

WHAT WE HEARD.



PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION

2026 Budget

Project Overview:

Each year the City prepares an annual budget plus a budget projection for the next three years. In April and May 2025 – City Staff sought feedback from Airdrie residents and businesses on their priorities for the coming year. An information booth was available for residents at the Airdrie Home & Lifestyle Show April 12-13 and an online survey and feedback tool was available online at Involve Airdrie from April 12 to May 11, 2025. 674 residents provided feedback online and 22 businesses completed the online Business Survey. This report provides a synopsis of the feedback received by City Staff.

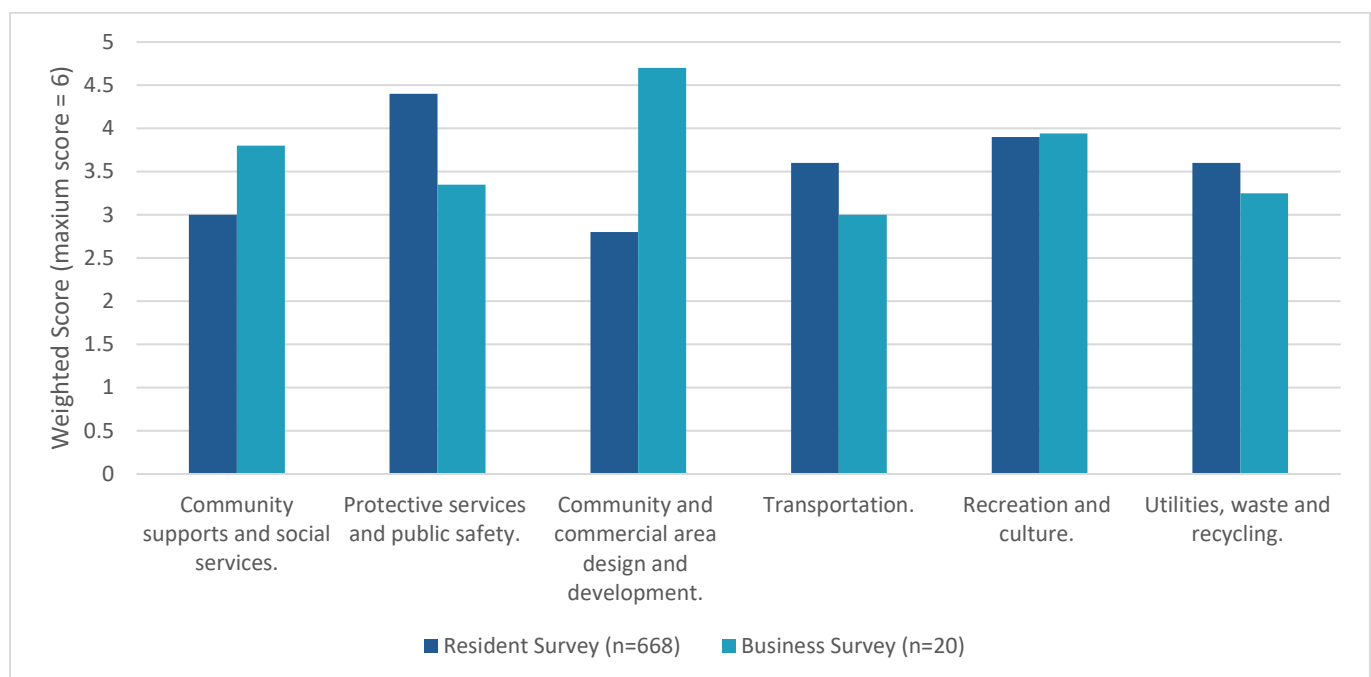
Date: May 26, 2025

Prepared by City of Airdrie

Executive Summary

Each year the City prepares an annual budget plus a budget projection for the next three years. City budgets are reviewed, deliberated and approved by Council in the fall each year.

In April and May 2025, City Staff undertook public participation on the 2026 Annual Budget in order to gather information from Airdrie residents and businesses on their priorities for the upcoming year. Participants were asked about which service areas they felt needed the most focus in the 2026 budget, as well as which services within those services areas should be a priority next year.



Overall, respondents prioritized services related to protective services and public safety expressing concerns related to increased theft and disorderly behavior, a desire for more outreach and education for Airdrie youth as well as a desire for more Bylaw enforcement related to pathway use and loud vehicles.

Respondents also want to see a focus on recreation and culture as well as transportation in the coming budget cycle. Here respondents discussed the need for more recreation indoor and outdoor amenities, maintenance of natural areas, increased tree planting, addressing traffic congestion, and expanding transit services.

The information from participants will be used by City Staff to consider as they build the 2026 budget as well as shared with Council for their consideration during budget deliberations in the Fall of 2025.

Project Information

The City of Airdrie uses principles of zero-based budgeting to create the annual budgets. This means that each City business unit starts from zero and creates a budget based on what is needed to deliver Council endorsed services and to advance Council's focus areas.

Typical operational expenses for the City include the cost to provide services such as street cleaning, recreation, water services, streetlights, trails, pathways, playgrounds, parks, public transit, arts and culture, police, fire and municipal enforcement. The utility fund covers water and waste and recycling services.

Each year the City prepares an annual budget plus a budget projection for the next three years. City budgets are reviewed, deliberated and approved by Council in the fall each year.

Public Participation Approach

In April and May 2025, City Staff undertook public participation on the 2026 Annual Budget in order to gather information from Airdrie residents and businesses on their priorities for the upcoming year.

An online opportunity for feedback was hosted on the City's online Engagement Platform, "Involve Airdrie." 674 participants provided feedback through the online feedback tools targeted to residents and 22 businesses completed the online Business Survey (also hosted on Involve Airdrie).

Participants were asked about which service areas they felt needed the most focus in the 2026 budget, as well as which services within those service area groupings should be a priority next year.

Summary of Public Participation Input

Overall respondents prioritized services related to protective services and public safety, followed by recreation and culture, transportation, utilities, community supports and social services and community and commercial area design and development – except for business survey respondents, for whom services related to commercial area design and development is a top priority.

Respondents expressed the desire that road and utility infrastructure, community amenities and facilities (recreation, arts and culture) and green spaces keep pace with population growth. And there is a desire to see more patrolling, enforcement and outreach to address concerns with disorderly behaviour, particularly from youth.

The following sections provide summaries of responses to each feedback question organized by category of question.

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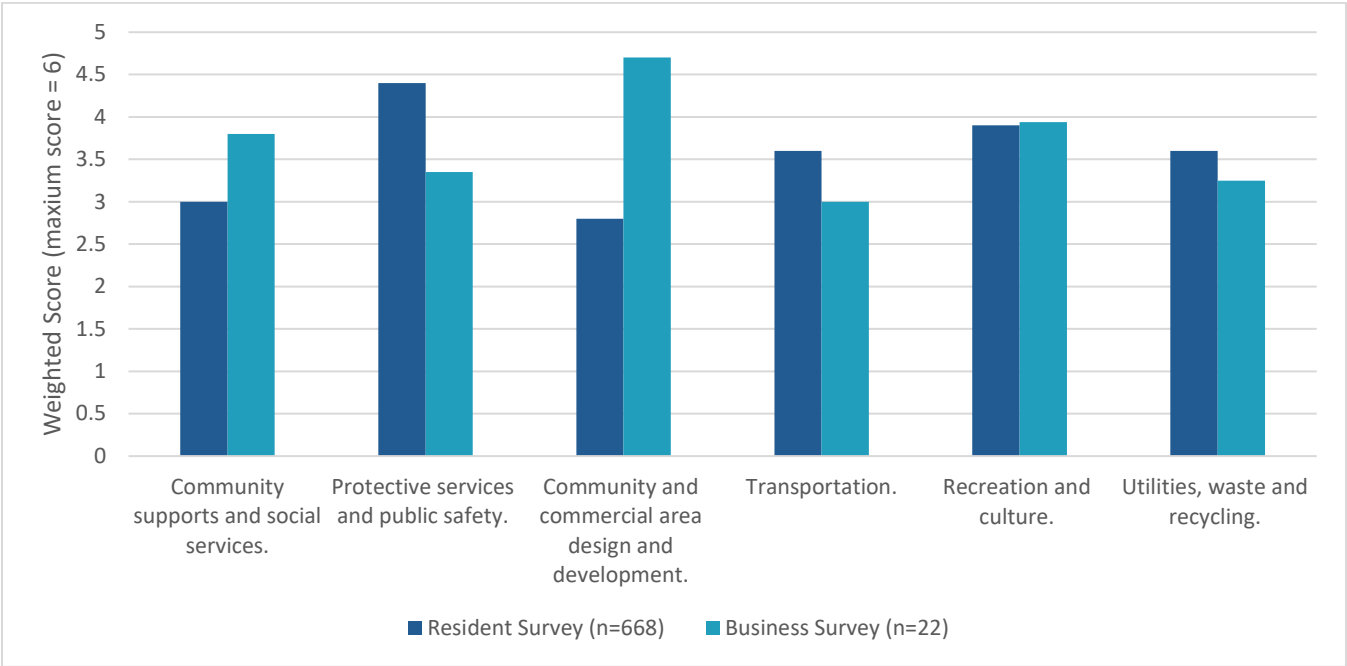
Notes:

- Numbers of respondents to individual questions in the survey are reported as n=x for example, “Resident Survey (RS) n=668”
- A single comment from a respondent may identify more than one topic which means numbers of mentions for key themes, identified in brackets such as (mentions 13), may not equal the number of comments received.

Q1 Service Areas

The Service Areas question sought to gather information about priorities across Service Areas for the coming year.

Q: What tax supported service areas do you think Council should focus on most in next year's budget? Drag and drop the service areas in the left-hand column below into your order of priority in the right-hand column.

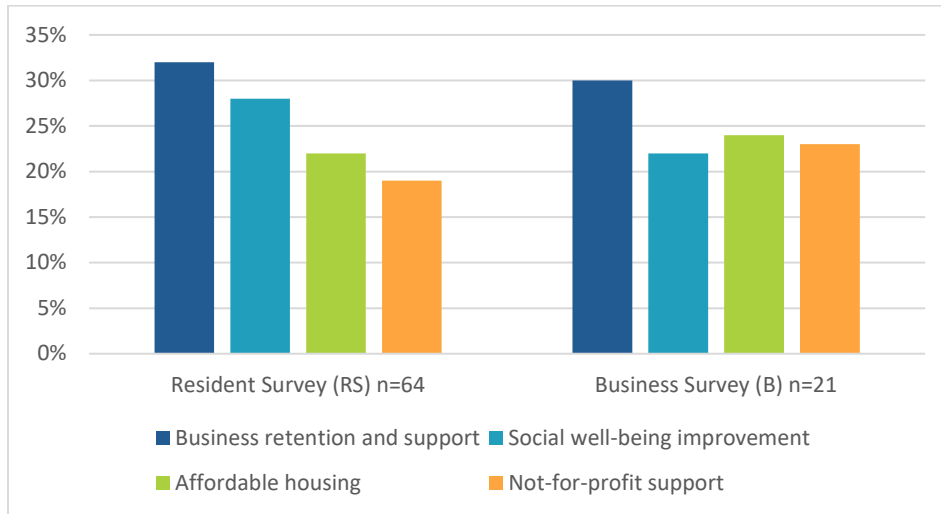


Priorities Activity

The Priorities Activity sought to gather information about service priorities within each service area described in the survey. Questions asked in each service area were as follows:

- **Resident Survey:** Use the up and down arrow buttons to allocate your 'budget' of 100 points on the services below to indicate what are your top priorities for the next year. Allocate more points to items of higher priority for you and fewer points to items you don't feel need as much focus in the next budget cycle.
- **Business Survey:** Using the slider underneath the services described here. Assign a number of points between 0 and 100 to identify your top priorities in this service area for 2025.

Q2 Community Supports and Social Services



Data Table		
	RS total # of Points	B total # of Points
Business retention and support	1950	1350
Social well-being improvement	1690	980
Affordable housing	1340	1090
Not-for-profit support	1140	1030

Q2 b. Is there anything else we should know about what is important to you related to community supports and social services?

Key Themes (Resident Comments: n=9)

1. Mental health supports (mentions 3)

- Mental health services, particularly mental health services aimed at youth was identified by some participants as a gap currently existing in Airdrie.

2. Affordable housing and social support organization (mentions 3)

- Some respondents highlighted the need for affordable housing to address unhoused populations in Airdrie, and that support for organizations that work with populations needing help such as Community Links and Airdrie Power are important.

3. Recreation/kids programming (mentions 2)

- Some respondents identified a desire for more opportunities for indoor/outdoor activities. And increased free children's activities especially in the summer.

4. Facilities for seniors' activities (mentions 1)

- There was mention of the need for an expanded facility for seniors' activities, and that with more space, the current Over 50 Club could offer more varied activities to a greater number of seniors.

5. Role of municipal government in community supports and services (mentions 1)

- One respondent mentioned that supporting well-being and businesses are actions better left to the free market.

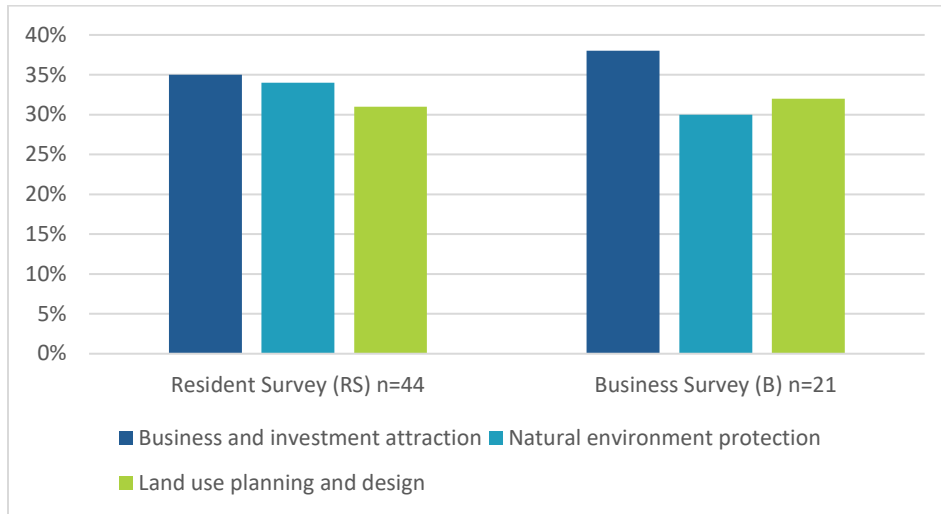
Business Comments: n=4

- Have the city sponsor an event catered to healthcare professionals to help bridge the gap between Medical Care and Alternative Care (chiropractors, naturopaths, physiotherapists, etc). This could help offload some burden on primary care medical practices, open doors for tailored care for patients, and support local businesses.
- I think it is better to find social services and help them do what they do best instead of taking that supportive role as a government. It would be helpful having the City support the local social services instead of competing against them.
- Keep expanding and maintaining pathways. Would love to see more on the east. I love it.
- Promote the businesses within the community and focus on using these businesses in day-to-day operations instead of hiring from Calgary and elsewhere.

“Mental health support for kids and teens is especially important. [...] they need help for many [...] reasons that are causing higher rates of anxiety and depression in kids and teens.”

“Community Links and Airdrie Power are incredibly important social supports for Airdrie. Prioritize providing support for these services.”

Q3 Community and Commercial Area Design and Development



Data Table		
	RS total # of Points	B total # of Points
Business and investment attraction	1540	1540
Natural environment protection	1515	1220
Land use planning and design	1345	1320

Q3 b. Is there anything else we should know about what is important to you related to community and commercial area design and development?

Key Themes (Resident Comments: n=13)

1. Urban Planning and Design (mentions 6)

- Some participants expressed a desire to reduce apartment/condominium types of housing, preferring single-family homes with yards. Others expressed a desire to see some additional apartment/condominium housing, especially in the downtown area.
- There was mention of a need for a focus on senior friendly housing that is on a single level and near pathways and parks.
- There was a desire expressed to look at ways to process zoning approvals faster for redevelopment.
- There was also a mention of a need for youth-friendly spaces.

2. Growth Management (mentions 4)

- Participants identified mixed sentiment towards the current rate of growth in Airdrie with some looking to limit growth of new residential areas and focusing on infrastructure and amenity gaps. Others called for “shovel-ready” properties for new homes and businesses.

3. Economic and commercial area development (mentions 4)

- Participants indicated a desire to reduce taxes and or leasing costs to give small businesses a chance to get established in the city.
- Participants also expressed a desire to see an increased diversity in attracting businesses of varying sizes to increase local employment opportunities. As well as areas that support arts, food, design and independent businesses (the community of Inglewood in Calgary was identified as an example) to reduce the need to travel to Calgary for such opportunities.

4. **Green Spaces and Environment:** (mentions 2)

- Participants highlighted the importance of maintaining natural spaces, pathways and parks and increasing tree cover.

Business Comments: n=7

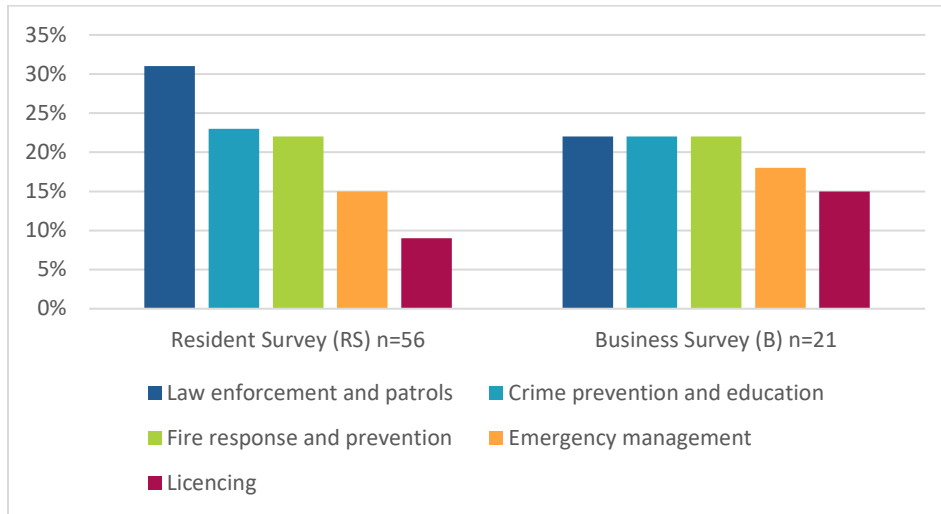
- Focus on incentivizing local businesses over larger corporations. (2 mentions)
- More focus on small spaces for small businesses located here. I find there is currently a lot of focus on developing commercial areas geared towards retail and large franchise type shops but not enough focus on supporting small growing businesses with their needs.
- Is it possible to strengthen the downtown area? Help business that will add to a great environment to get people out of their house and walk around downtown to do some shopping and spend time in their community.
- Making sure there is adequate parking
- Reduce red tape for approvals. Allow for flexible planning (if something compliments zoning consider it - helps diversify areas better too) (2 mentions)

“... The retention and use of green space, paths and recreation area[s] is a model for other growing urban areas. Keep it up!!!!”

“I would like to see more senior housing. Where seniors had a small community of single level homes, with parks and walkways, where they could enjoy their senior years living somewhat independently. “

“...more thought needs to be given to ensuring the appropriate infrastructure is in place before more residential development is approved.”

Q4 Protective Services and Public Safety



Data Table		
	RS total # of Points	B total # of Points
Law enforcement and patrols	1740	1380
Crime prevention and education	1310	1380
Fire response and prevention	1225	1380
Emergency management	835	1120
Licencing	475	940

Q4 b. Is there anything else we should know about what is important to you related to protective services and public safety?

Key Themes (Resident Comments: n=9)

1. Law Enforcement and Patrols (mentions 6)

- Some respondents expressed concern with rising levels of theft and petty crime, and expressed a desire for more patrols/presence at known trouble spots in the community (e.g. a particular 7-11 location), as well as more enforcement of speeding in subdivisions.
- Some respondents are concerned that support for policing has not kept pace with the rate of population growth, citing by way of example the much higher number of fire stations (quoted at 6-7) compared to police stations (quoted as 1).
- A suggestion was received for the City to advocate to the Federal Government for better processes to reduce releasing repeat offenders.

2. Bylaw Education and Enforcement (mentions 3)

- Some participants would like to see stricter enforcement of helmet bylaws and ebikes exceeding the speed limit on pathways, as well as enforcement of dogs off-leash on the pathways.
- Some concern was expressed that Bylaw focuses too much on traffic enforcement at the expense of other bylaws.

3. Education and youth outreach (mentions 2)

- A suggestion was received to work with youth on education and outreach to reduce increasing issues with drugs, fights and theft.

4. Emergency Preparation (mentions 1)

- A suggestion was received for more education about how to prepare in advance of increasingly intense climate events (storms) and how to respond in the aftermath to help neighbours and businesses.

5. **General Feedback** (mentions 2)

- Participants identified they feel pedestrian safety needs some attention, for example flashing crossings where there are non-intersection, high-volume roads (e.g. 24, 8 and Main Streets) and a count down display at some signalized intersections (e.g. along Yankee Valley and Veterans Boulevards)
- There was a suggestion to stop the requirement for dog licensing.

Key Themes (Business Comments: n=4)

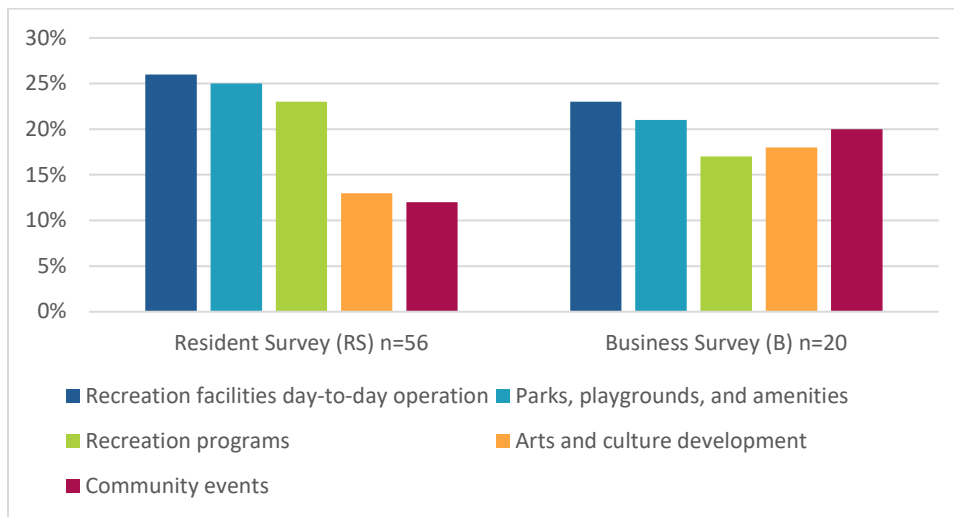
- Incentivize small businesses in downtown area to have cameras/alarm systems installed.
- Less emphasis on licensing etc. and more presence in the parks, neighborhoods and streets to deter crime, vandalism, while interacting with the public in a positive way.
- Speeding enforcement in neighbourhoods.
- Providing a police force that protects residents and their property is a priority. But other items, such as dog licencing, is not a priority.

"More education is needed for kids and teens so they can avoid getting into trouble at a young age and then having to pay for that with a youth record. ... Youth need our attention now, as they are so important to the future of the community and the country."

"The tornados and other storms are getting more severe and there needs to be education on how to protect yourself, family, neighbours and property, during these storms."

"The increase in population to Airdrie requires additional resources for emergency services in the city. Theft and petty crimes seem to be increasing among the youth age group."

Q5 Recreation and Culture



Data Table		
	RS total # of Points	B total # of Points
Recreation facilities day-to-day operation	1265	1440
Parks, playgrounds, and amenities	1205	1320
Recreation programs	1105	1050
Arts and culture development	645	1130
Community events	580	1270

Q5 b. Is there anything else we should know about what is important to you related to recreation and Culture?

Key Themes (Resident Comments: n=12)

1. Recreational Facilities and Amenities (mentions 10)

- Respondents expressed a strong interest in additional indoor recreation facilities to accommodate community need. This included interest in more ice surfaces (sooner than planned), an indoor fieldhouse, indoor, unboarded soccer arena and a new 50 m pool.
- There is a call for more facilities (perhaps combined use with an ice arena) that can host larger community events such as graduations.
- Respondents identified a desire for more outdoor sports and fitness amenities including trails, track for mountain biking and Nordic skiing, and an outdoor swimming area.
- Some concern was raised about the high cost of memberships and program fees at existing facilities.

2. Parks and Green Spaces (mentions 3)

- Respondents identified that parks and playgrounds are valuable, and events can bring people to those facilities. A desire was expressed for playgrounds to have rubber ground instead of rocks, and a desire was expressed for more trees in parks and along walking paths.
- A concern was expressed about the need for more litter pick-up in parks and green spaces. As well, a concern was expressed about staff/contractors/residents driving on newly reseeded grass areas.

3. Community Programs and Cultural Activities (mentions 3)

- Respondents suggested increasing arts and cultural activities, and a specific request to support the Airdrie Arts and Cultural Council.

- A concern was submitted that arts and culture should be left to the free market.

Key Themes (Business Comments: n=5)

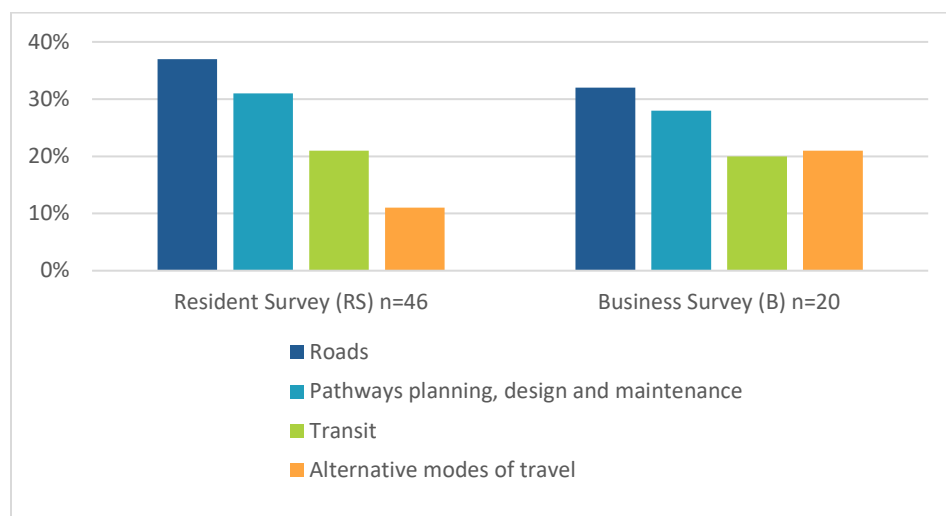
- Find ways to create partnerships between local businesses and events, or potential events, whether that be through local sponsorship, volunteering, etc.
- I believe the creative opportunities at the library can be really great. I hope the energy will be there to push more into community events and arts and culture.
- Please consider ways to reduce taxes.
- Rental prices for locations are often prohibitive for smaller events at city facilities. Could there be more price breaks for not-for-profit groups on such rentals? Is there a public calendar listing dates where the location is shown as available for events? A list of community spaces available that people may not know exist.
- Recreation has simply not kept up with population growth. Genesis place is at capacity along with the arenas. Find funding to fix these items, add more spaces, and make the arts and culture scene more accessible and interactive.

"Please provide a generous budget for tree planting. ... Council, please throw some literal shade towards your parks and pathway systems. :)"

"Genesis has become so unaffordable to families (especially single and low income) to utilize these facilities."

"I would like to see more variety of recreation options for Airdrie. We used to have things like archery here but now we have to go to Calgary."

Q6 Transportation



Data Table		
	RS total # of Points	B total # of Points
Roads	1690	1490
Pathways planning, design and maintenance	1415	1320
Transit	955	930
Alternative modes of travel	515	990

Q6 b. Is there anything else we should know about what is important to you related to Transportation?

Key Themes (Resident Comments: n=16)

1. Traffic Management and Road Infrastructure (mentions 7)

- Participants identified concerns about congested roads currently as well as concerns about increasing congestion with increased growth of population. Participants also mentioned the need for road maintenance (e.g. fixing potholes)
- Respondents identified that traffic signal operations may be contributing to traffic congestion. Specific areas with many signals and turning lanes causing confusion (e.g. Yankee Boulevard from East Lake Road), or other locations that may lack needed traffic signals (e.g. Veteran's Boulevard and 24 Street). More generally a desire was expressed for more synchronizing of traffic signals at peak times or increasing the use of sensors to control signal timing (e.g. when there is a build up of vehicles waiting in one direction, but no traffic for the direction that has the green light).

2. Pathways and small-ride transportation methods (mentions 5)

- Respondents identified the pathway system as a valued part of life in Airdrie. There was also a suggestion to add more garbage cans on pathways, and more bike parking at City facilities, with encouragement to businesses to add more bike parking too.
- Participants mentioned concerns about e-scooters, identifying that helmet laws are not enforced, that take up space where they are left after use, and that motorized scooters may be a cause for accidents on shared pathways.
- A comment was received that promoting increased use of bikes, skateboards and scooters should not be undertaken by the City.

3. **Public Transportation** (mentions 4)

- Some respondents expressed interest in more connectivity between Calgary and Airdrie to alleviate reliance on driving.
- A suggestion to extend hours of service to match the closing time of Genesis Place was received, as well as a desire for more, easy to understand routes at convenient times.
- A suggestion was received to ensure Transit is fully user funded, and that the City not pursue plans for EV buses as that has proven challenging in other jurisdictions.

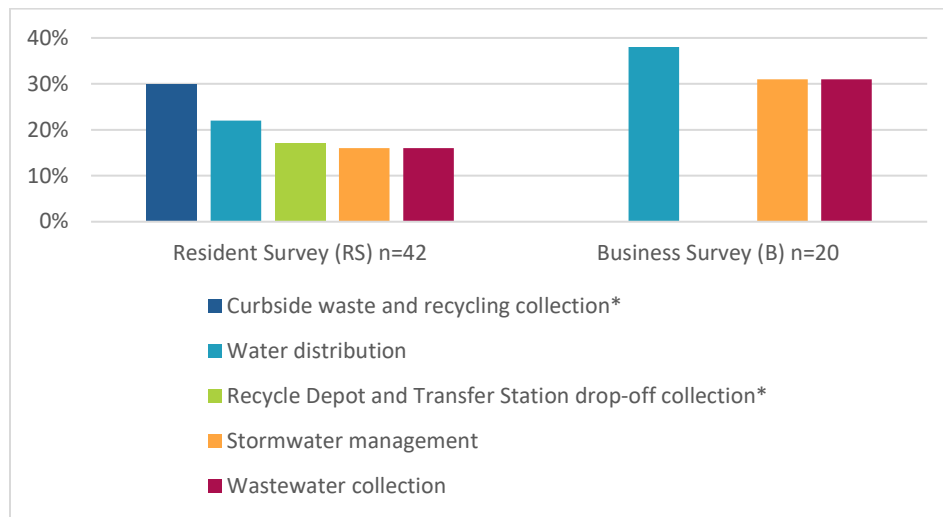
Business Comments: n=5

- Are we not large enough yet to provide evening and weekend public transit? A single city loop perhaps along the main areas like East Lake/Kings View over to 8th Ave? Encouraging this mode and reducing overall traffic congestion
- I am concerned that more money is being spent to encourage use of scooters then on fixing potholes.
- I love how the community speed limit is 30kph because it is so much safer for my kids. It would be great to have a way to better enforce that more frequently.
- I love the paths. More garbage cans please. Open areas to just be with trees.
- The pathways that link parks in the city are one of the biggest reasons Airdrie is a great place to live. More of them is a great way to define our city.

“With ebikes and motorized scooters now popular there is potential for accidents on the pathways. Perhaps speed limits or designated walking side vs bike side?”

“Airdrie's road infrastructure is just meeting the needs of the city now, but ... increasing number of residents and commuters is going to put infrastructure at capacity over the next few years.”

Q7 Utilities, Waste and Recycling



Data Table		
	RS total # of Points	B total # of Points
Curbside waste and recycling collection*	1250	n/a
Water distribution	920	1470
Recycle Depot and Transfer Station drop-off collection*	695	n/a
Stormwater management	670	1190
Wastewater collection	660	1210

*Businesses do not receive these services and the business survey did not ask about them.

Q7 b. Is there anything else we should know about what is important to you related to Utilities waste and recycling?

Key Themes (Resident Comments: n=14)

1. Waste Management and Garbage Collection (mentions 8)

- Several respondents would like to see black bins replace garbage bags for this pick-up service.
- Praise received for the recycling depot operations and staff, a desire to see the depot open 7 days a week.
- A concern was received about garbage being left un-managed or collected in construction areas.

2. Water Supply. Management and Conservation (mentions 3)

- Respondents identified some concern, considering the watermain break in Calgary last year, to ensure regular inspection and maintenance of our water related infrastructure.
- Respondents suggested encouraging water conservation, especially in the summer, perhaps using incentives or rebates.
- A comment was received to lower the rates for water in established areas.
- A suggestion was received to increase stormwater system education – to discourage release of oil, paint or other contaminants into the street.

3. General Feedback and Praise (mentions 5)

- Some residents express satisfaction with the current waste and recycling programs, commending the city and its staff for their efforts and customer service.
- Some concern was expressed about utility systems/programs becoming over-burdened with increased population growth.
- Some concerns about high utility bills.

Business Comments: n=3

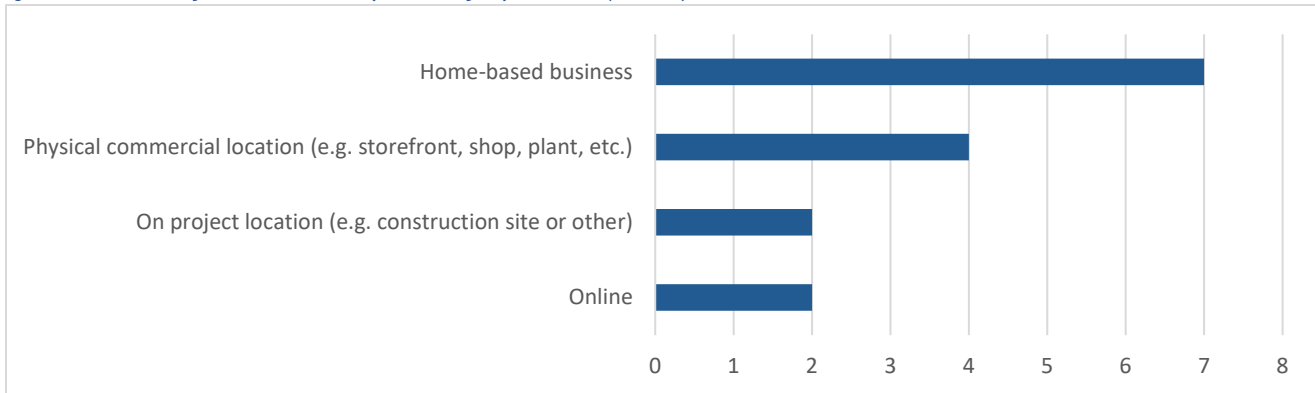
- I'm not sure how accurate your wastewater collection is. When we had the restrictions, my family greatly lowered our use of water and did many unconventional things to save water. However, our bill was unchanged. It was very discouraging and I'm not as motivated to support a restriction again as it didn't seem to show.
- It will be helpful to improve on the hardness of drinking water in Airdrie. Limescale build up on heated water is terrible and needs to be addressed.
- We really don't need black bins for garbage. The current service is working fine.

"Airdrie does well maintaining these operations but I worry that the systems could become overburdened with the sharp rise in our population and expanding communities."

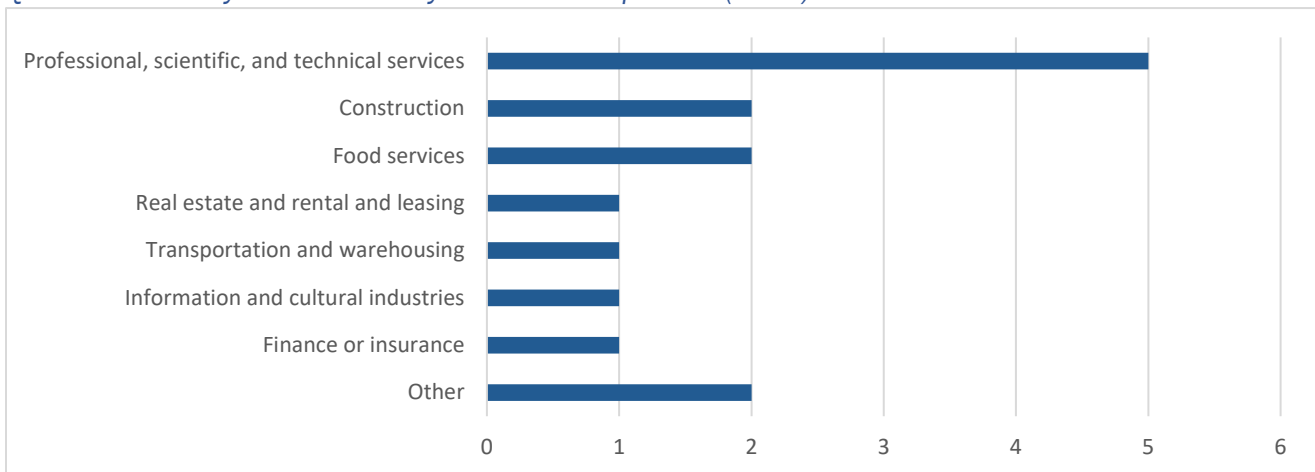
"After summer 2024, we need to make sure our water infrastructure is inspected and repaired if needed. If Calgary's water mains can break, so can ours. Airdrie found out that we could quickly become a city without water, if we weren't careful. The City should encourage water conservation, especially during summer, maybe with incentives or rebates."

Additional Results from the Business Survey

Q: Where does your business primarily operate? (n=15)

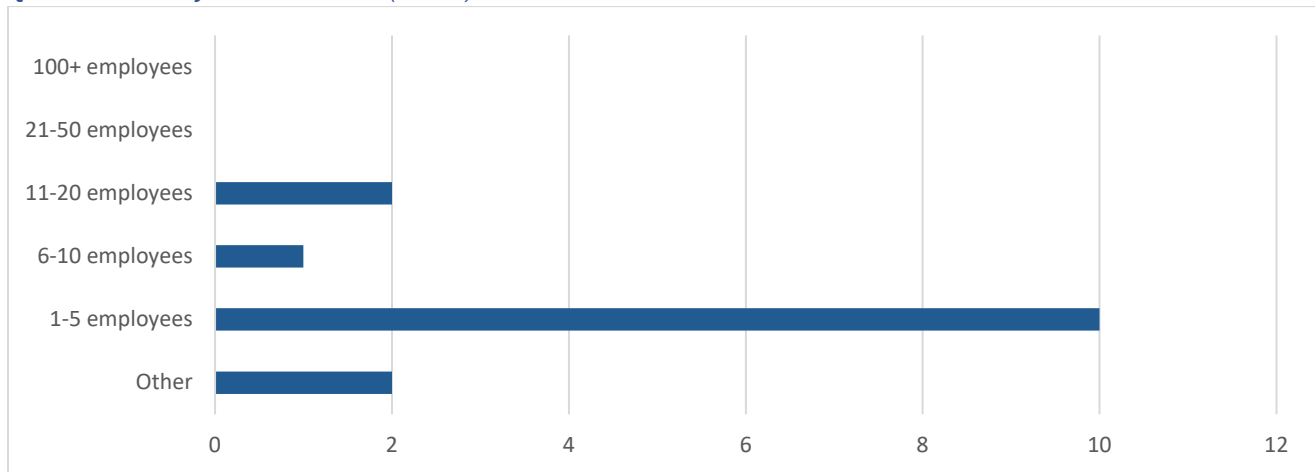


Q: In what industry or sector does your business operate? (n=15)



Other: Church, Garage equipment sales and service

Q: What size is your business? (n=15)



Other: 0 employees, volunteers

Q: Is there anything else the City should consider in preparing the budget for 2025 from the perspective of your business? (n=5)

- Focus on roads before building more housing.
- The average resident in Airdrie is paying 40% less in taxes than the average across Alberta's cities. This should be celebrated!!
- Law enforcement, water and roads should be prioritized.
- Law enforcement and crime prevention should be prioritized.
- Prioritize getting more input from citizens/residents.

What's Next & Timelines

The feedback provided by the public is used by City Staff for consideration in creating the 2026 budget. It will also be shared with Council to provide them insight into what Airdrie residents and businesses identified is important, which Council can weigh alongside many other factors and provincial obligations that they must weigh in on during budget deliberations in November 2025.

Contact Information

For more information regarding the 2026 Budget Public Engagement, please contact:

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