
Submitted by: Aleksander Lindscoog, Deputy
Treasurer/Financial Analyst

Report No: 2026-101

Council Meeting Date: Regular Council - 07 Oct 2026

Subject: 2027 Budget Survey Results

File Location: Budget-2027

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report 2026-101 from the Deputy Treasurer/Financial Analyst be received and filed for Council's information.

BACKGROUND & COMMENTS:

The Township participated in the County wide Budget Consultation Online Survey which launched June 10, 2026, and ran through to August 31, 2026. It was promoted through the Township and County websites, the Township's social media platforms, local media and tax bill inserts.

Meaningful and effective public engagement improves the quality of decisions made, facilitates citizen understanding of issues and government process, fosters respect for the views of others and increases support, understanding and ownership of decisions made.

The survey received 94 responses a decrease of 44% over 2026 (169-2026, 131-2025). Of the respondents, 61% heard about the survey through social media. Responses are attached to this report.

Service Levels

The survey illustrated how property taxes were spent in 2026 and asked residents to indicate whether the same services should be enhanced, maintained or reduced in the upcoming year.

In all service categories, the majority of respondents selected to maintain, with only an inflationary increase to taxes.

The more notable areas with respondents selecting service level enhancements and or reductions were identified as:

Enhancements:

- Health Services: 38%
- Policing: 36%
- Roads & Bridges: 31%
- Parks & Recreation: 26%

Reductions:

- General Government: 30%
- Municipal By-law and Building: 24%
- Other (Planning, Drainage, Economic Development): 23%

When asked what the respondents thought were the top 5 priorities in their community, Safe Communities - Police ranked the highest, which differs from the top result of the 2026 and 2025 surveys (Active Living - Parks, trails and recreation).

The top 5 notable service area priorities were:

1. Safe Communities - Police (43 Respondents)
2. Active Living - Parks, trails and recreation (34 Respondents)
3. Long-term Care (32 Respondents)
4. Affordable Housing (30 Respondents)
5. Infrastructure - roads, bridges and stormwater (29 Respondents)

The budget survey provides a section to provide rating comments and/or feedback as well as a section for further comments or suggestions.

Tax Dollars

When asked about the value received from Zorra Township tax dollars, 50.57% (44 respondents) (2026-43.05%) rated the overall value as fair, while 24.14% (21 respondents) (2026-27.81%) rated the overall value as poor.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There is no direct financial impact to the current budget; however, survey results referenced in the report will be considered in determining the 2027 budget.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

The content in this report supports the strategic priority outlined below, with more information available in Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

A Sustainable Community:

- Reduce municipal and greenhouse gas emissions
- Enhance and protect the health of our natural environment
- Introduce procurement policies that emphasize and recognize the impact of climate change
- Wise resource management

A Livable, Healthy Community:

- Facilitate expanded housing diversity and supply; to promote attainability
- Adopt policies to promote densification in our urban settlements
- Provide a diversity of inclusive and accessible recreation activities
- Promote a vibrant arts and culture community

A Fiscally Sustainable Community:

- Renew and reinvest in our infrastructure.
- Adopt policies to promote and support the agricultural sector.
- Attract, retain, and expand business investments to diversify the tax base and increase local employment.
- Attract and retain a municipal workforce driven to provide customer service excellence and innovative service delivery.

Governance & Corporate Excellence:

- Identify and commit to opportunities for Zorra to provide an enhanced customer service experience. Learn from past mistakes and improve.
- Ensure organization and financial alignment to achieve Strategic Priorities and meet the needs of our growing community.
- Be accountable to the public through open and responsive government.
- Ensure Zorra is organizationally resilient, ready to adapt, and succeed in a changing environment.

ATTACHMENTS:

[2027 Budget Survey - Zorra](#)

Approved By:

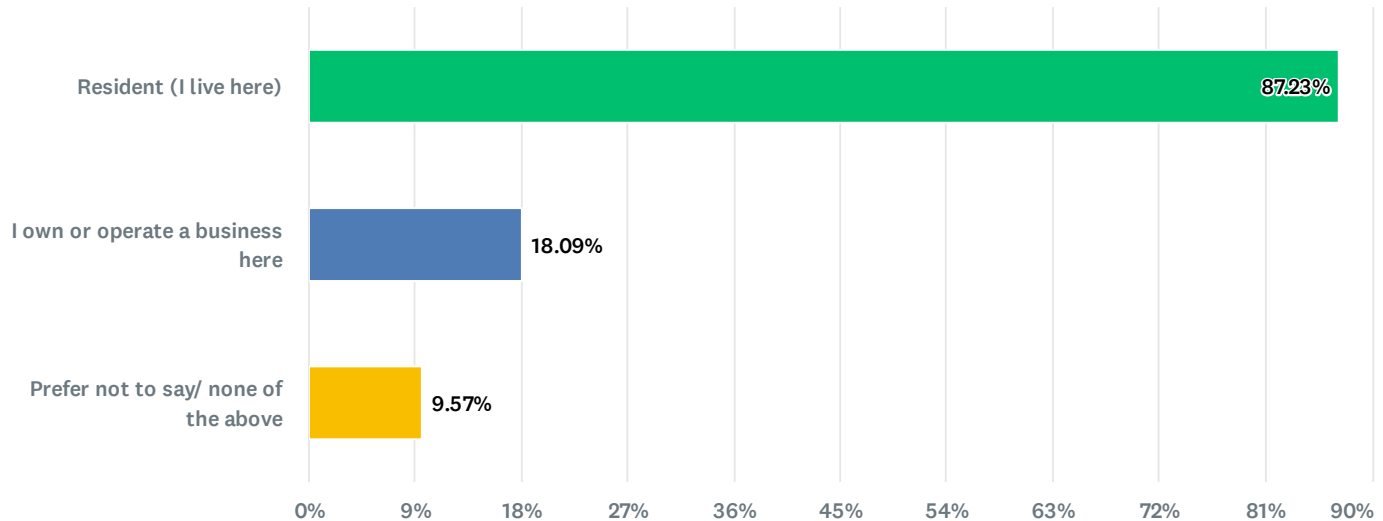
Diane Larder, Chief Administrative Officer
Karen Martin, Director of Corporate and Protective Services

Status:

Approved - 23 Sep 2026
Approved - 25 Sep 2026

Q1 94 responses

Tell us about yourself Which of the following statements describes your connection to Zorra Township? Please select all that apply.

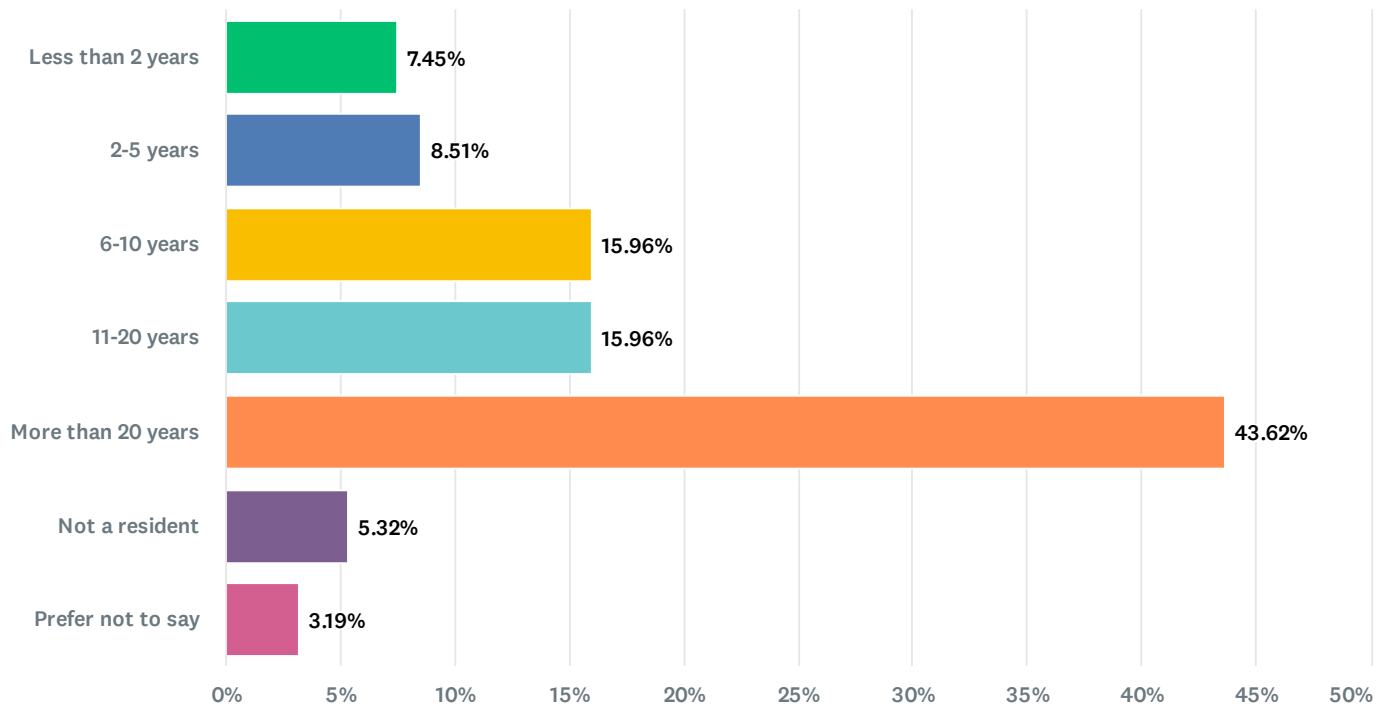


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Resident (I live here)	87.23%	82
● I own or operate a business here	18.09%	17
● Prefer not to say/ none of the above	9.57%	9
Total		108

#	OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN)	DATE
1	Farm in zorra	6/26/2026 6:55 AM

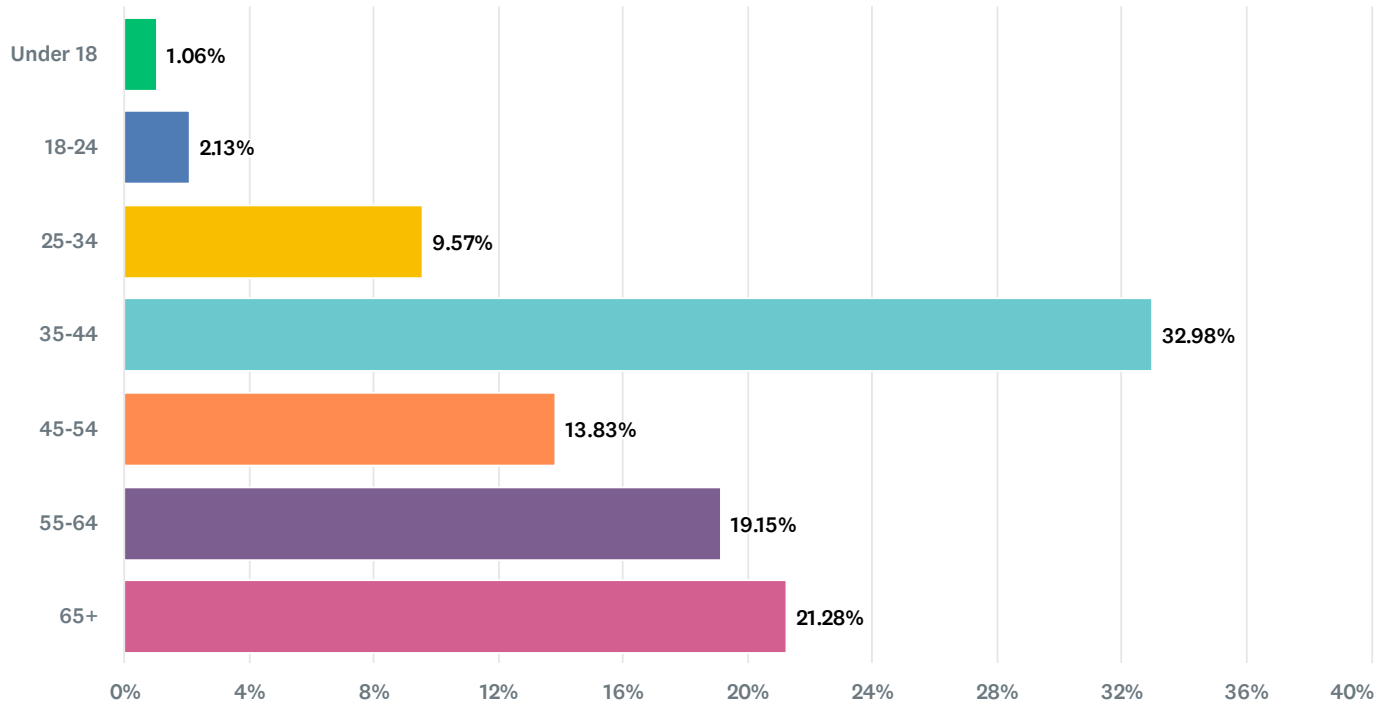
Q2 94 responses

How many years have you lived in Zorra Township?



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Less than 2 years	7.45%	7
● 2-5 years	8.51%	8
● 6-10 years	15.96%	15
● 11-20 years	15.96%	15
● More than 20 years	43.62%	41
● Not a resident	5.32%	5
● Prefer not to say	3.19%	3
Total		94

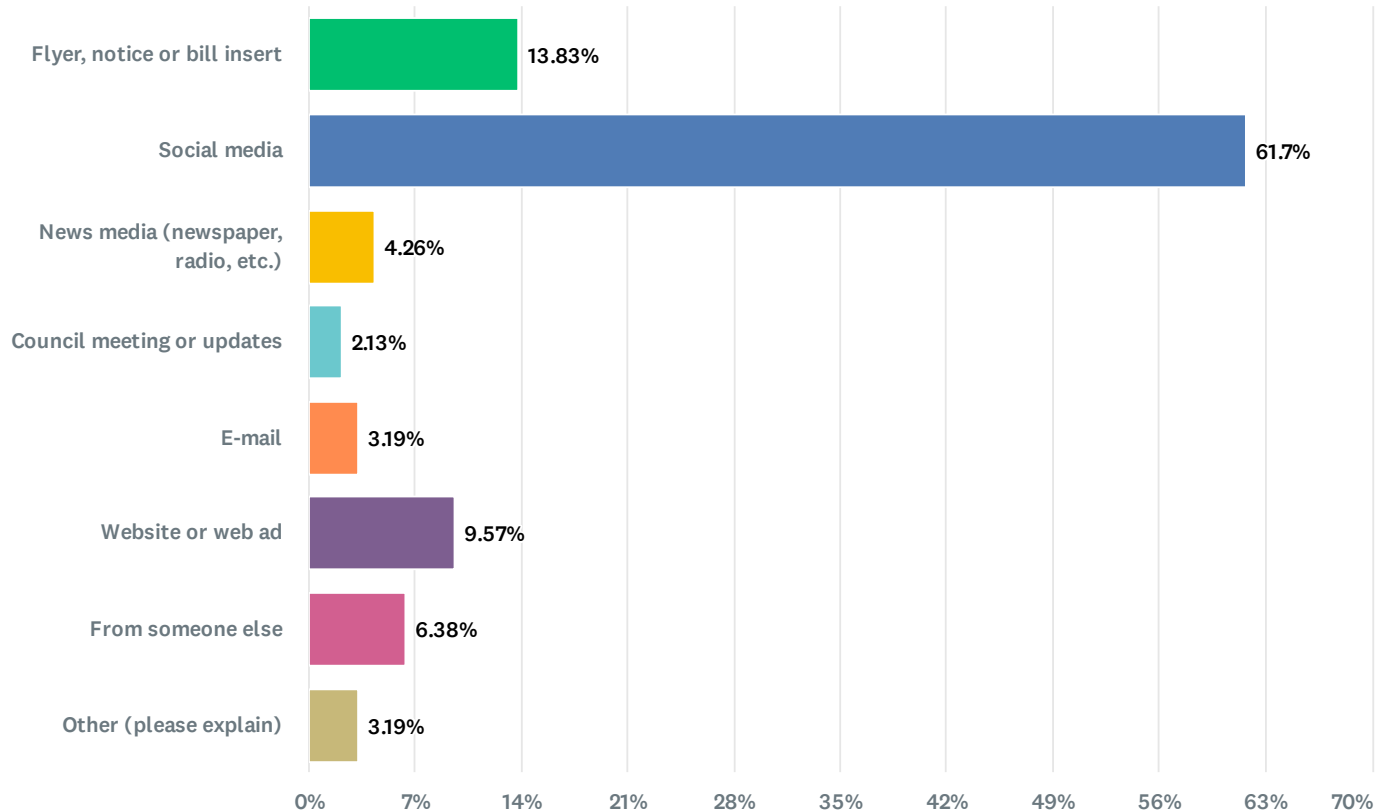
Q3 94 responses

What is your age?

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Under 18	1.06%	1
● 18-24	2.13%	2
● 25-34	9.57%	9
● 35-44	32.98%	31
● 45-54	13.83%	13
● 55-64	19.15%	18
● 65+	21.28%	20
Total		94

Q4 94 responses

How did you hear about this survey? Check all that apply.



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Flyer, notice or bill insert	13.83%	13
● Social media	61.70%	58
● News media (newspaper, radio, etc.)	4.26%	4
● Council meeting or updates	2.13%	2
● E-mail	3.19%	3
● Website or web ad	9.57%	9
● From someone else	6.38%	6
● Other (please explain)	3.19%	3
Total		98

#	OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN)	DATE
1	seen the pop-up when I went to Zorra's page	8/19/2026 1:33 PM
2	Woodingford	6/23/2026 1:02 PM
3	Township office	6/10/2026 3:40 PM

Q5 87 responses

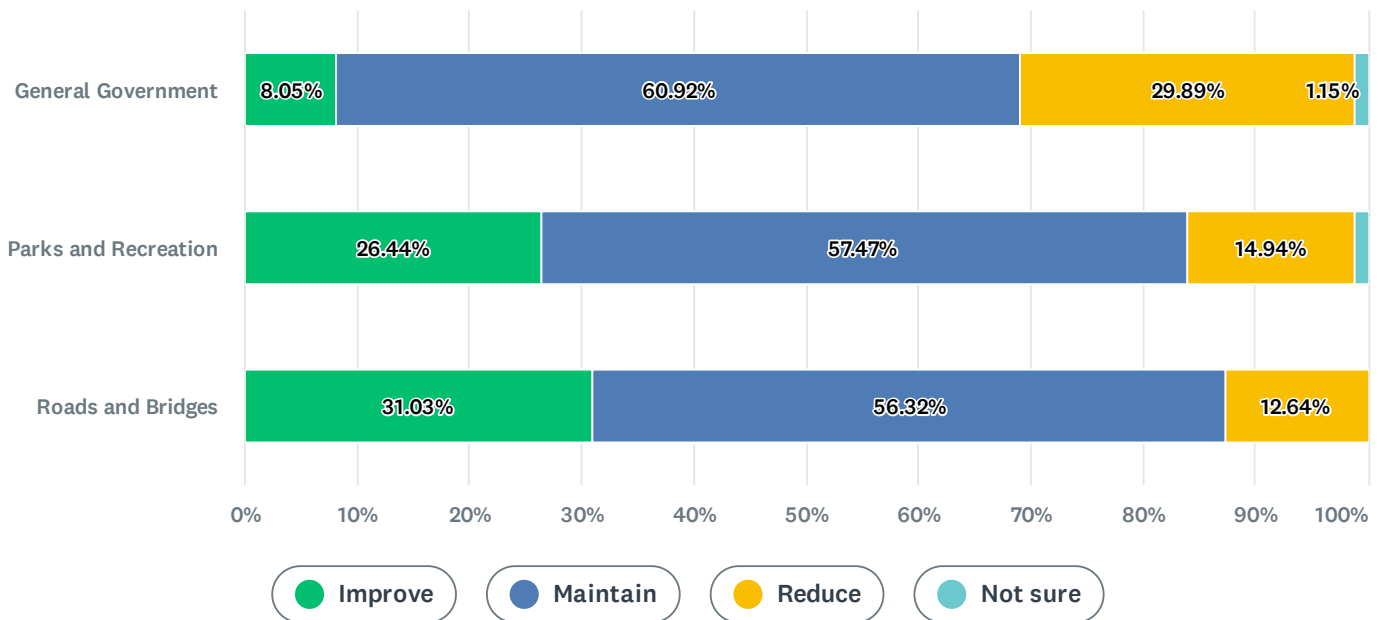
The following questions are about services funded through Zorra Township tax dollars and delivered by the Township. For each, you will be given the tax paid per household in 2026* and then asked if the service should be: Improved, even if it means a tax increase Maintained, with only an inflationary increase to taxes Reduced to lower taxes *Household is based on the average residential MPAC Assessment of \$275,000

General Government Approximately \$82 per household in 2026 Council, CAO Office, and Corporate Services (Clerks, Finance, Asset Management)

Parks and Recreation Approximately \$254 per household in 2026 Recreation programs Parks and recreation facilities (e.g., community centres, arenas, public pool, splash pad, parks, trails) Local sports and special events

Roads and Bridges Approximately \$1,047 per household in 2026 Roadway system maintenance, including sidewalk repairs, road repairs, pothole repairs, snowplowing, snow removal, traffic signs, and streetlights

The Township maintains 475 kilometers roads, 69 bridges structures/culverts with span over 3 metres, and 30282 square metres of sidewalks

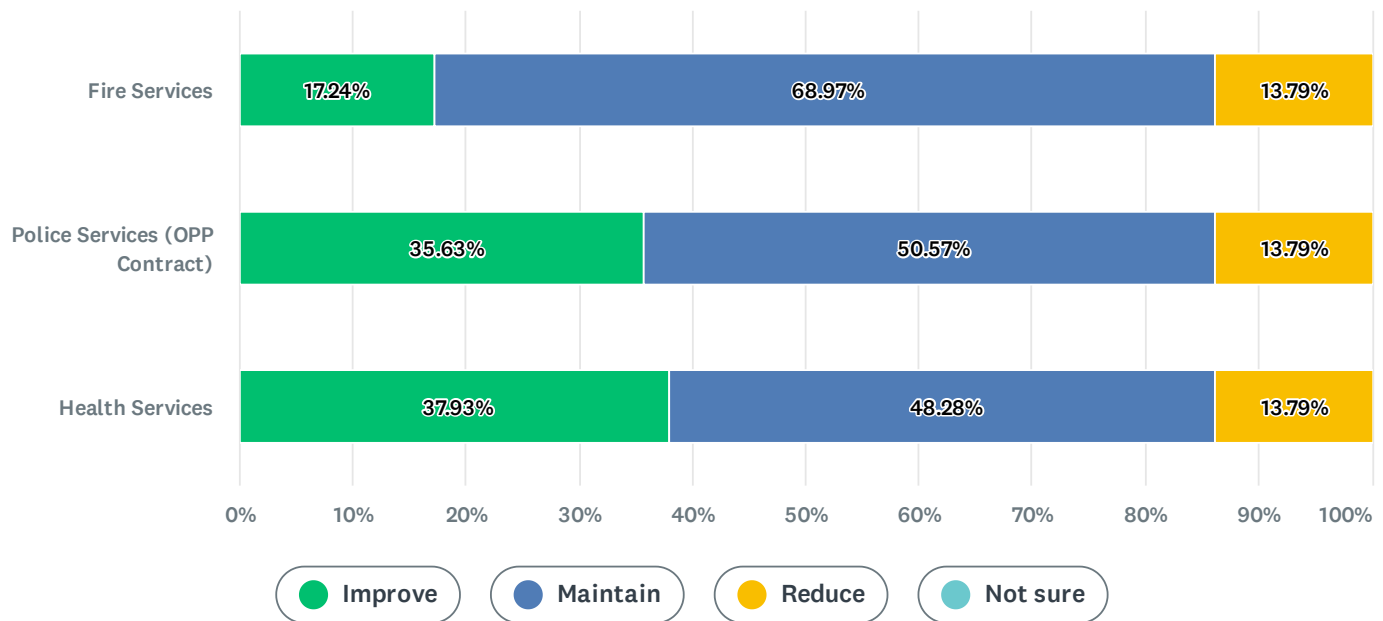


	Improve	Maintain	Reduce	Not sure	Total
General Government	8.05%	60.92%	29.89%	1.15%	87
	7	53	26	1	
					261

	 Improve	 Maintain	 Reduce	 Not sure	Total
Parks and Recreation	26.44% 23	57.47% 50	14.94% 13	1.15% 1	87
Roads and Bridges	31.03% 27	56.32% 49	12.64% 11	0% 0	87
					261

Q6 87 responses

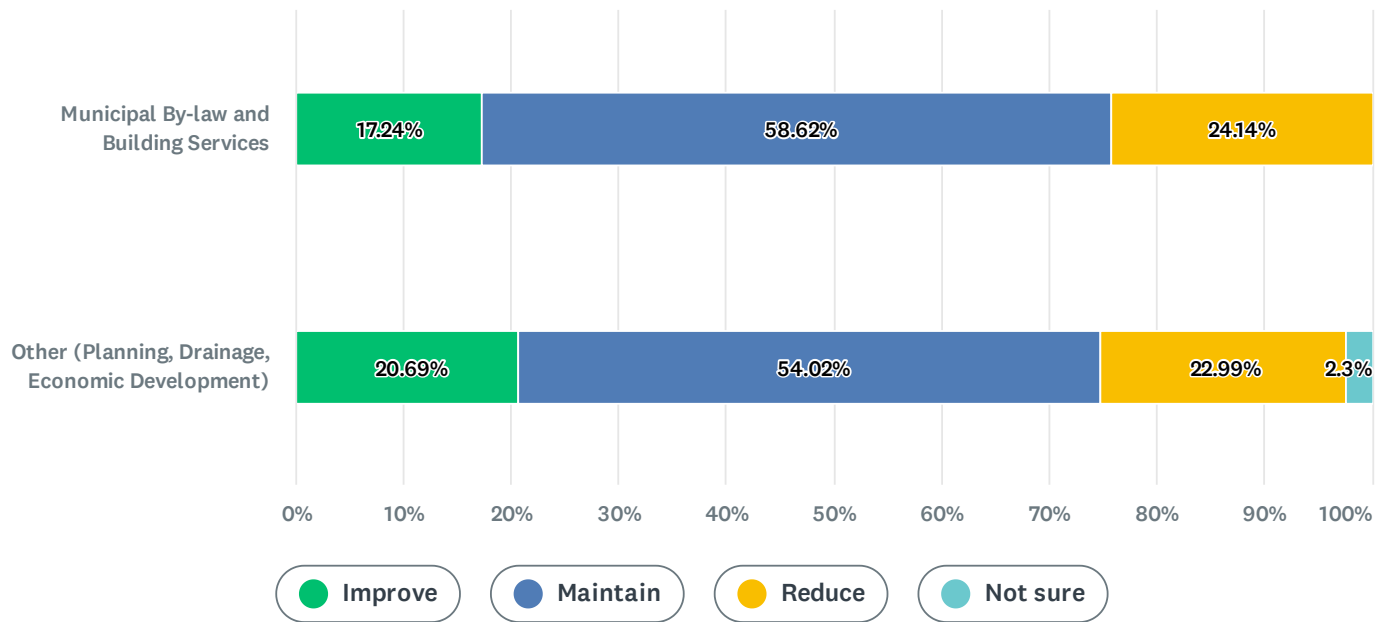
Should the following services be: Improved, even if it means a tax increase
 Maintained, with only an inflationary increase to taxes
 Reduced to lower taxes
 Fire Services Approximately \$221 per household in 2026
 Fire suppression services, fire prevention programs, training and education, and emergency rescue services
 Police Services (OPP Contract) Approximately \$205 per household in 2026
 Policing services that maintain the safety and security of all citizens
 Health Services Approximately \$25 per household in 2026
 Cemeteries and medical services



	Improve	Maintain	Reduce	Not sure	Total
Fire Services	17.24% 15	68.97% 60	13.79% 12	0% 0	87
Police Services (OPP Contract)	35.63% 31	50.57% 44	13.79% 12	0% 0	87
Health Services	37.93% 33	48.28% 42	13.79% 12	0% 0	87
					261

Q7 87 responses

Should the following services be: Improved, even if it means a tax increase
 Maintained, with only an inflationary increase to taxes Reduced to lower taxes
 Municipal By-Law Enforcement and Licenses Approximately \$7 per household in
 2026 By-law enforcement for regulations involving parking, property maintenance,
 noise, animal control and business licensing Other Approximately \$27 per
 household in 2026 Planning, Drainage, Economic Development



	Improve	Maintain	Reduce	Not sure	Total
Municipal By-law and Building Services	17.24% 15	58.62% 51	24.14% 21	0% 0	87
Other (Planning, Drainage, Economic Development)	20.69% 18	54.02% 47	22.99% 20	2.30% 2	87
					174

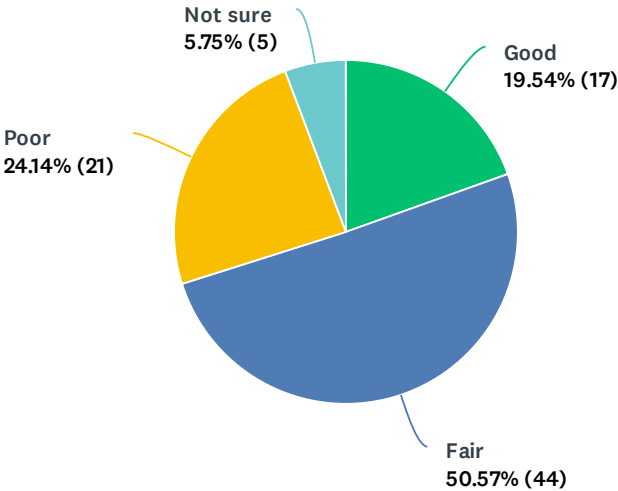
Q8 Do you have any feedback or comments about your ratings?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 81

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Our taxes are insane and increases are perpetually way larger than inflation. Negotiate better contracts, figure it out.	8/30/2026 6:35 PM
2	Last fall the county/ township couldn't even erect winter snow fences correctly. They put up the post, but not the fence.What a waste of labour	8/26/2026 9:46 PM
3	Start charging farmers higher tax on farm land they are willing to pay 50,000 per acre of land 5 times land production value but yet you charge a person making 45000 annual more tax on there home Business gets charged huge rates for property tax farmers next to nothing they are the top wealthiest people in the country yet pay next to no taxes and are the ones that use 95 percent of services Increase farm taxes decrease business and residential	8/22/2026 7:00 AM
4	Tax increases have been way more than government posted inflation. An example is too many road crews doing make work projects.	7/30/2026 7:25 AM
5	stop hiring more administration staff every year spending more than \$3,000,000 for part of a gymnasium in the new Thamesford school co-build is an irresponsible waste of money	7/29/2026 1:47 PM
6	we need more OPP presence, seeing them once a week just sitting somewhere isn't really doing it.	7/26/2026 12:13 PM
7	Quality of by-law enforcement is very low. No response to by-law complaints. No followup. Parking on lawns, wrong side of street, boats/RV's all over the place in Thamesford.	7/17/2026 8:40 AM
8	Please get the Thamesford Arena a new water heater for the dressing rooms.	7/6/2026 7:38 PM
9	The state of the gravel roads in zorra is very poor. Better drainage and more hard surfacing is needed.	7/2/2026 4:30 PM
10	When you view the municipal directories on the county web site, Zorra has more staff listed than any other body. .. I've had a couple interactions in past year and each person says someone else will answer my question.. and no one does	6/22/2026 2:46 PM
11	I think there is money that is being spent that needs a second look. Maybe these generalized groupings could be refined. Why do we need economic development? Doesn't Thamesford have enough already? We're about to get another 1000 houses - that the province wants the existing homeowners to foot the bill for the necessary infrastructure to accommodate all those homes.	6/20/2026 12:22 AM
12	The size of Zorra staff has ballooned in recent years. We have looked after staff with new facilities It's is now time to invest in in our roads network	6/11/2026 7:45 PM
13	Improve gravel roads, ditch mowing and snow removal on gravel roads	6/11/2026 9:53 AM

Q9 87 responses

MPAC (Municipal Property Assessment Corporation) is responsible for assessing and classifying all properties in Ontario. The property assessments MPAC provides are what municipalities use to base the property taxes needed to pay for services. Property assessments for the 2026 property tax year continue to be based on January 1, 2016 current values. The average residential property in Zorra Township is assessed by MPAC with a value of \$275,000, based on January 1, 2016 values. In 2026, the Zorra Township share of municipal taxes for the average residential property is \$1,868.*How would you rate the overall value received from your Zorra Township tax dollars?* This does not include the part of your municipal tax bill that is paid to Oxford County and to your preferred Ontario school board.



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Good	19.54%	17
Fair	50.57%	44
Poor	24.14%	21
Not sure	5.75%	5
Total		87

Q17 83 responses

Other comments and suggestions Now it's your chance to provide additional information relevant to building next year's budget. What would you say are the Top 5 priorities for your community right now? Please select 5.

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Safe communities – Police	51.81%	43
● Active living – Parks, trails and recreation	40.96%	34
● Long-term care	38.55%	32
● Affordable housing	36.14%	30
● Infrastructure - Roads, bridges and stormwater	34.94%	29
● Snow/ice control	28.92%	24
● Safe communities – Paramedic Services	20.48%	17
● Safe communities – Fire	19.28%	16
● Communication and transparency	19.28%	16
● Economic Development	18.07%	15
● Public Health (Southwestern Public Health)	16.87%	14
● Social concerns – Poverty	15.66%	13
● Information - High-speed internet	15.66%	13
● Downtown revitalization	15.66%	13
● Social concerns – Child care	14.46%	12
● Active transportation (e.g., pedestrian and cycling infrastructure)	13.25%	11
● Infrastructure – Water and wastewater	13.25%	11
● Environment/climate change/sustainability	13.25%	11
● Quality neighbourhoods – Property standards and by-law	12.05%	10
Total		415

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 Quality neighbourhoods – Planning	12.05%	10
 Library services	12.05%	10
 Waste management - Curbside collection (garbage and new organics program in 2026-2027)	10.84%	9
 Waste management – Waste disposal (Landfill)	8.43%	7
 Emergency Management	8.43%	7
 Transit	6.02%	5
 Arts and culture	3.61%	3
Total		415

Q18 Are there any further comments or suggestions you would like us to consider for either Zorra Township or Oxford County's 2027 budget?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 76

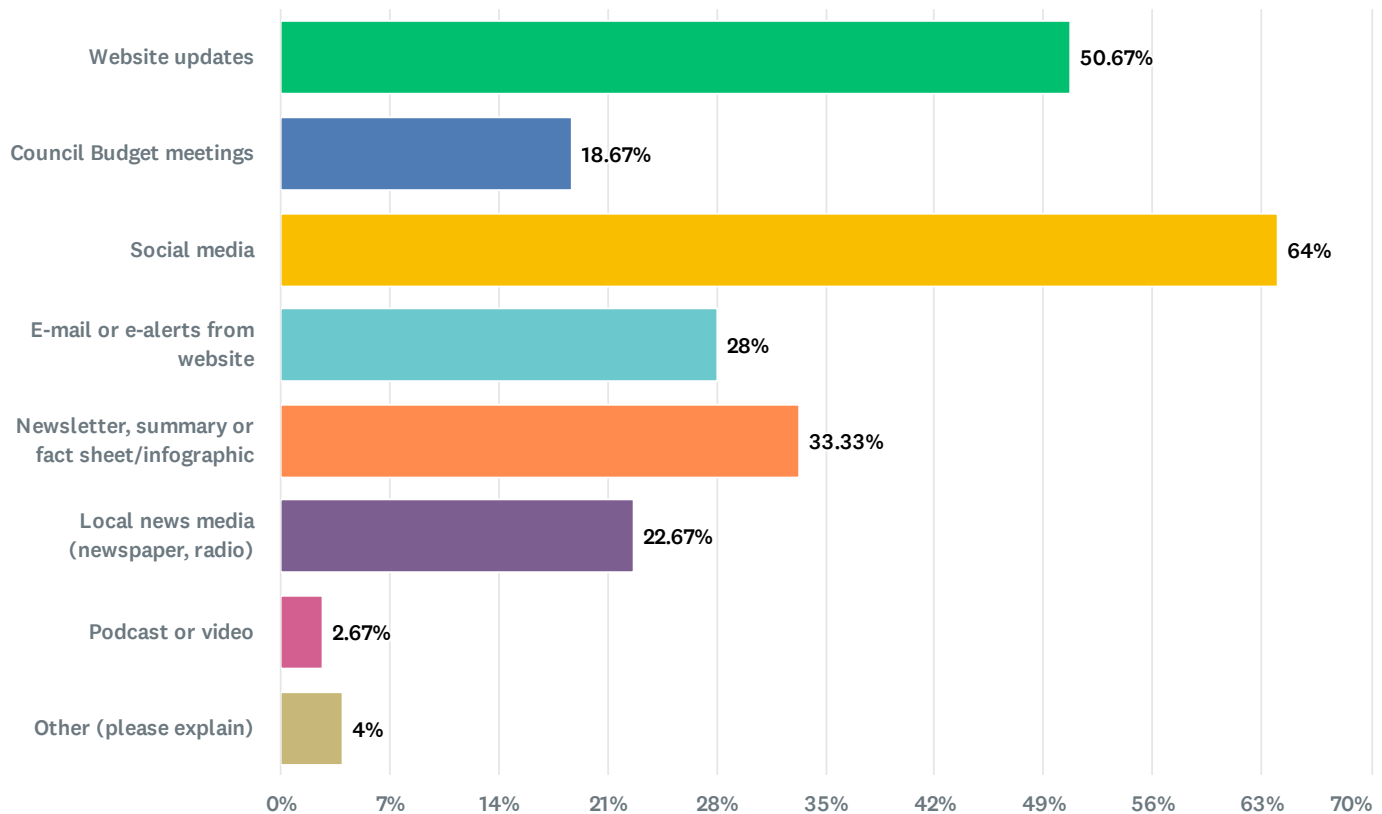
#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Great survey! I learned so much	8/31/2026 6:40 AM
2	The services we get are quite good. The cost is out of control though and needs to come down.	8/30/2026 6:43 PM
3	Better communication about how and where tax dollars go. More accountability from school boards on decisions made in London that affect rural Zorra.	8/30/2026 4:05 PM
4	Improve efficiency reduce waste. Drop the woke ideology. We have enough of that at the federal level.	8/26/2026 9:51 PM
5	We need affordable housing without using the valuable farmland	8/24/2026 3:52 PM
6	Figure out how to charge less taxes off less services give back to residents rather than keep increasing everything all the time Should cut 5 percent for three years including employment you would be amazed at what you save with little impact on services Decrease residential and business tax make farmers pay more	8/22/2026 7:08 AM
7	Protect the environment, land,water, air and all species	8/11/2026 3:22 PM
8	Zorra needs to listen to residents and not just do what they want. Thamesford is a mess and will only get worse.	7/30/2026 10:50 AM
9	No DEI No ideological No climate change or green Enforcement of existing bylaws No ATV's or dirt bikes on any road No open air burning whatsoever Limit any tax increases to government posted inflation as a maximum. Reduce the number of employees.	7/30/2026 7:47 AM
10	concentrate on providing basic services and maintaining infrastructure and reduce spending and using resources on social and environmental issues	7/29/2026 1:48 PM
11	My mother has been waiting for a long term care bed for 5 years, getting burnout and Woodingford lodge needs to do something to help the crisis in Oxford	7/22/2026 4:21 PM
12	Yes. Get rid of DEI policies. Remove any spending in all departments on gender ideology. Thank you.	7/3/2026 10:38 PM
13	Grocery store should be in the village with the number of homes, Dollarama too - helps people stayed employed in the village they live and raise their family.	7/1/2026 1:58 PM
14	Improve gravel road maintenance.	6/26/2026 7:03 AM
15	Avoid duplication along boundary roads. Garbage / recycling goes by twice per week as we are on twp boundary. Also, fibre internet is rolling out for each township. We have 2 fibre services installed along our road. Lots of other examples. We own farm which accounts for majority of our tax bill but receives virtually no benefit. Why should our farm pay for daycare in Thamesford or recreation programming, etc. Similar to our farm having to pay for municipal drain repairs yet we cannot connect to the drain (due to an assessment in 1972 and no response from twp to request for review.	6/22/2026 2:59 PM
16	I do not look forward to a changing garbage pick-up day after having it picked-up on Monday for the last 18 years. Please find a way for Thamesford to keep the weekly Monday pick-up. Also, I do not plan to participate in your organic pickup program. I would rather have you prioritize picking up leaves and brush over kitchen scraps.	6/20/2026 12:39 AM
17	Embro community centre- snow days/PA days open the arena for use and not charging top dollar. Rent it out for \$50/private rental or \$5/ child to skate if it is sitting empty. You already have staff there.	6/11/2026 10:45 AM

18 Autism social group for adults. Somewhere to make connections. There is no "safe" transit to Ingersoll for people with disabilities. Maybe once a week para transit to the grocery store. Maybe a grocery store in Thamesford.

6/10/2026 3:59 PM

Q19 75 responses

In addition to this survey, there are other ways to learn more and have a say on the budget process. How would you like to be informed about the Oxford County and/or the Township of Zorra budgets? Select all that apply.



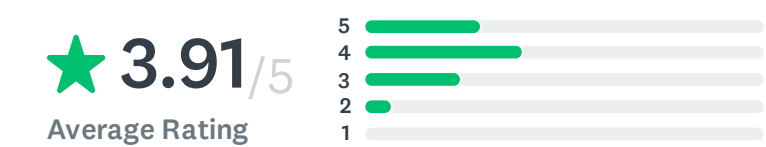
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Website updates	50.67%	38
● Council Budget meetings	18.67%	14
● Social media	64.00%	48
● E-mail or e-alerts from website	28.00%	21
● Newsletter, summary or fact sheet/infographic	33.33%	25
● Local news media (newspaper, radio)	22.67%	17
● Podcast or video	2.67%	2
Total		168

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 Other (please explain)	4.00%	3
Total		168

#	OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN)	DATE
1	None learn to spend less on this stuff	8/22/2026 7:08 AM
2	Nothing official should be posted on social media, etc.	7/6/2026 7:41 PM
3	.	7/2/2026 4:41 PM

Q20 58 responses

How would you rate this survey?



Rating	Percentage	Responses
1 / 5	0%	0
2 / 5	6.90%	4
3 / 5	24.14%	14
4 / 5	39.66%	23
5 / 5	29.31%	17
Average 3.91		58