



News Release
August 26, 2020

Town Invites Citizen Input on the 2021 Budget

Virtual Budget Open House and Online Survey Posted on Town Website until September 27

(August 26, 2020 – Ponoka, Alberta) – Ponoka citizens are being invited to give their input on the 2021 Town of Ponoka Budget. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Town’s annual public consultation on the Town Budget is being held almost entirely online this year through a virtual Budget Open House and an online survey posted on the Town website at www.ponoka.ca.

The virtual Budget Open House gives residents an opportunity to learn more about the Budget planning process, how property taxes are determined and where Budget funds are allocated. After touring the virtual Open House, citizens can fill out the Citizen Input Survey to offer their input on the Budget and share key priorities they would like Town Council to consider as it prepares to deliberate the upcoming Budget.

“The virtual Budget Open House and online survey are an essential part of the Budget planning process,” said Ponoka Mayor Rick Bonnett. “Council values the input we receive from our citizens. It helps us make more informed decisions that reflect what residents value most when it comes to Town services and future planning.”

A Year of Uncertainty

Mayor Bonnett adds, “As we prepare for our annual budget deliberations, it’s important to keep in mind that, due to COVID-19, the federal and provincial governments are facing increased budget pressures this year which could impact municipal funding and the 2021 Town Budget. Those increased budget pressures and the ongoing uncertainty caused by this pandemic could result in unanticipated budget constraints that we may have to grapple with during budget deliberations this year.”

The virtual Budget Open House and Community Input Survey will be available on the Town website until September 27. Copies of the survey and Open House materials will also be handed out at the Town’s booth at the Community Activity and Sports Registration Night on Wednesday August 26 from 5 – 8 p.m. at the Ponoka Curling Rink. Paper copies of the Budget consultation package are also available at the Town Office at 200, 5604-50 Street.

Citizen input collected from the Community Input Survey results will be summarized and presented to Town Council for careful review and consideration during the 2021 Budget deliberation process in November. A summary of the citizen input received will also be shared with the public.

Last Year’s Survey Results

Last year, the Town conducted a statistically representative Citizen Satisfaction Survey that showed Ponoka citizens’ top three priorities are economic development, recreation and road and sidewalk maintenance. Those



priorities were reflected in the 2020 Budget with funding for an Economic Resilience Strategy designed to help the local economy rebound and recover from the current challenges. The Town's Annual Roadway and Infrastructure Improvement Program is also currently underway with roadway and sidewalk maintenance and improvements being completed at multiple locations throughout the community. On the recreation front, extensive maintenance and facility improvements were completed at the Ponoka Aquaplex and Arena this spring, and two new park designs and walking trail improvements are being completed in town this summer.

Public Welcome to Observe 2021 Budget Deliberations

The public is welcome to observe Council's annual Budget deliberations being held in November 2020. Due to COVID-19, the public will be invited to observe the deliberations electronically this year. Further details on how citizens can observe the upcoming Budget deliberations, including the exact date of the deliberations, will be provided in the coming weeks.

For Media Inquiries:

Sandra Smith
Communications Manager
Town of Ponoka
403-783-0158
communications@ponoka.ca