approach to gathering feedback on other areas explored through this year's survey, respondents were asked to express additional feedback on Morinville's customer service. This question was optional, receiving 184 individual written responses, all of which were reviewed and analyzed to identify trends. Those trends are presented in the aggregate below, including a ranking of key trends which received a comment share reaching or exceeding 10%.

Trended Customer Service Feedback Identified in Qualitative Responses		
Theme	Share of Comments (%)	Overview/Description
Property Taxes & Perceived Value	69%	Feedback included frustrations with perceived high property tax rates, with many perceptions that tax levels are not justified by current service levels and rate of infrastructure improvement.
Desired MLC Changes	29%	Feedback included a desire for MLC hours to be expanded again. Respondents expressed a desire for the construction of an indoor pool at the MLC, with many stating they'd be willing to pay more in taxes to see this accomplished.
Fiscal Responsibility & Operational Efficiency	25%	Feedback included concerns around the current level of fiscal responsibility and operational efficiencies in spending.
Economic Development	18%	Feedback included a desire for the attraction of more diverse and sustainable businesses to the community.
Equity in User Fees	13%	Feedback included support for increased user fees, with suggestions to subsidize access for low-income households, or to implement discounted rates based on local residency.
Infrastructure Maintenance	15%	Feedback included a desire for increased maintenance of local roads and sidewalks, improvements to snow clearing and winter maintenance efforts, and increased downtown revitalization.

Table 11. Trended respondent feedback associated with Morinville's Budget 2026, identified through open-ended qualitative responses and ranked based on percentage of comment share.

Though less frequent, additional recurrent themes included:

- Requests for public transit, including a desired bus or shuttle service to St. Albert, with specific mention of the value proposition for seniors and youth.

"Our taxes are almost as high as St. Albert's, but we don't give near the service they do."

"I would support a tax increase for a pool."

"We need more businesses that pay taxes to reduce the residential burden."

"Support fee increases, but protect access for low-income families."

"Cut wasteful spending first before asking residents for more money."



Section 5 – Final Analysis

Results of the Budget 2026 Engagement Survey offer a strong cross-section of public sentiment, supported by statistically valid participation and a multi-year dataset for deeper understanding of trends in community priorities, satisfaction levels, and budget expectations. Though analysis on engagement results is included throughout this report, there are a number of broader areas of consideration not yet acknowledged. These include analysis across all sections, holistically, along with multi-year trend identification. One such area is the evolution of community priorities, reviewed over the term of the past three years:

Multi-year Comparison of Respondents' Ranked Priorities				
Ranked Respondent Priorities	Budget 2026 Ranking	Budget 2025 Ranking	Budget 2024 Ranking	Average Ranking (Rounded)
Minimizing property taxes in the future	1	1	1	1
Economic development and business attraction	2	2	2	2
Ensuring future growth is well planned	3	5	5	5
Addressing local infrastructure needs	4	3	6	5
Ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability	5	4	3	4
Maintaining or increasing service levels	6	6	4	6
Other	7	7	7	7

Table 12. Ranked respondent priorities comparison across three years of budget engagement surveys, associated with Budget 2024, 2025 and 2026.

Multi-year analysis of community priorities shows certain areas of clear consistency, including that the No. 1 and 2 ranked priorities (minimizing property taxes in the future; economic development and business attraction) have maintained their positions across all three years of analyzed surveys. Comments on each of these topics, across all three years, have been largely consistent, though the two have come together more each year. From one year to the next, there has been a general desire for minimized property taxes (and increased value for taxes), and for greater diversity in local business attraction. Then, in the Budget 2025 survey, and more emphatically in the Budget 2026, residents have begun stating a desire for greater economic development to grow Morinville's commercial tax base to support offsetting residential taxation.

On economic development, there is a desire for increased investment recorded in each of the three survey years. For Budget 2024, 34% of respondents supported increased investment in economic development, followed by 54% for Budget 2025, and dipping back down to 35% for Budget 2026. While this makes the Budget 2025 desire for increased service level investment somewhat anomalous, also speaks to overall consistency in resident desires.

Outside of top priorities, rankings have shifted from one year to the next. “Ensuring future growth is well planned,” for example, climbed by two spots this year, from where it was in the previous two years, while “Addressing local infrastructure needs” fell by one spot from Budget 2025 and two spots from Budget 2024. “Ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability” has taken a back seat, falling one spot each year since the Budget 2024 engagement, now landing in fifth place. Finally, “Maintaining or increasing service levels” has now held the No. 6 spot for two consecutive years, previously falling two spots between Budget 2024 and Budget 2025 engagement. This comes with associated shifts in public sentiment:

Positive Changes in Perceptions of Morinville Services	
Service	Overview
Morinville Leisure Centre (MLC)	Improved public sentiment in both public satisfaction and public demand suggests progress in programming, hours, and/or overall perception through increased usage.
Wellbeing and Referral Services	Increased satisfaction in the utilization of services such as those provided by FCSS, are most commonly linked to increased usage rates. That is not the case for Morinville, instead suggesting growing appreciation amongst users, and improved visibility.
Winter Road Maintenance	While winter road maintenance remains an area of low satisfaction, the year-over-year increase in satisfaction level is encouraging. Written responses still show a high level of frustration with snow clearing, specifically, which is further supported by a desire for increased service levels. However, the YOY gains are indicative of progress.
Negative Changes in Perceptions of Morinville Services	
Economic Development	A sharp drop in satisfaction (from 93% to 43%) warrants deeper exploration, with EcDev remaining a top public priority. This may signal frustration with a lack of recent progress, supported by qualitative responses that see bolstered economic development as an opportunity to grow Morinville’s non-residential tax base.
Bylaw Enforcement	Falling in satisfaction by 22% year-over-year, bylaw enforcement may be hampered by some more visible elements of the role. This is tied to survey respondents’ written answers which stated a desire for improved enforcement of the Community Standards Bylaw and increased traffic enforcement.
Emergency Services	Satisfaction levels associated with Emergency Services are often directly tied to visibility, though there are times at which it’s based on responsiveness. The significant scope of wildfires throughout Alberta in 2023 shined a light on emergency services across the province, and resulted in an overall uptick in public satisfaction of emergency services across municipalities. That has since tapered off, and the lack of any major events in Morinville, while a positive, may be the reason for decreased satisfaction rates.

Table 13. Evaluation of key year-over-year service satisfaction level changes.

Taxation, meanwhile, continues to be a point of contention, as it has been across annual surveys. While residents gave thoughtful consideration to various scenarios for Budget 2026 quantitatively, over two-thirds of written responses about budget expressed dissatisfaction with perceived property tax value. While this may simply be tied to current service levels, the satisfaction rates identified through this survey point to the majority of residents being satisfied with current service provision (with the exception of a couple of areas). Further, respondents noted a desire for maintained service levels across most areas—again, with a few notable exceptions. Without further analysis, it’s difficult to pinpoint the resulting disconnect between satisfaction levels and perceived value for tax dollars; however, one consistent in other communities has been a communications challenge.

Residents are open to paying more when value is evident, but many are unclear about how existing funds are allocated or how budget decisions translate to tangible outcomes. This is often the case in areas like Morinville, where a significant amount of infrastructure investment is required, not all of which are immediately clear to residents. A continued emphasis on budget literacy, spending transparency, and reporting back to the public on how tax dollars are used can help to address this disconnect.

Going back to service level desires, it is typical that areas of low satisfaction are accompanied by a desire for increased investment or service levels, as is the case with economic development. However, there are a few areas in which a desire for increased service levels is being expressed in areas where satisfaction levels is already high.

Desire for Increase Services in High-satisfaction Areas		
Service	Satisfaction Level	Desire for Increased Service Levels
Parks & Open Spaces	84%	44%
MLC	67%	36%
Summer Road/Sidewalk Maintenance	71%	25%

Table 14. High-satisfaction service areas with notable desire for service level increases.

This suggests that while residents appreciate current performance, they may also hold increasing service level demands. This is likely the case for the MLC, for instance, where written comments related to the Leisure Centre often alluded to a desire for even greater hours of operation, and expanded programming and amenities. It is also possible that the desire for increased service levels stems from the frequent request for an indoor pool, despite residents being happy overall with what is currently offered at the MLC.

Conversely, simultaneously high satisfaction levels and desires for increased service levels may simply be the result of desired growth. Where residents are already satisfied, they have identified opportunities for improvement despite being generally happy, so that their experience continues to be good in the future. When it comes to Parks and Open Spaces, for instance, residents noted a desire for more garbage bins.

Desires around Summer Road and Sidewalk Maintenance, meanwhile, are likely tied to individual experiences; in the comments, for example, some residents noted specific issues with the sidewalk in front of their homes, while others acknowledged potholes that are likely annoying to them because they’re on a frequently driven route.

5.1 Conclusion

Morinville's Budget 2026 Engagement Survey results underscore a local engagement, thoughtfulness, and dedication to helping shape the community's future. Further, statistically valid results that run the course of three surveys over three years underpin the impact of the multi-year dataset in offering increasingly valuable insights into evolving resident expectations and demands, as well as service level satisfaction and budget priorities. This will continue to be pertinent in years to come, with the three-year mark acting as a significant milestone in multi-year trending, and each year after that increasing the value of consistent engagement and reporting.

With all this in mind, clear patterns have emerged in Morinville. Residents consistently place high priority on minimizing property taxes, while also expressing a strong desire for expanded economic development and a diversified tax base. These priorities have remained stable across all three years of analyzed budget engagement, reinforcing their foundational importance in community discourse.

This year's results also reveal encouraging gains in service level satisfaction across multiple areas, with notable year-over-year improvements in key service areas, as outlined previously. Those areas with lower satisfaction levels, however, do warrant further exploration. This is particularly true in areas of Economic Development and Bylaw Enforcement, where the decrease in service level satisfaction was further emphasized, to a significant degree, through respondents' written survey responses.

While a majority of respondents expressed satisfaction with most services, one important nuance identified in survey response analysis is the desire for continued improvements in areas of already high satisfaction, such as parks and recreation. This suggests a resistance to complacency where Morinville has already found success, as residents are not only aware of current service levels but are also forward-looking in their aspirations for continued improvement.

This can be tough to balance against public dissatisfaction with property taxation, which continues to take centre stage as both a budget priority for survey respondents, and in the written comments provided. While there is evidence that residents are open to modest tax increases, especially when paired with fee adjustments and targeted improvements, concerns remain about the perceived value of taxes paid. This highlights an ongoing need for transparency and community education. Residents expect a tangible return on investment for their tax dollars, and it's important that actions be taken by the Town to show not just the "What," but also the "Why," delving into both the value delivered and its impact on residents and other community members.

All inputs and analysis secured through Budget 2026 engagement should be considered appropriately by Council, alongside other inputs. While decisions must be made based on all information available to Council, and in the best interest of the whole community, residents must feel heard and valued in providing feedback through engagement processes such as this. As Morinville continues to grow and evolve, ongoing engagement will remain critical in ensuring that services, programs, and budget priorities align with community needs and expectations.



