

# Let's Talk: 2025 Budget Engagement Survey

## Balancing Priorities and the Budget

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1. Do you live in, or own a business in, Niagara Falls? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. If you answered yes, please select the options which apply to you.

☐ Resident

☐ Work in Niagara Falls

☐ Own a business in Niagara Falls

(untitled)

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3. Balancing competing priorities can require decisions about service levels. The level of service can be increased or decreased by changes, such as reducing operating hours or frequency of service.

Increasing services would likely increase taxes, maintaining services would result in inflationary increases, and decreasing service levels could reduce taxes.

Please tell us if the City should increase, decrease or maintain its budget investment in the following programs and services:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Increase              | Maintain              | Decrease              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Cultural programs and facilities (for example, holding cultural events such as concerts, art exhibits or other activities at the Niagara Falls History Museum and The Exchange)                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Economic development (for example, attracting new business to the area or assisting to expand existing business, strategic opportunities such as new sector development, and business support services) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Facility maintenance (for example, rehabilitation and repairs to community centres, arenas, and other facilities)                                                                                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Libraries.                                                                                                                                                                                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Parks and trails (for example, new development, playground rehabilitation)                                                                                                                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Pools and splash pads                                                                                                                                                                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Recreation programming (for example, Older Adults programming and recreation activities offered at MacBain Community Centre)                                                                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Road maintenance and                                                                                                                                                                                    |                       |                       |                       |



## Setting Tax Rates

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5. Municipal property taxes are the primary way to pay for assets and services provided by the City. How should Niagara Falls set its taxes?

**Select the statement you most agree with from the list below:**

- ☐ Set the tax rate to ensure our assets (such as facilities, roads, etc.) and services are maintained.
- ☐ Keep tax increases as close to zero as possible, even if this means reducing services.
- ☐ Keep taxes around the rate of inflation.
- ☐ Set the tax rate to ensure that Niagara Falls can maintain our assets and services as well as invest in new services.

## Environmental Sustainability

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6. Please rank the following potential environmental sustainability projects (1 being the highest priority and 7 being the lowest priority):

|                                                                                                                                           | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     | 7                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Greening more fleet vehicles with hybrid or electric vehicles                                                                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Providing incentives to homeowners and builders to build more sustainably                                                                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Increase the amount of spending on maintenance and construction of trails, walkways, and other active transportation amenities            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Install more vehicle charging stations for public use                                                                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Increase resources towards maintenance of existing woodlots, naturalized areas, urban forests and the planting of new trees               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Invest in flood resiliency initiatives such as sewer separation, stormwater management improvements, bioswales, and permeable pavement    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Performing energy audits and pursue building retrofits such as HVAC upgrades, LED lighting, and motion sensors at our City-run facilities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

## User Fees

7. Consistent with other municipalities, the City of Niagara Falls charges fees for various services. These services add to the resident's quality of life and the City's overall attractiveness to current and prospective residents. Some examples of user fees include paying to use an ice rink, baseball diamond, or

soccer field, attending swimming lessons and other recreation programs, purchasing marriage or business licences, and cemetery fees.

In most cases, the cost associated with providing the service is significantly higher than the user fee charged. As a result, the cost of providing the service that exceeds the user fee charged is borne by all taxpayers through their property taxes.

**Examples of current recovery levels include:**

| <b>Activity</b>                    | <b>Cost</b> | <b>User Fees</b> | <b>% of cost covered by User Fees</b> |
|------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| One hour Youth Prime Time Ice      | \$233.42    | \$151.76         | 65%                                   |
| One hour Adult Soccer (Category A) | \$38.18     | \$12.00          | 31%                                   |
| One hour indoor pool swim lessons  | \$233.49    | \$127.60         | 73%                                   |

**Based on the above information, what level of support should the user and the general property taxpayer provide for these types of services?**

**Please select the option you agree with the most.**

- ☐ There should be no user fees. These are all valuable services and should be free of charge, with the general taxpayer absorbing the entire cost.
- ☐ The user of the service should pay 25% of the cost of the service, and the general property taxpayer the majority.
- ☐ The user of the service should pay 50% of the cost of the service, and the general property taxpayer pay 50%.
- ☐ The user of the service should pay the majority of the cost of the service that they are using.

- ☐ The user should pay all of the cost to provide the service that they are using.

## Aging Facilities

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8. When it comes to aging facilities, such as pools, arenas, etc., would you prefer to pay more to refurbish an existing facility or use that money to enhance other facilities?

- ☐ Pay more to replace a facility with minimal features but at a much higher cost to the taxpayer.
- ☐ Invest in improving another asset so that the City would have fewer, better-quality assets at a more sustainable cost.

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9. What is your age range?

- ☐ Under 18 years
- ☐ 19-25
- ☐ 26-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65-74
- ☐ 75 years or older

10. What is your postal code?

11. Please provide your email If you would like to receive updates on related engagements, such as Asset Management.