



# Budget 2025

## What We Heard

District of Sooke

On the traditional territory of the T'Sou-ke and Scia'new Nations.





# BUDGET PROCESS



## Presentation Topics:

1. Our Engagement Approach
2. Interactive Experience
3. Key Messages
4. Next Steps in the Budget Process

### THE BUDGET PROCESS STARTS WITH YOU!

This process starts with an annual budget survey and community connections (pop ups) at local markets and park from mid-June to mid-August each year.

The budget is also shaped by various district plans, such as the Official Community Plan, the Transportation Master Plan, the Parks and Trails Master Plan, the Sooke 2030: Climate Action Plan, the Community Economic Development Strategy, and the Fire Master Plan.

Community budget input and these master plans (which have their own engagement process) help the Council decide on service levels.

Service levels are reviewed annually, and the five-year financial plan is updated accordingly, with the immediate year's budget being finalized and future years remaining flexible.



**YOUR VOICE MATTERS!**

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# Engagement Approach



Survey included questions on transportation and economic growth



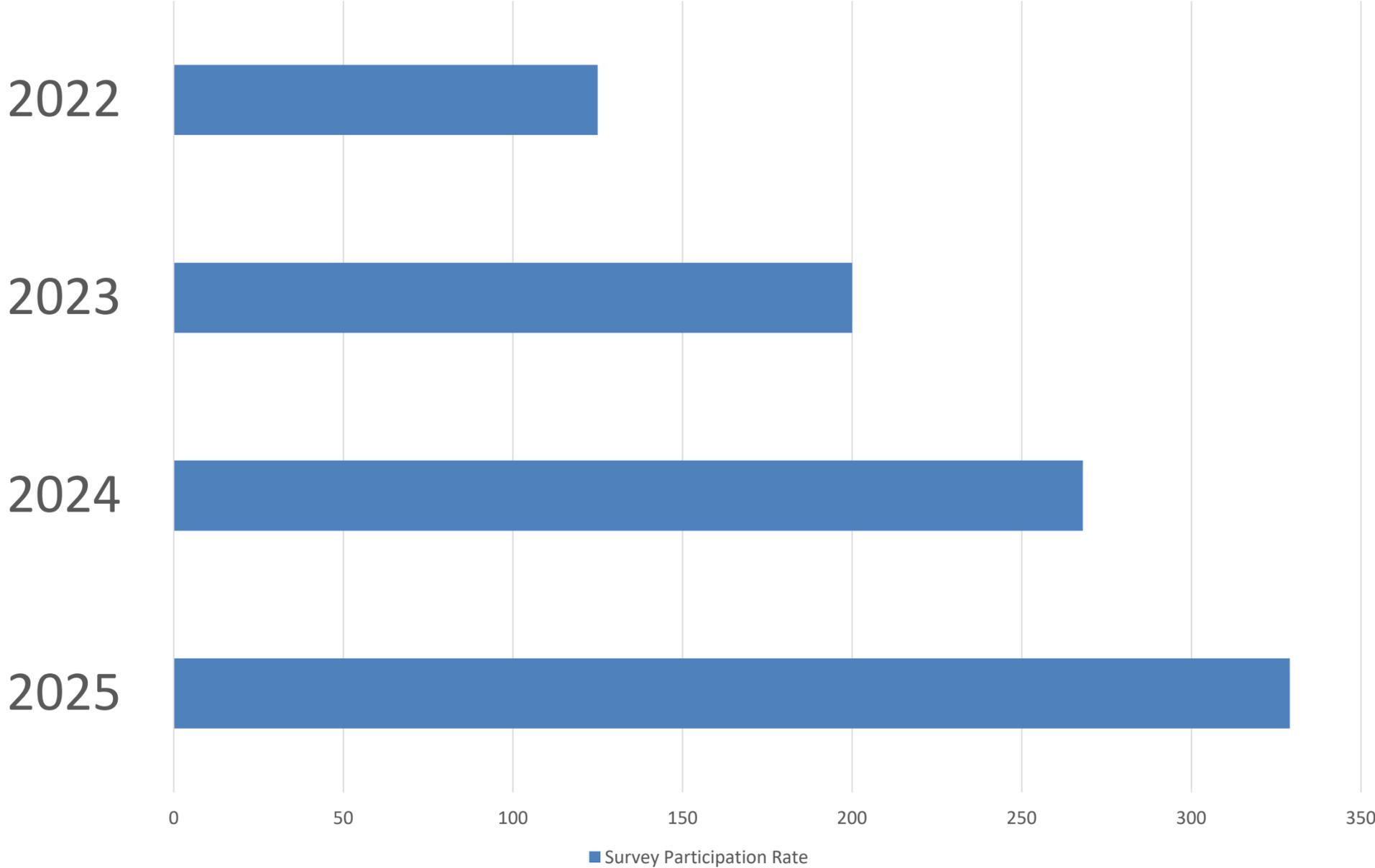
- 2-question dotmocracy:
- Community priorities
  - referendums



Random sample to 200 households

**1,100 +** Engaged

### Survey Participation Rate





# WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES?

● RESIDENT ● RESIDENT WILLING TO PAY MORE FOR SERVICE LEVEL INCREASE ● YOUTH ● TOURIST



 BUSINESS ATTRACTION, RETENTION AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT	 BYLAW EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT	 COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	 COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	 COMMUNITY SUPPORT (LOCAL GRANTS AND EVENTS)	 CLIMATE ACTION	 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND PLANNING	 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
 FIRE RESCUE SERVICES	 HOUSING CHOICES	 LOCAL STREETS AND ROADWAYS	 PARKING	 PARK MAINTENANCE AND BEAUTIFICATION	 PARK AND GREENSPACE ACQUISITION	 PLAYGROUNDS	 POLICING
 SIDEWALKS AND TRAILS	 SPLASH PARK	 SPORT FIELDS	 SNOW REMOVAL	 TREE CARE AND PLANTING	 YARD WASTE DISPOSAL	 OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY:	

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# LET'S TALK ABOUT REFERENDUMS



A referendum question is a way for us to ask voters for their opinion or decision on an important issue such as borrowing money for large projects like building roads or purchasing land.



During the referendum, voters can say "yes" if they agree or "no" if they don't. We use the results to decide if we should borrow the money or find another way to pay for the projects.

How much do you support the District exploring Loan Authorization Borrowing Bylaws (to be defined), which would allow the District of Sooke to borrow money, with interest, for up to 30 years to fund capital investments for projects/initiatives indicated below?

**STRONGLY SUPPORT**

**SUPPORT**

**UNSURE**

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

- 1 THROUP ROAD CONNECTOR
- 2 PHILLIPS ROAD CORRIDOR
- 3 BUYING LAND
- 4 SIDEWALKS



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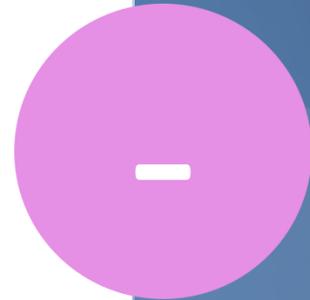
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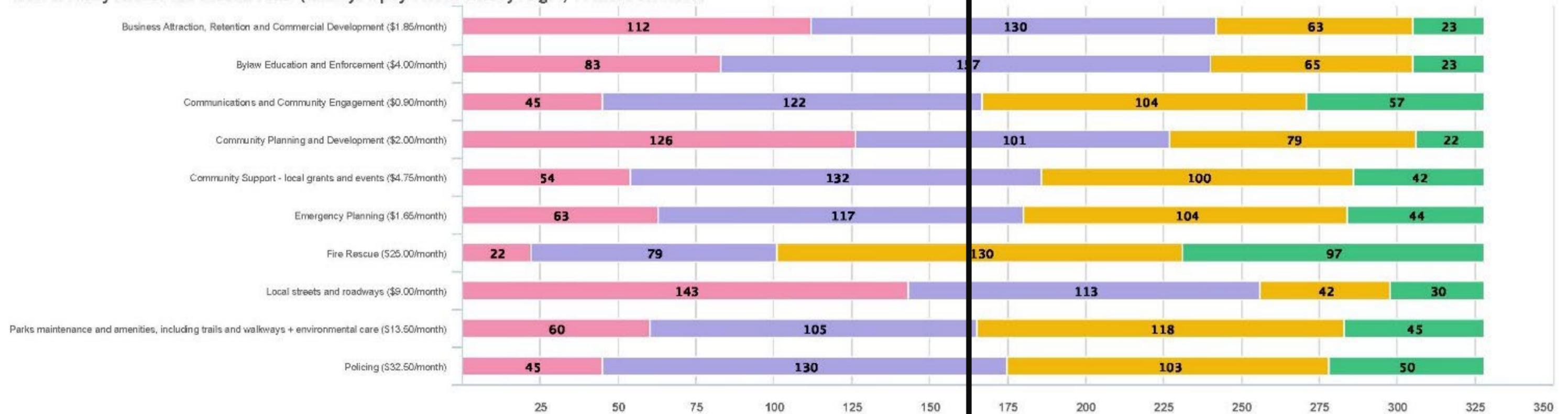
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# Satisfaction Levels



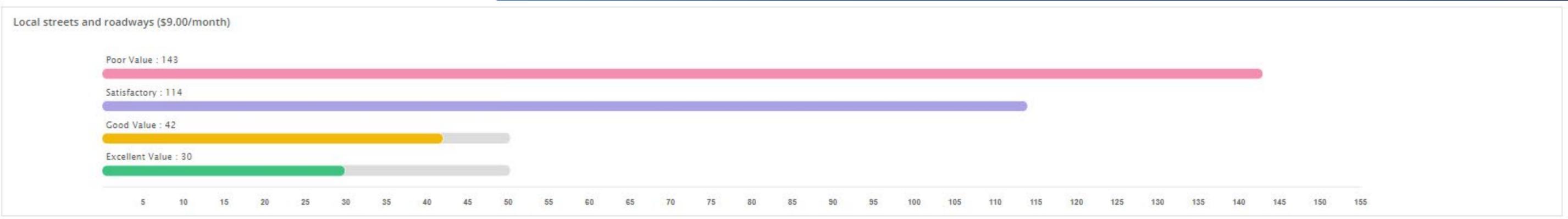
How would you rate the overall value (what you pay versus what you get) of these services?



**Question options**

- Poor Value
- Satisfactory
- Good Value
- Excellent Value

# Local Streets and Roadways



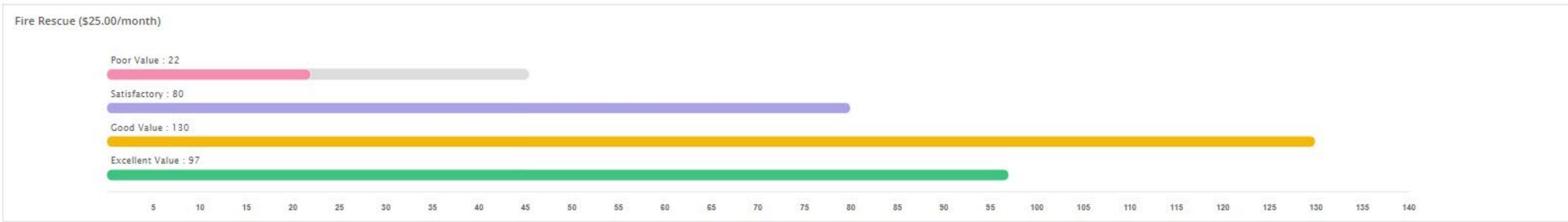
“Without improved roadways and transportation options Sooke will not attract businesses, which are key to reducing Hwy 14 traffic in/out of Langford by residents being able to shop local and employ local.” – Survey Respondent

**43.5%** Poor Value

**21.8%** Good or Excellent

“The local road network does not meet the needs of the people who live in Sooke. Increasing capacity and improving traffic flow must be addressed. Additionally, much more needs to be done to secure the Province's support for improvements to Hwy 14, including expanding capacity, increasing mass transit options, and adding sidewalks and bike lanes.” – Survey Respondent

# Fire Rescue Services



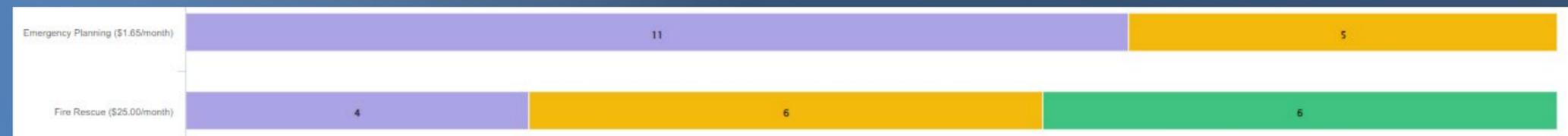
“Please put more money into policing, fire/rescue services and park maintenance .” – Survey Respondent

“We need a faster HW 14 commute, firefighters, police, more businesses and an actual clinic. Past those items, quit wasting our money. – Survey Respondent

**7%** Poor Value

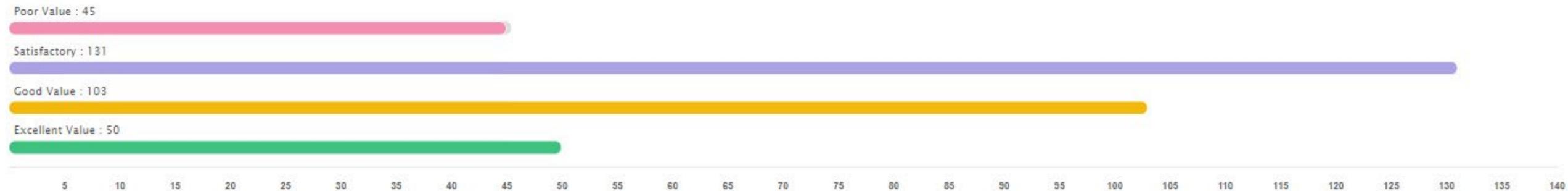
**63%** Good or Excellent

Public Input July 23–31, 2024 following the Old Man Lake Wildfire



# Policing Services

Policing (\$32.50/month)



**13.6%** Poor Value

**40.4%** Satisfactory

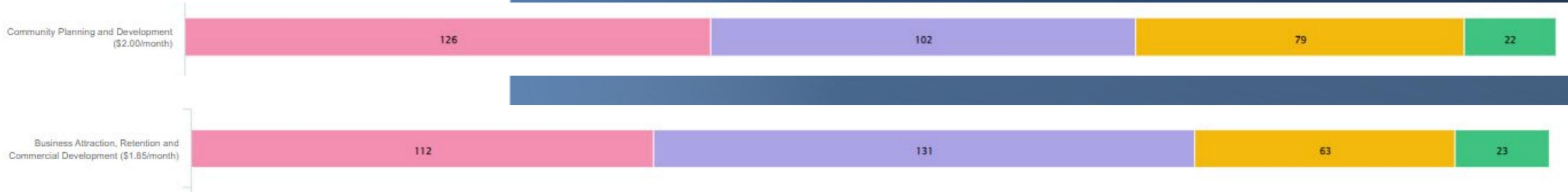
**46%** Good or Excellent

“We need more police and an alternate route into Sooke!– Survey Respondent

“Expand the police service to address growing crime issues. The police department is very underfunded and over worked. – Survey Respondent

“There has been no police enforcement of traffic laws in Sooke to do anything with the speeders, motor bikes riding on the shoulder of the road or people cutting through residential areas at high speeds.” – Survey Respondent

# Community Planning and Economic Development

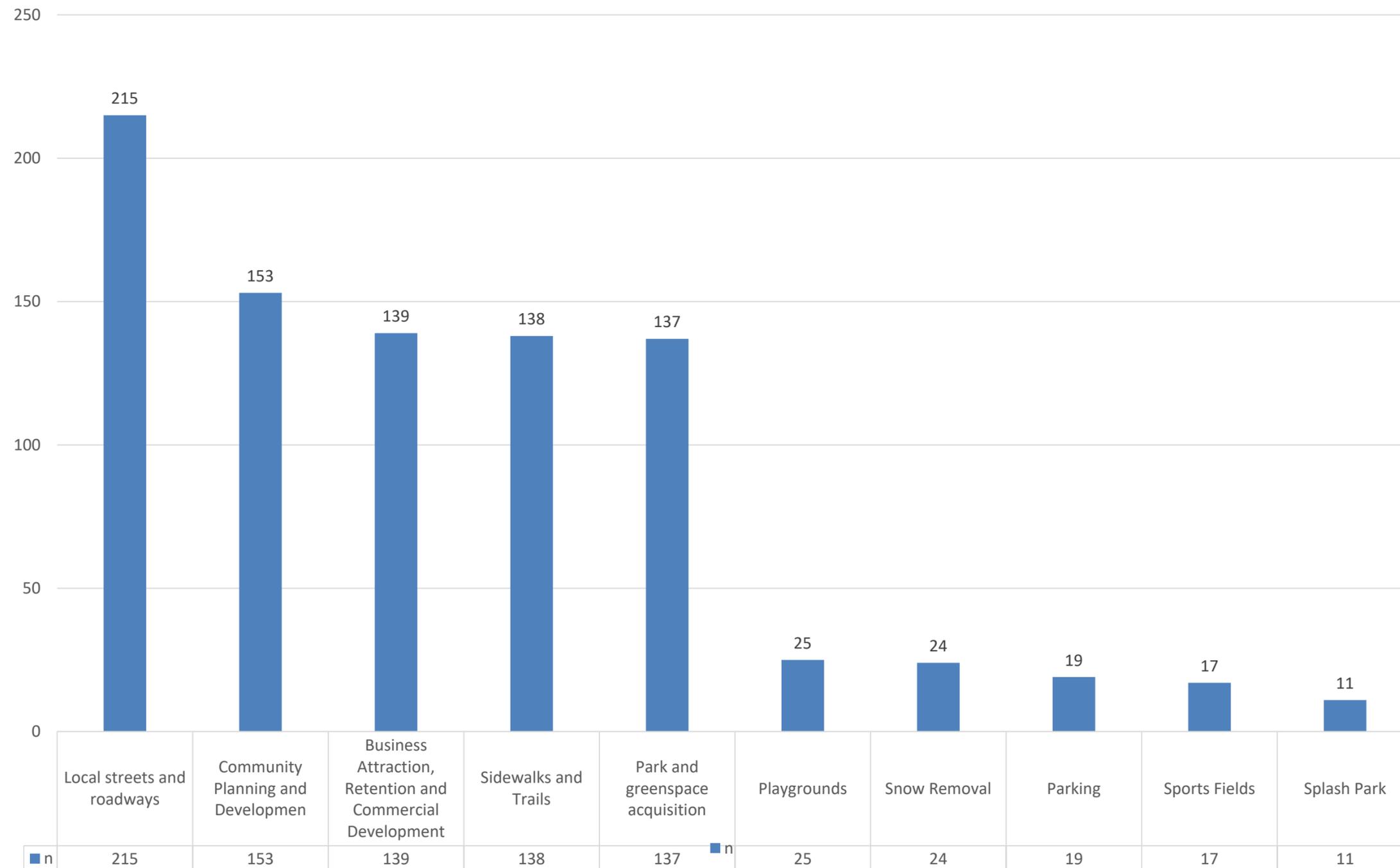


“We need economic development to lessen the burden on the home owners period.” – Survey Respondent

“Strengthening our economic base including tourism, exploring alternative transportation modes (ie light rail, express transit, water bus/ferry), air travel, etc.), and SUSTAINABLE development of infrastructure while maintaining trails and greenspace must be part of the community plan to be successful.” – Survey Respondent

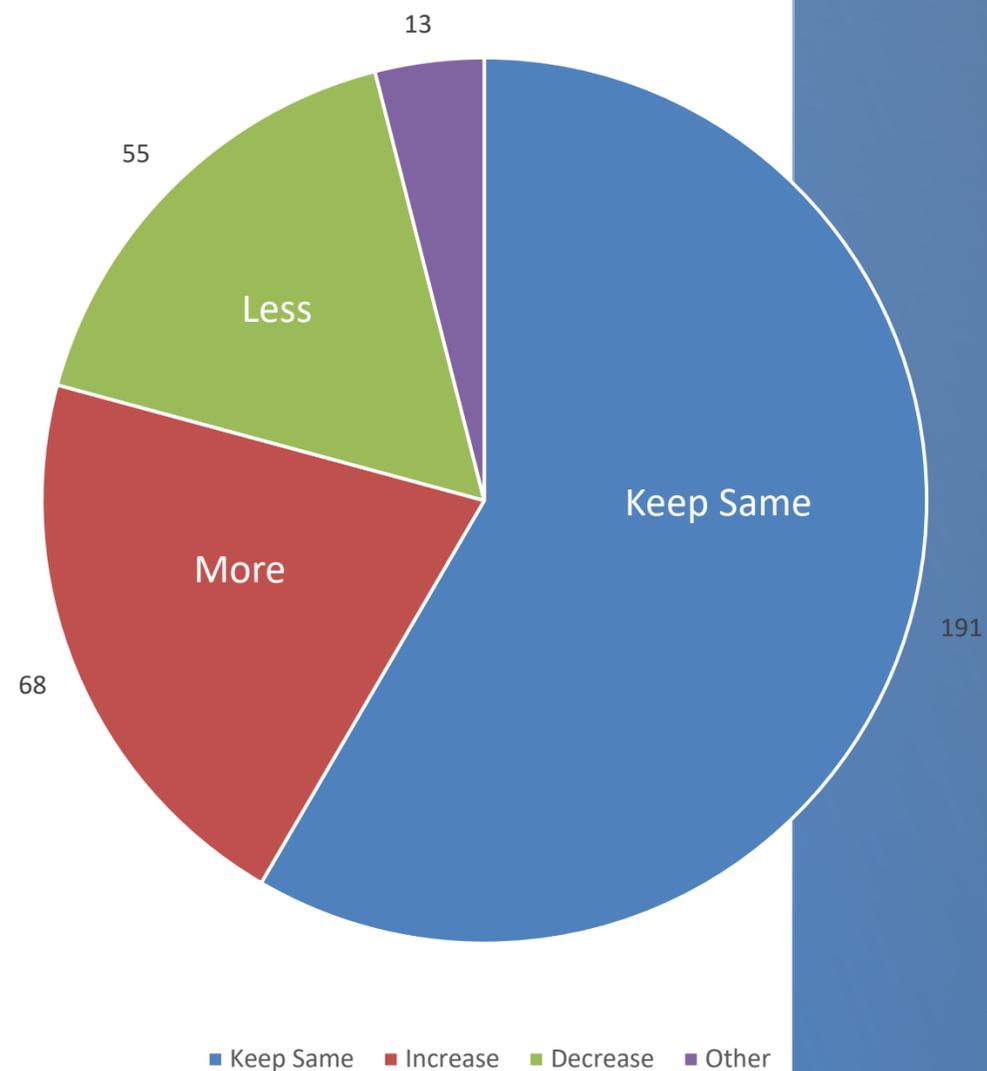
# Understanding Priorities

*n* indicating Priorities, when selecting top 5 on survey



# Understanding Contributions to Community Groups

“Do you think there should be more, less, or the same amount of support for community groups within the District’s budget?”



“Closer look at certain tax exemptions in future, otherwise the \$1 million is well spent in providing taxpayer support to lifeblood community organizations.” – Survey Respondent

“A new Health Clinic managed by a Society to attract and retain doctors to properly serve the needs of residents; Sooke Centre needs big improvements Re: modernization and beautification. A New Community Hall is long overdue. Seniors Services need more funding to ensure their needs are met: transportation, home maintenance, social isolation, improved subsidized housing.” – Survey Respondent

# Understanding Transportation and Desired Solutions

Residents were asked to prioritize up to three solutions for reducing congestion on Highway 14.

## Results:

1. Alternate Routes: 225 votes; 68.4%
- 2. Improve local roads and how we travel around Sooke: 171 votes; 52%**
3. Road Widening and expansion: 148 votes; 45%
4. Improve public transportation: 138; 41.9%
5. Local employment: 125; 38%

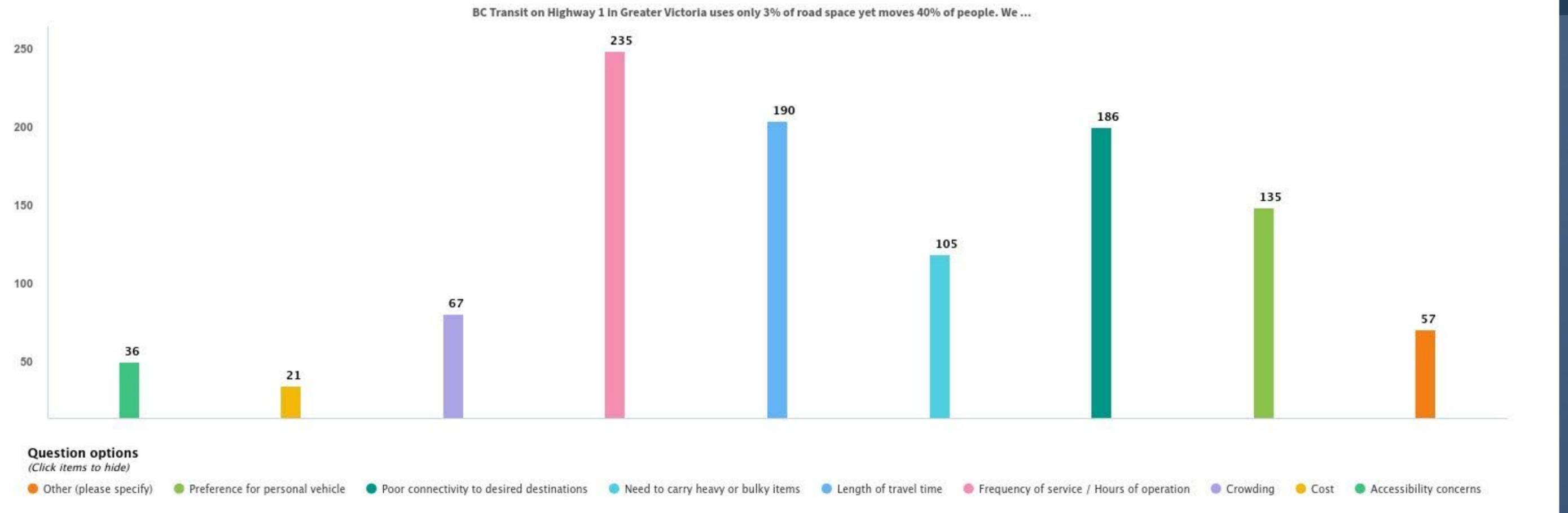


“The one bridge, with only two lanes will always be a choke point. Either twin it, build a new 4 lane version or add a new crossing (possibly for the Thorpe road connection).” – Survey Respondent

“Without improved roadways and transportation options Sooke will not attract businesses, which are key to reducing Hwy 14 traffic in/out of Langford by residents being able to shop local and employ local.” – Survey Respondent

“There is no one solution to the transit and transportation issues in Sooke and surrounding areas.” – Survey Respondent

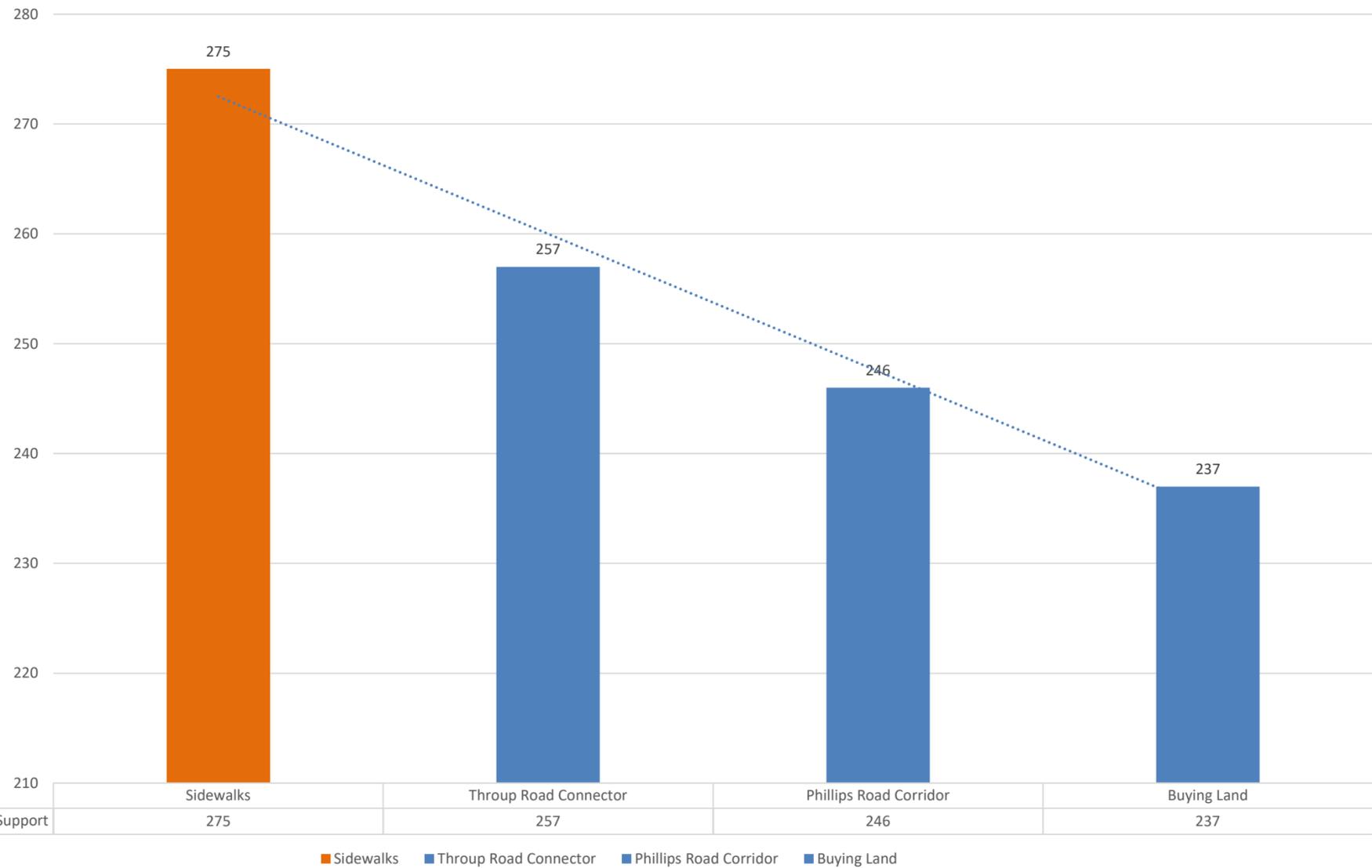
# Understanding Transit as a Solution



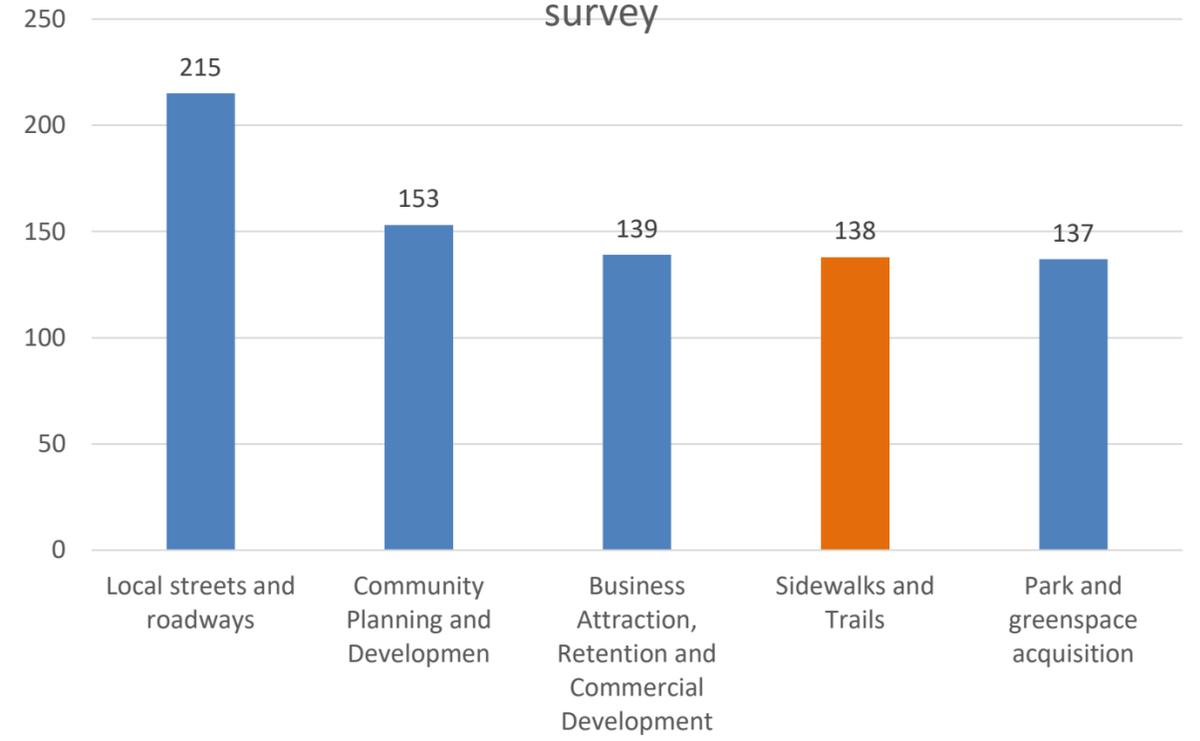
“BC Transit services to Sooke need to be improved. Last year I attempted to ride the bus to and from Sooke, when I worked in Langford. I gave it a solid 4 months but couldn't continue due to the overcrowding. – Survey Respondent

# Referendums

Support + Strongly Support Referendum on Borrowing



*n* indicating Priorities, when selecting top 5 on survey





# MUNICIPAL TAXES



The District of Sooke is committed to ensuring fiscal responsibility while responding to the needs of a growing community.

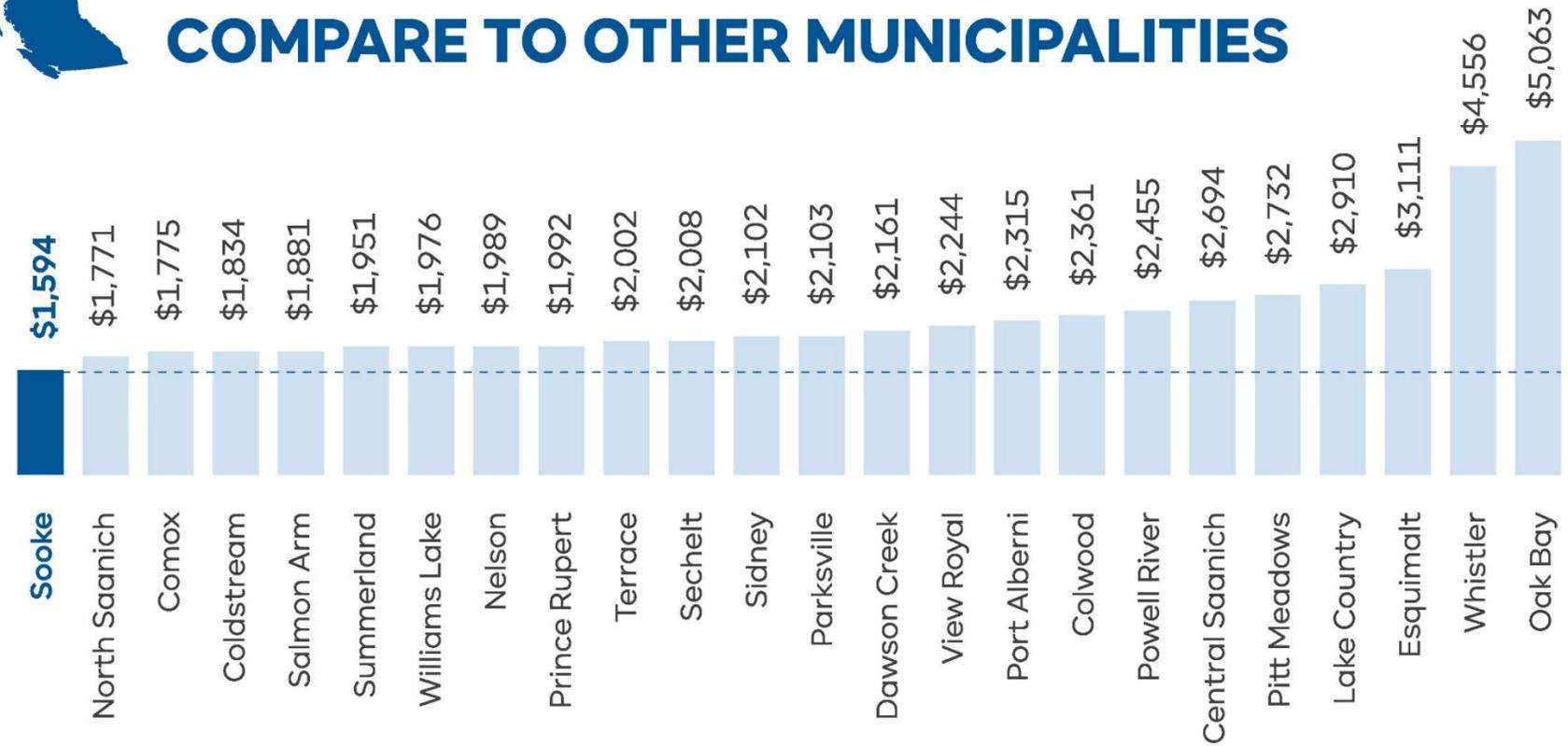
## DID YOU KNOW?

Sooke taxes and charges are among the lowest when evaluated against neighbouring municipalities and those with comparable populations (see chart).

Please note that this is not a direct comparison as services and service levels vary between municipalities. One example of this is where municipalities with populations less than 15,000 are responsible for 70% policing costs; Sooke's population is greater than 15,000 and, therefore, responsible for 90% of policing costs.



## HOW DO DISTRICT PROPERTY TAXES COMPARE TO OTHER MUNICIPALITIES



The District has the lowest municipal taxes on a representative house when compared to all municipalities in BC with a population above 10K and below 20K.

Source: Government of British Columbia, Municipal taxes and charges on a representative house (2023)



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Thank you for the chance to provide feedback!

Thank you for conducting this survey.

Thank you for this opportunity. I appreciated the chance to share about a potential referendum (bring it on!) as well as insights into the monthly costs involved in a wide range of District services.

Thank you for the attention to crosswalks on Townsend (adding no parking signs adjacent to the crosswalk) and Church (blinking lights for the bike path crossing). I use both every day and they are far safer.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in these important decisions. Love living in Sooke.

I just want to say that I appreciate the efforts of the district and council. I know that you're having to juggle the demands of the province with the pressures of a growing, deeply invested community and it's not easy. I appreciate the communication and invitation for input. I think prioritizing housing, with transportation and increasing our tax base through attracting more businesses to Sooke so locals can work locally while also keeping the character of this great community is an important focus for future planning, and a balance that will no doubt be hard to strike. Thank you for all you do.

Thank you for doing this survey

Appreciate having the opportunity to share my opinions. Thank you.

Thank you for this work. Sooke is a beautiful place and the changes have been positive.



# What's next?

1. Preliminary budget development
2. Service level overview: November 18, 2024
3. Budget Book Introduction for Information: December 2024
4. First Reading (introduction) of 2025 Budget at a Regular Council Meeting
5. Second Reading (initial discussion) of 2025 Budget at Regular Council Meeting
6. Third Reading (final discussion) of 2025 Budget at Regular Council Meeting
7. Community Budget Open House to inform on 2025 priorities
8. Budget Adoption