BUDGET COMMITTEE

JANUARY 12, 2009

2009 BUDGET FORUM RESULTS

Recommendation

The City Manager and the Deputy City Manager/Commissioner of Finance & Corporate Services recommend:

That the following report be received for information purposes.

Economic Impact

There are no direct implications of this report.

Communications Plan

Not applicable

<u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of this item is to report on the input received from the Public Budget Forum held at the Civic Centre on November 10, 2008, for the benefit of the members of the Budget Committee and Council.

Background - Analysis & Options

As part of the City's approved 2009 budget process and consistent with the previous year's process, a Public Information / Consultation Forum was held to educate and inform the public and to receive public input into the 2009 budget process. The forum was held at the following location:

Civic Centre – Monday November 10 – 7:00 pm

To achieve the maximum benefit from the forum, the objectives were two-fold as follows:

- 1. Educate and inform the public regarding the City services, their costs and their relationship with property taxes; and
- 2. Engage the public and obtain input and feedback from the public with respect to the local services provided, the city's challenges, and available options to manage cost increases.

The School Boards and the Region of York were invited to participate in the Public Forum. Unfortunately, there was no representation from York Region or the School Boards.

Early Consultation

To ensure the Community was aware of this event, a very aggressive communication/promotion plan for the City's 2009 Budget Forum was followed and consisted of:

- 1) Access Vaughan Phone Promotion Oct. 14th–Nov. 10th (195 people registered)
- 2) City Page Notice Vaughan Citizen/Liberal (Oct. 23)
- 3) 5 Mobile signs 1 in each Ward starting (Oct. 27)
- 4) Advertised on website under Public Meetings & What's Happening (Oct. 27)
- 5) Budget "Tile" on front page of website under "Featured Project" (Oct. 29)
- 6) Posted in City Facilities (Civic Centre, Libraries, community centres) (Oct. 30)
- 7) City Page Notice Vaughan Today (Oct 31)

- 8) Notice posted on The VIBE and sent to all City employees (Nov. 3)
- 9) Preregister attendees Follow-up invitation (reminder) mailed (Nov. 3rd -7th)
- 10) Issued e-Bulletin to 3,000 subscribers (Nov. 4)
- 11) Issued News Release (Nov. 5) published in Vaughan Citizen/Liberal (Nov. 6); Vaughan Today (Nov. 7); and Lo Specchio (Nov. 7)
- 12) City Page Notice Vaughan Citizen/Liberal (Nov. 6)
- 13) Additional ½ page advertisment in Lo Specchio (Nov. 7)

The Forum was open to all and the intent was to get feedback with respect to the services provided by the City and whether or not residents believe they are getting value for their property tax dollar. The following questions were posed to the audience:

- 1. Are we providing the right services & at the right level?
- 2. Are you getting value for your property tax dollars?
- 3. What are your top 3 City service priorities?
- 4. To deal with the City's challenges, do you support tax increases or service level reductions?
- 5. Are there services you would reduce or eliminate?
- 6. Would you support more user fees?
- 7. Would you support a dedicated surcharge to fund the repair and replacement of municipal infrastructure?
- 8. What are your top infrastructure priorities?

In addition to receiving deputations from the audience a questionnaire reflecting the above mentioned points was provided to help capture insight on these specific topics.

Continuing Opportunity for Input

For 2009, the process was further refined by incorporating the City's website to allow citizens unable to attend the forum the opportunity to review the presentation. In addition, an identical feedback document was made available for citizens to complete on-line and submit. The website information and feedback was made available from November 10th to November 30th. This new addition to the public input process was promoted as follows:

- 1. Advertised on the City home page Featured Project
- 2. Website promoted at the Budget Forum (Nov. 10th)
- 3. Promotion through Access Vaughan
- 4. News release Nov. 14th

In addition to the above, Vaughan residents also have an opportunity to participate in any of the Budget Committee/Council meetings scheduled over the next few months, including an opportunity to provide feedback at the final Public Budget Input Session held before Council adopts the final 2009 Budget.

Forum Results

Overall approximately 40 people attended this event. This was less than expected as promotional efforts through Access Vaughan pre-registered 190 people. In total 14 residents stepped up to podium to provide their comments (Deputations). We also received 9 completed questionnaires. Residents did not utilize the online presentation video/questionnaire. It is very important to recognize that although the comments received through the forum are important, they represent a very small proportion of the City's population.

The overview provided in this section attempts to categorize the comments provided by first summarizing the key points of verbal deputations and then summarizing the questionnaire responses. It should be noted that Budget Forum Notes recorded by the Clerks department and resident questionnaire responses are provided as attachments 1&2.

Deputations & Resident Comments

Reoccurring themes mentioned by more than one resident focused on issues related to:

- Traffic Calming (mixed feedback, some in favour, some not)
- Fire Emergency Services resource requirement to meet standards
- A number of the issues raised were related to Regional issues (transit, transportation)

A number of individual issues were raised as follows:

- 2010 Accessibility Act compliance
- Illegal Mobile signs
- Gridlock (Field Gate & Keele, Right-hand turn lanes, etc)
- Need for more commercial development
- Pathway conditions and connections
- Street lighting and Streetscape (Nashville)
- Train whistling
- Back yard flooding/catch basin (Emmitt Road)
- Noise attenuation fence repair funding (fences on private property)
- Timing of new sub-division services
- Park Services
- Etc.

Of particular interest was the number of comments raised related to services provided by the Region of York, roughly 30%. Although, outside of the City's area of responsibility, the majority of these comments largely focused on regional transportation and transit issues, with some additional input on topics related to GTA pooling and improving shelters for women, children, and seniors. Specific detail on the deputations provided by residents is provided in attachment #1 - 2009 Budget Information/Consultation Forum Notes (Resident Comments).

Questionnaire Results

In addition to the above verbal comments residents were encouraged to complete a questionnaire that focused on the questions previously illustrated. This section summarizes the community feedback received through the questionnaire. Each question is illustrated below followed by a summary of the input provided. Each resident questionnaire is provided in attachment 2 of this report.

- 1. Are we providing the right services & at the right level?
- 2. Are you getting value for your property tax dollars?

Response for Questions 1 & 2 - Of the questionnaires received, 30% of the residents indicated that Vaughan is providing the right services at the right level and are getting value for their property tax dollars. Comments of those indicating the opposite cited very general comments and focused on areas related to gridlock, snow removal, road maintenance, landscaping, parks, regional services, etc. The fact that some residents cited regional service concerns provides an indication that further resident education is required on what services the City provides.

3. What are your top 3 City service priorities?

Frequently mentioned top City service priorities are Roads and Snow Removal. Other items mentioned, but not as frequently, are related to Garbage and Park services. Other service priorities mentioned intermittently relate to Fire, Boulevard Maintenance, Gridlock, and Urban Planning services.

4. To deal with the City's challenges, do you support tax increases and no service impact or no tax increase and reduced service levels?

Respondents were equally split (22%) between those that preferred a tax increase to service reductions and those that wanted a service level reduction with no tax increase. The majority wanted no tax increase with same or improved levels of service.

5. Are there services you would reduce or eliminate?

Only 3 of the 9 residents responded to this question and indicated they would reduce or eliminate road services, excessive spending, and legal services. Unfortunately, reference was not made to specific expenses or services provided. It should also be noted that road services was also listed as a community top priority in Question #3.

6. Would you support more user fees?

66% of the respondents indicated they would not support more user fees. For those that did support user fees they suggested fee increases in waste collection and false alarms.

7. Would you support a dedicated surcharge to fund the repair and replacement of municipal infrastructure?

Only 3 of the 9 responses, roughly 33%, indicated support for an infrastructure surcharge, 4 responses indicated they would not support a surcharge, and 2 responses were left blank.

8. What are your top infrastructure priorities?

Surprisingly, 8 of the 9 responses were left blank. The single response provided focused on roads, snow removal, and boulevard maintenance.

Feedback on the Forum

As part of the questionnaire, we asked citizens to provide us with feedback on the public forum. This information is very useful in helping the City improve the budget forum process and better cater to our community's needs. We are proud to state that each completed questionnaire indicated the budget forum was informative. In addition, the average rating for the forum's accessibility, format, content, material, and public engagement was typically between average and excellent. A few suggestions were offered to improve the forum mainly incorporating an overview of previously raised concerns, creating a child friendly environment, and having more sessions.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020 / Strategic Plan

The process of obtaining public input into the budget process is critical. The budget process is where Council allocates resources and establishes priorities to achieve its vision.

Regional Implications

There are no regional implications as a result of this report.

Conclusion

Vaughan has one of the lowest tax rates in the GTA and high levels of service. The Budget Forum was well promoted through a variety of mediums. The City has been able to make a strong case that residents are getting value for their property tax dollars. The low turn out may actually reflect a high degree of satisfaction with the City's operations and the efforts of Council and staff.

Attachments

Attachment 1– 2009 Budget Information/Consultation Forum Notes (Resident Comments) Attachment 2– 2009 Budget Forum Questionnaires

Report prepared by:

Respectfully submitted.

Clayton D. Harris Deputy City Manager/Commissioner of Finance & Corporate Services Ext. 8475

John Henry, CMA, Director of Budgeting & Financial Planning ext. 8348

Michael DeAngelis City Manager	

Clayton D. Harris, CA
Deputy City Manager/Commissioner of Finance & Corporate Services



CITY OF VAUGHAN

2009 BUDGET PUBLIC INFORMATION / CONSULTATION FORUM NOTES

Civic Centre Monday, November 10, 2008 7:00 p.m.

Members of Council Present:

Mayor Linda D. Jackson Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio Regional Councillor Mario F. Ferri Regional Councillor Gino Rosati Councillor Peter Meffe Councillor Tony Carella Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco Councillor Alan Shefman

The public were invited to participate in the City's information/consultation forum on the City's 2009 Draft Budget. It was explained that the forum allows the public an opportunity to provide input into the 2009 Budget process. A comment sheet and a copy of the City's PowerPoint presentation were available to the public for their information.

The City Manager welcomed and thanked the residents for attending the forum and introduced Mayor Jackson.

Mayor Jackson extended greetings on behalf of the Members of Council and the City of Vaughan, introduced the Members of Council and provided opening comments and an overview on the purpose of the forum.

The City Manager introduced the Commissioners and invited the Deputy City Manager/ Commissioner of Finance and Corporate Services to begin the presentation regarding the 2009 Budget Process.

It was explained that the budget forum will cover a variety of topics including city services, infrastructure, priorities, property taxes and how the current economic conditions might impact city services. The public were encouraged to also provide their input by submitting their written comments and by completing the questionnaire, also available on-line.

A total of 14 residents from the audience stepped to the podium to provide comments. The following is a summary of those comments.

2009 BUDGET PUBLIC INFORMATION / CONSULTATION FORUM NOTES – NOVEMBER 10, 2008

Resident 1 Thornhill Resident

- Concrete fences at the rear of properties backing on to main streets
- Originally installed by the Developer for privacy purposes
- Over the years they have deteriorated and are in need of repair
 - The cost of repair for these fences is now the homeowners' responsibility
- This cost should be included in infrastructure repairs

Resident 2 Mr. Arthur S. Larman, 67 Findhorn Crescent, Maple, L6A 1M2

- Greenock traffic calming issues discussed
- Too many signs posted for speed bumps
- Has complained to the City signs were removed and smaller signs were reinstalled
- Sign at S/W corner of Major Mackenzie and Keele "To Be Completed Summer 2007" still exists
- Maintaining gardens along roadways (ie Creditstone, Langstaff, etc.) causes gridlock
- Gridlock at Fieldgate & Keele Streets
- Mobile signs that are illegal should be addressed
- Need a right hand turn lane rather than gardens

Person 3 Mike Doyal, on behalf of the Vaughan Professional Firefighters Association

- Concerns were expressed with respect to the refusal in 2008 of a significant hiring of Professional Firefighters
- Are not able to sustain standards
- 17/10 (17 firefighters in 10 min.) was explained
- Parts of the City they cannot maintain 17/10
- Appears to be a fundamental problem to the way Council addresses staffing issue
- Need staff now!
- Asked why the N/E portion of Vaughan does not deserve a truck in 10 min?
- Asked that Council approve an increase in personnel
- The health & safety of the firefighters is at stake
- Hay Hoe fire discussed
- Hiring requires an increase in the budget
- Increase service levels
- The City should be interested in providing the best service possible to residents
- It will save lives
- 250 members support the hiring of firefighters

Resident 4 Mr. Eugene Soanes, 55 Via Cristina Way, Woodbridge, L4H 1R9

- Concerns expressed with respect to speed bumps on Sonoma Boulevard
- Traffic calming concerns in the Sonoma Heights subdivision
- Cause damage to snow removal equipment and other vehicles
- Restrict the installation of speed bumps on Sonoma Boulevard

Resident 5 Ms. Heidi Last, 20 Glacier Court, Maple, L6A 2V3

- Concerns expressed with respect to time for fire and emergency vehicles to respond approximately 20 min.
- Need to improve accessibility for emergency response vehicles has a handicapped child
- Keele / Kirby and then Kirby south on Dufferin corridor
- York Region Transit have been contacted to address concerns

Resident 6 Mr. John Scaini, 104 Valleyway Crescent, Maple, L6A 1K8

- As mandated by the Accessibility Act, the City must be accessible by 2010
- Discussed YRT/transportation concerns
- He has to walk in order to take public transit buses
- He uses trail/walking paths as a short cut to get to the buses
- Pathways are not easily travelled in bad weather difficult to walk and need to be cleared

2009 BUDGET PUBLIC INFORMATION / CONSULTATION FORUM NOTES - NOVEMBER 10, 2008

- Some areas are washed out and covered with stones not paved
- Requested better maintenance on an ongoing basis

Resident 7 Ms. Lisa Wong, 176 Stevens Drive (S/W corner Bathurst & Major Mackenzie subdivision)

- Expressed two concerns with respect to more commercial development in new subdivisions and better transportation
- Commercial should be built concurrently with residential development
- Lack of Transportation connections in new subdivisions forces residents to take their own cars and drive everywhere
- Improvements are needed to improve convenience of residents

Resident 8 Mr. Paul Mantella, on behalf of Nashville Area Residents Association

- Asked why the Region doesn't finance the Fire Department?
- Parks and forestry 2000-2010 13 trees planted over a 2 year period
- Streetscape should be extended to Nashville
- Discussed concerns with the train whistle
- The Mill in the area is in need of repair
- Nashville street lights are needed
- Numerous construction vehicles / CN lines better suited as a park

Resident 9 Mr. Nick Pinto, President, West Woodbridge Homeowners' Association

- Insufficient notice given for this public information/consultation forum only 6 days
- So many meetings it is impossible to come to the public and Council and relay messages
- Residents think Council tends to spend freely (i.e. hiring of consulting firm to change the City's tag line
- Signs are not going to change anything attitude
- Concerns expressed with respect to the fire department
- Public would pay more to hire firefighters
- Discussed concerns with advertising on the City Page most residents do not receive these newspapers
- Time to look at changing how information is relayed to the public
- Discussed using the internet
- Public not getting the information in a timely manner better communication is required
- "Do it right!" the public are interested

Resident 10 Ms. Afroditi Gouvis, 25 Emmitt Road, Maple, L6A 3V8

- Expressed concerns with the drainage of water from her rear yard
- Neighbour has raised yard and covered the catch basin in rear yard
- Rear yards flood in heavy rain and in spring when snow melts
- Catch basin is not in her backyard but is behind her yard
- Discussed concerns with transportation on Jane Street only south
- No transportation north on Jane Street
- No shelter for residents
- Requested a shelter at Northwood stop across from Wonderland on the west side of Jane Street.
- City Manager will relay request to install a shelter to York Region Transportation

Resident 11 Concord Resident (approximately 10 years)

- Services have gone down
- Should be known as the "City of Darkness"
- Minimum quantity of service needs to be maintained
- Expansion of Dufferin Street from Clark Avenue to Steeles Avenue
- Asked who benefits?
- Forced to use cars because of reduced bus service
- Noise and pollution concerns expressed

2009 BUDGET PUBLIC INFORMATION / CONSULTATION FORUM NOTES – NOVEMBER 10, 2008

- Asked Council to think about people who live in the area
- Concerns expressed with respect to expansion of the roads in the area
- City Manager explained that Dufferin Street is a Regional Road
- Asked for examples of services that have been reduced/lowered

Resident 12 Resident from Major Mackenzie & Bathurst Street (S/W corner)

- Discussed concerns with tax bill (\$7,400)
- Area has no services yet
- Area/road is unassumed and no garbage pick-up
- Why do they receive a full tax bill for services when area is not fully serviced?
- Discussed garbage pick-up concerns
- Hospital being proposed tax surcharge to pay for hospital but anybody can use it
- It is a provincial institution so why are Vaughan Residents required to pay for it?
- City Manager explained that the province is heavily involved 10% is municipal responsibility

Resident 13 Ms. Carrie Liddy, 36 Humberview Drive, Woodbridge L4H 1B1

- Asked staff and Council to post on the web details on spending habits and expenses with respect to mileage, meals, parking, 407 ETR
- GTA Pooling when reduced money should come back to the City of Vaughan
- Discussed the need for shelters for women, children and for seniors
- "Pay more attention" agreed with the comments with respect to the surcharge for the proposed hospital
- Should be a Provincial responsibility

Resident 14 Ms. Maxine Povering, 48 Ohr Menachem Way, Thornhill, L4J 8X7

- There is no ratepayers' association in the area
- Represents residents of Thornhill Woods
- Parks installed Autumn Hill Boulevard & Summeridge Drive
- Stop sign on Sandwood Drive has been removed, replaced, removed and reinstalled
- Engineering Department explained that the sign was not necessary
- Asked about the required distance between crosswalk and stop signs
- Asked when traffic calming measures will be considered for the area
- Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco explained that stop sign approved for Sandwood Drive and traffic calming has been approved

Recognizing that there were no other speakers, the City Manager, on behalf of the Mayor and Members of Council, delivered closing comments. Appreciation was expressed for the input provided. Residents were encouraged to complete a questionnaire form and/or to visit the City of Vaughan's website for an on-line version of the questionnaire.

The forum ended at 8:25 p.m.

ATTACHMENT #2

FORUM QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Waiighan



The City Above Toronto

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Name: KESHY (FRUNTER)
Address: 30 SHERBOURNE DR
Postal Code: LGA 1G8
Email: Keshuchandhari. @ hotonceil. com
Is the City providing the right local service at the appropriate level?
Yes
□ No
If "No" provide comments
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2. SNOW REMOUTE
3. ROAD REPACR
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Address:	176 Sir Sterens Dr.
Postal Code:	16A OG6
Email:	lisahuang 78@ hotmail. com
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The City <u>Above</u> Toronto

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Email:	josedele@msn.com	basis.
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Address:	26 Maples Ave
Postal Code:	14L8R4
Email:	a-nimpo @ rogers.com
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☐ No tax	increase & Reduced service levels
Tax inc	reases & No service level impacts (For the avg. home a 1% incr. = \$11/year)
10 NOTOX	increase & Same services
5. Are there s	ervices you would reduce or eliminate?
1. Council	increase their pay soll
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6. To reduce the tax burden, are y recreation services, false fire alar Yes	ou open to ms, etc.)?	more us	er fees (i.ew	/aste col	lection, ··
7. If yes, for which services? 1 2 3					
8. Would you support a dedicated replacement of the City's infrastructure. Yes No 10. What are your top 3 infrastructure. 2. 3.	ucture? cture priorit 		taxes to fun	d the rep	air and
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Did you find this process information Yes No What can we do to improve this experience to the could like to our Kido Cang		Bu N	ildeny I De E	Thei	¥





Name: MARGARITA RUVINSKY	2
Address: 62 NOSSON PLACE	
Postal Code:	
Email: RITAR B1980 Q YGLOO.CG	
1. Is the City providing the right local service at the appropriate level? Yes No	
If "No" provide comments	
- NO GARBASE PICK UP	
# 00 Choo!5	
- ROODS MAG LOOPS Shoed	
2. Are you getting value for your local property tax dollar? Yes No	
Comments? TAX Bill 15 / tap 4155	
given the above noted lace	
of services	
2.345.7	
3. What are your top 3 local service priorities? 1	
2. Consage DICK 40	
3. fores	
4. To deal with City challenges would you choose	
No tax increase & Reduced service levels	
Tax increases & No service level impacts (For the avg. home a 1% incr. = \$11/year) Improved services for the Hist taxes we are payins	
5. Are there services you would reduce or eliminate?	
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6. To reduce the tax burden,	are you open to	more us	er fees (i.e. w	aste coll	ection,
recreation services, false fire	alarms, etc.) r				
□ No					
7. If yes, for which services					
1. <u>false g/arms</u>	<u> </u>				
2. Lechan					
3.					
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Would you support a dedi replacement of the City's inf	cated surcharge rastructure?	on your	taxes to lust	u tile rep	an and
☐ Yes					
No					
10. What are your top 3 infra	structure priorit	ies?			
1					
2					
3.					
Feedback on the forum					
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D. J	f				
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∏ No					
NO					
What can we do to improve	this event?				
					





	Name: Soscalt L. ZINNI
	Address: 15/GREEN MANUR CRES.
	Postal Code: 44977
	Email: 416-990-4/34
-	1. Is the City providing the right local service at the appropriate level? ☐ Yes ☐ No If "No" provide comments TMAACGUDOCK, ☐ CAN THUM WAY JR-DAKE ▼ PLAME
	SNOWPLOWING PRIMOUR SCALICES DELIVERED LATE, LANDSCAPING MANJANCE SERVICES I.C. BEND of
¥	2. Are you getting value for your local property tax dollar? Yes No Comments?
	SAME AS ABOVE "
	3. What are your top 3 local service priorities? 1. FINE SINICES PROPOSERVD ROPAIRS 2. BLVD. MAINTEN ANCE & BLWD THE PLANTING MERILIANIS. 3. SNOW PREMOURE 4. THANK & GRADIOCK.
	4. To deal with City challenges would you choose No tax increase & Reduced service levels For The TAX Dollars collected Tax increases & No service level impacts (For the avg. home a 1% incr. = \$11/year)
	5. Are there services you would reduce or eliminate? 1
	2.
	3.

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6. To reduce the tax burden, are yo recreation services, false fire alarn		more user	fees (i.e. v	vaste colle	ection,	
☐ Yes	•					
No						
7. If yes, for which services?						
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2.						
3.						
8. Would you support a dedicated replacement of the City's infrastruct Yes No 10. What are your top 3 infrastruct 1. POADS - EMDLE 2. SABUPLOWING 3. BOULEVARD MANN Feedback on the forum	cture?	ies?	axes to fun	d the repa	ilr and	
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Name:	UNKNOW N	
Address:	UNKNOWN UNKNOWN	•
Postal Code:		
Email:		
Liliali.		• \
1. Is the City p ☐ Yes ☐ No If "No" provid	providing the right local service at the approp	priate level?
		·
	<u> </u>	
Yes No Comments? - No OF	NANY CAWSMIS ENOUGH ACCUMT STAFF EXPENSES	
3. What are ve	our top 3 local service priorities?	
		
3		
☐ No tax i	h City challenges would you choose increase & Reduced service levels reases & No service level impacts (For the avg.	home a 1% incr. = \$11/year)
5. Are there s 1	ervices you would reduce or eliminate?	
3		

recreation services, false fire a	lamis. etc.):		er fees (i.e. w		·
No No					
7. If yes, for which services?					
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3. Would you support a dedicate placement of the City's infrastrone No 10. What are your top 3 infrastrone 1	structure? ructure priorit		taxes to fun	d the rep	air and
	4		3		
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