

2026 BUDGET SURVEY ANALYSIS

Prepared for the City of Vancouver

October 2025



Background, Objectives and Methodology



2026 Budget Background

Each year, the City of Vancouver must deliver a balanced budget while managing services. Public input on the budget helps inform Council when deliberating the draft annual budget. **This report presents the findings of the City's 2026 Budget Survey.** The survey was fielded on the City's Talk Vancouver platform. Ipsos' role was to analyze the data and prepare a summary report.



Engagement Objectives

- Understand priorities for City spending in 2026
- Understand preferences for delivering a balanced budget in 2026
- Understand tolerance for property tax increases



Methodology

- Online survey with a self-selected sample of Vancouver residents (15+ years) and business owners/operators
- Survey was promoted across City communication channels, the City's Talk Vancouver engagement panel, posters at community centres and libraries, and at in-person pop-ups
- Fielded Aug. 12 to Sept. 14, 2025
- Final data weighted by age, gender and geographic zone (residents) and business size (businesses)



Who We Heard From

- n=6346 total responses
 - n=5417 residents
 - n=929 businesses

See Sample Characteristics at the end of this report for more information

*A self-selected sample provides valuable insights into the perspectives of Vancouver residents and businesses, though it may not fully represent the perspectives of the broader Vancouver population.

RESULTS

Top 2026 Budget Priorities

- Residents and businesses agree that the top budget priorities should be to "deliver high-quality City services and infrastructure" (62% residents, 60% businesses) and "work with partners to address the local housing crisis" (54% residents, 51% businesses).
- These were also the top two priorities for the 2025 Budget, although the emphasis placed on these priorities by businesses has increased.

Residents (n=5417)



Businesses (n=929)



Base: All respondents

Q1. Which of the Council priorities listed above do you think are most important for the 2026 Budget? Select up to three.

↑ ↓ Changes >5 points vs. 2025 Budget Survey

Top 2026 Budget Priorities: Demographic Differences (Residents)

- City services and infrastructure is the top priority across all age groups, although residents aged 15-39 years place a nearly equal emphasis on housing.
- Renters prioritize housing as their number one priority, whereas homeowners focus primarily on City services and infrastructure.

	TOTAL	AGE			GEOGRAPHIC AREA*					HOUSING TENURE	
		15-39	40-59	60+	Downtown/ West End	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	Rent	Own
Base:	5417	2433	1660	1225	1034	1298	1211	1049	825	2731	2561
Deliver high-quality City services and infrastructure	62%	63%	62%	61%	61%	62%	65%	60%	65%	59%	66%
Work with partners to address the local housing crisis	54%	62%	50%	45%	55%	59%	54%	56%	45%	69%	39%
Manage public funds, resources and staff responsibly as part of good governance	33%	20%	37%	53%	33%	25%	33%	32%	42%	21%	46%
Respond to climate emergency	32%	38%	27%	26%	27%	36%	33%	33%	29%	36%	27%
Enable a healthy, inclusive and equitable city	31%	33%	32%	24%	28%	35%	32%	32%	27%	35%	26%
Support the local economy to help businesses thrive	22%	17%	23%	28%	23%	18%	23%	19%	25%	14%	29%
Invest in emergency planning and services to make Vancouver safe	20%	16%	21%	26%	24%	15%	19%	19%	23%	14%	26%
Support and advance reconciliation	14%	20%	13%	5%	13%	21%	12%	16%	10%	21%	7%
Support Vancouver as a vibrant and diverse city	13%	14%	13%	10%	16%	12%	14%	12%	10%	12%	14%

Base: All residents

Q1. Which of the Council priorities listed above do you think are most important for the 2026 Budget? Select up to three.

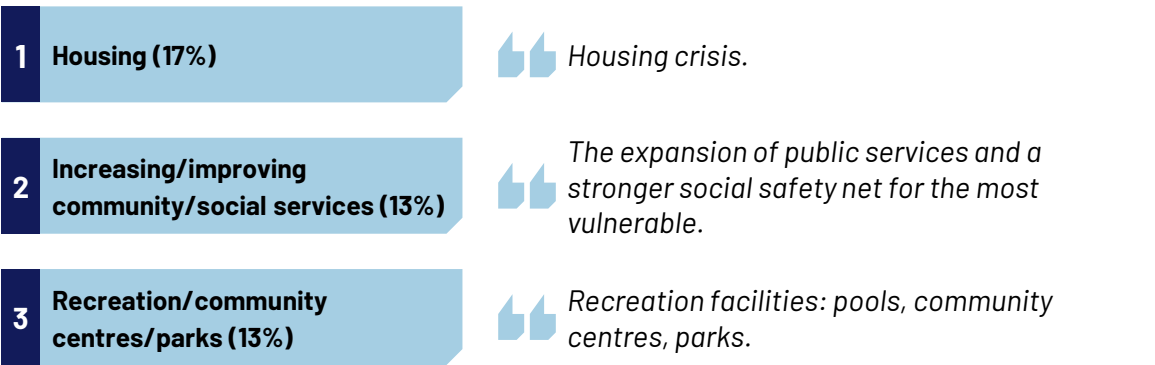
Top Priority	2 nd Priority	3 rd Priority
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* Geographic areas: Downtown/West End, Northeast – North of 16th Ave. and east of Main Street, Northwest – North of 16th Ave. and west of Main St., Southeast – South of 16th Ave. and east of Main St., Southwest – South of 16th Ave. and west of Main St.)

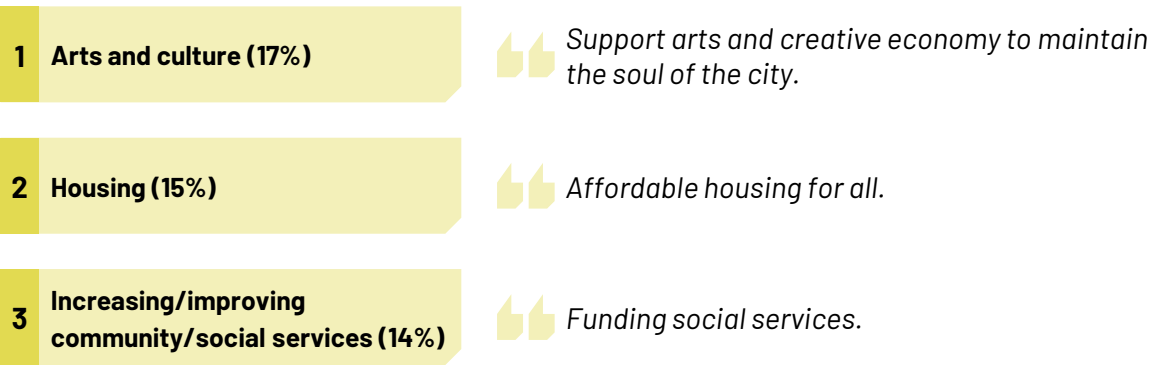
Other Priorities for 2026 Budget – Top Three Mentions

- Respondents were asked if they had any suggestions for other priorities that should be considered for the 2026 Budget. The following includes coded open-ended comments (with example verbatims) from residents and businesses that completed this survey question.
- Housing and the enhancement of community/social services are among the top mentions of both residents and businesses.
- Residents also emphasize the importance of recreation/community centres/parks, while businesses highlight support for arts and culture.

Residents (n=2624)



Businesses (n=528)



Base: Those answering
Q1a. Do you have any other priorities that should be considered for the 2026 Budget?

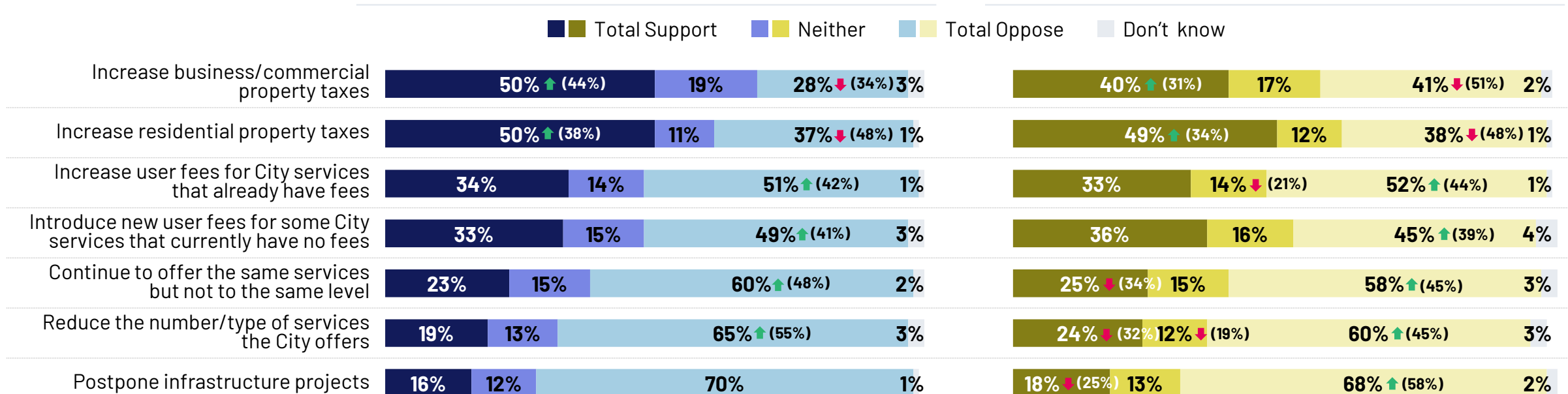


Support for Financial Tools to Balance the Budget

- Relative to other options presented for balancing the budget, increasing residential and business/commercial property taxes received the highest support, with 50% of residents surveyed favoring each. Support for both options has risen since last year. However, overall support for those actions is somewhat mixed— 37% of the residents surveyed oppose residential property tax increases and 28% oppose business/commercial increases.
- Business respondents show a similar pattern: they express the greatest support for increasing residential (49%) and business/commercial property taxes (40%) compared to other options. Like residents, support for both options has increased from last year. Again, overall support is mixed, with 38% opposing residential increases and 41% opposing business/commercial increases.
- Residents and businesses alike are least likely to support "postpone infrastructure projects" (16% and 18% respectively).

Residents (n=5417)

Businesses (n=929)



Base: All respondents

Note: Question wording was updated in 2025; year-over-year comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

Q2. As the City works to manage rising costs while limiting property taxes and maintaining services, we want your input on the best ways to do this. The City has several financial tools available to balance the budget. Tell us how much you support or oppose each of the following options.

↑ ↓ Changes of >5 points vs. 2025 Budget Survey

Support for Financial Tools to Balance the Budget: Demographic Differences (Residents)

- Support for an increase in taxes (both business/commercial and residential) is higher among those who are 15-39 years of age, live in the Northeast and rent their home.

TOTAL SUPPORT	TOTAL	AGE			GEOGRAPHIC ZONE					HOUSING TENURE	
		15-39	40-59	60+	Downtown/ West End	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	Rent	Own
Base:	5417	2433 [A]	1660 [B]	1225 [C]	1034 [D]	1298 [E]	1211 [F]	1049 [G]	825 [H]	2731 [I]	2561 [J]
Increase business/commercial property taxes	50%	59% BC	50% C	36%	47%	58% DFGH	49% H	53% DH	44%	58% J	43%
Increase residential property taxes	50%	64% BC	46% C	31%	51% H	59% DFGH	55% GH	48% H	40%	65% J	35%
Increase user fees for City services that already have fees	34%	31%	37% AC	33%	37% EGH	33%	36% G	31%	32%	28%	40% I
Introduce new user fees for some City services that currently have no fees	33%	25%	38% A	40% A	38% EFG	29%	34% EG	30%	35% EG	24%	42% I
Continue to offer the same services but not to the same level	23%	17%	28% A	31% A	26% EG	19%	23% E	22%	29% EFG	16%	32% I
Reduce the number/type of services the City offers	19%	11%	22% A	28% AB	21% EG	15%	18% E	16%	25% DEFG	10%	29% I
Postpone infrastructure projects	16%	13%	18% A	19% A	15%	15%	14%	16%	21% DEFG	14%	18% I

Base: All residents

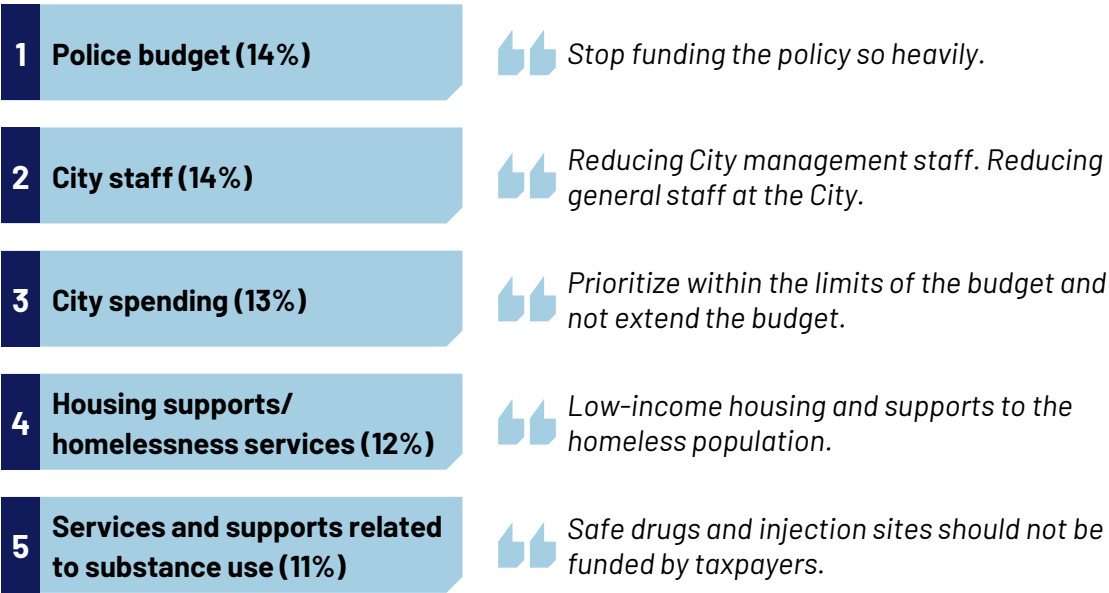
Q2. As the City works to manage rising costs while limiting property taxes and maintaining services, we want your input on the best ways to do this. The City has several financial tools available to balance the budget. Tell us how much you support or oppose each of the following options.

ABC, DEFGH, IJ Significantly higher than subgroup indicated by letter.

Top Five Suggestions for City Programs or Services to Reduce or Stop

- Respondents who indicated they would support continuing to offer the same services but not at the same level or stopping some services, were asked a follow up question about which services they would consider this for. The following includes coded open-ended comments from residents and businesses that completed this survey question.
- Feedback indicates a focus on changes to municipal operations that include reductions in City staff and streamlining services and departments.
- Both groups also suggest decreasing the policing budget, improving fiscal management and reducing services and supports related to substance use.

Residents (n=911)



Businesses (n=205)



Base: Those answering

Note: Question wording was updated in 2025; year-over-year comparisons should be interpreted with caution.
Q2a. To help balance the budget, which City programs or services would you support reducing or stopping?



Preferred Property Tax Scenarios (based on June 2025 direction)

- Residents and businesses were asked about their preferences for property tax increases relative to service levels (reflecting 2026 Budget scenarios staff were directed to explore in June 2025).
- Most respondents are supportive of some increase in property tax. Of the options presented, the most preferred was a “property tax increase of 5% that maintains the current level of City services” (42% residents, 37% businesses).
- On October 8, 2025, Council provided direction for staff to move forward and prepare the 2026 Budget with a 0% property tax increase, while prioritizing core City services and maintaining community grants, library and community centre services. This direction is different than the budget scenarios suggested in 2026 Budget survey.

Survey question preamble:

“The City continues to face significant financial pressures related to overall rising costs, regional levies from Metro Vancouver and E-Comm 9-1-1, among many factors.

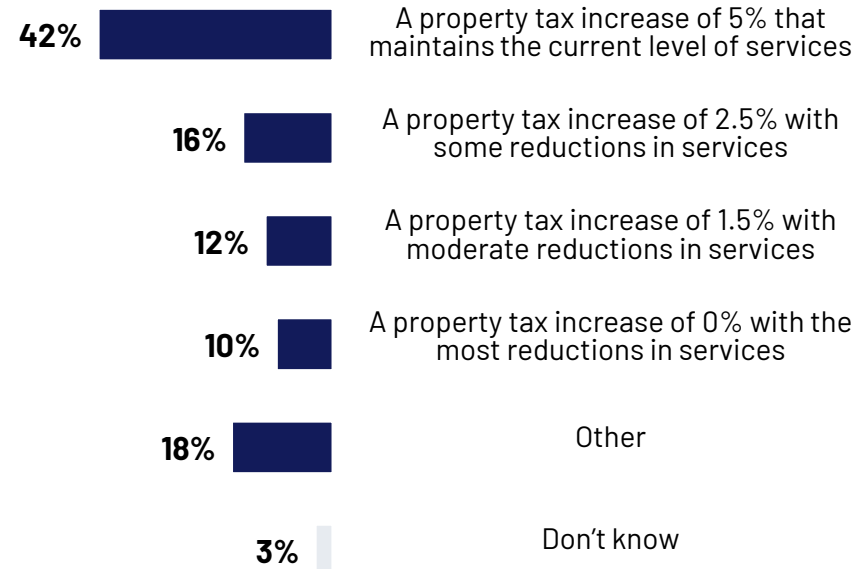
As mentioned, property tax increases are one financial tool that the City can use to help address rising costs, balance the budget and maintain service levels.

For the City to continue providing the same level of services, analysis by staff showed a 5% increase in property taxes would be needed due to cost pressures.

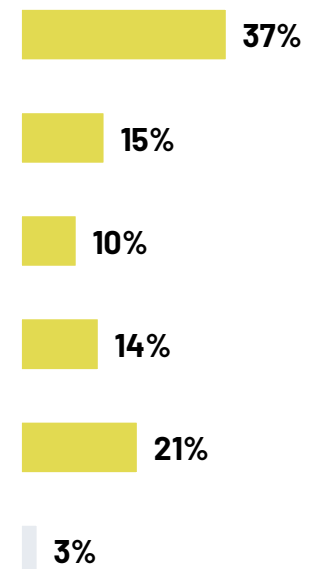
In an effort to address affordability for residents and businesses, City Council asked staff to create three budget scenarios based on 0%, 1.5%, and 2.5% property tax increases.

Property taxes are the City’s main source of revenue and help fund the services people rely on. For that reason, decisions about property tax rates and service levels are considered together during the budget process.”

Residents (n=5412)



Businesses (n=928)



Base: Those answering

Q4. Given this, which of the following do you prefer for managing property taxes and service levels? Select one.

Preferred Approach to Balancing Property Taxes and Service Levels: Demographic Differences (Residents)

- Preference for a "property tax increase of 5% that maintains the current level of services" is higher among those who are 15-39 years of age, live in the Northeast and rent their home.
- Overall, homeowners show a preference for lower tax increases than renters.

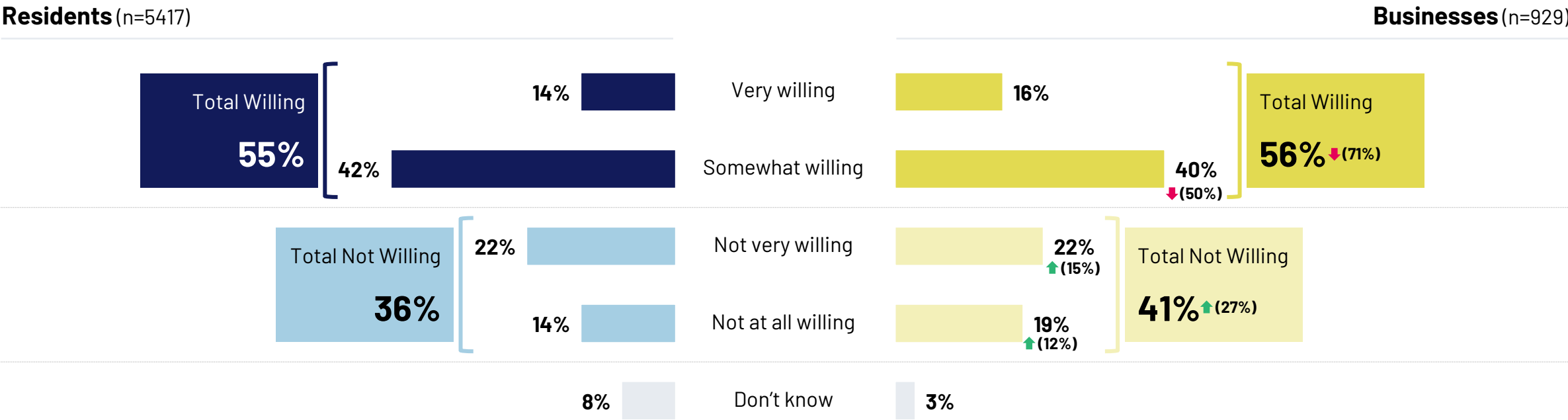
	TOTAL	AGE			GEOGRAPHIC AREA					HOUSING TENURE	
		15-39	40-59	60+	Downtown/ West End	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	Rent	Own
Base:	5412	2432 [A]	1657 [B]	1225 [C]	1034 [D]	1296 [E]	1210 [F]	1048 [G]	824 [H]	2729 [I]	2558 [J]
A property tax increase of 5% that maintains the current level of services	42%	51% BC	37% C	32%	43% H	50% DFGH	46% GH	40% H	34%	54% J	30%
A property tax increase of 2.5% with some reductions in services	16%	12%	15% A	23% AB	19% EG	12%	17% E	14%	16% E	12%	19% I
A property tax increase of 1.5% with moderate reductions in services	12%	8%	13% A	17% AB	11% E	8%	10%	13% EF	14% EF	7%	17% I
A property tax increase of 0% with the most reductions in services	10%	7%	13% A	11% A	9%	8%	8%	11% EF	14% DEFG	4%	17% I
Other	18%	18% C	19% C	15%	16%	19% F	16%	19%	18%	19% J	16%
Don't know	3%	4% C	4% C	2%	2%	3%	3%	4% D	3%	5% J	1%

Base: Those answering
Q4. Given this, which of the following do you prefer for managing property taxes and service levels? Select one.

ABC, DEFGH, IJ Significantly higher than subgroup indicated by letter.

Willingness to Pay Increased User Fees to Maintain Services

- Just over half of residents (55%) and businesses (56%) say they are willing to pay increased user fees to maintain services.
- Willingness among businesses to pay user fees has decreased from the previous year, although these comparisons should be interpreted with caution due to changes in question wording.



Base: All respondents
Note: Question wording was updated in 2025 to focus only on maintaining services (the 2025 Budget survey asked about willingness to pay more in user fees to maintain or improve services); year over-year comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

Q3. The public pays user fees to access some City services, facilities and utilities. Some examples include business licences, building and development permits, and use of City-owned facilities such as recreation centres. Would you be willing to pay more in user fees to maintain the services you or your business use? Select one.

↑↓ Changes >5 points vs. 2025 Budget Survey



Willingness to Pay Increased User Fees to Maintain Services: Demographic Differences (Residents)

- Willingness to pay increased user fees to maintain services is higher among those in the Northwest and homeowners.

	TOTAL	AGE			GEOGRAPHIC AREA					HOUSING TENURE	
		15-39	40-59	60+	Downtown/ West End	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	Rent	Own
Base:	5417	2433 [A]	1660 [B]	1225 [C]	1034 [D]	1298 [E]	1211 [F]	1049 [G]	825 [H]	2731 [I]	2561 [J]
Total Willing	55%	56%	57%	54%	56%	54%	60% EG	53%	56%	51%	61% I
Total Not Willing	36%	34%	36%	39% A	36% F	37% F	32%	38% F	37% F	39% J	33%

Base: All residents
 Q3. The public pays user fees to access some City services, facilities and utilities. Some examples include business licences, building and development permits, and use of City-owned facilities such as recreation centres. Would you be willing to pay more in user fees to maintain the services you or your business use? Select one.

ABC, DEF, GH, I, J Significantly higher than subgroup indicated by letter.



Other Comments/Suggestions for 2026 Budget – Top Five Mentions

- The survey concluded with an opportunity for respondents to offer other comments or suggestions regarding the 2026 Budget. The following includes coded open-ended comments (with example verbatims) from residents and businesses that completed this survey question.
- Both residents and businesses focus on the importance of maintaining existing services and suggest progressive taxation, with increasing taxes for the wealthy. They also emphasize the importance of addressing the housing crisis and re-evaluating the policing budget.

Residents (n=1468)

1	Do not cut services (26%)	 <i>I strongly oppose any cuts to services and funding for infrastructure.</i>
2	Increase taxes (for the wealthy/corporations) (26%)	 <i>Tax the wealthy, not people struggling to get by and relying on city services.</i>
3	Address housing issues (22%)	 <i>Please, please, please prioritize affordable housing.</i>
4	Decrease the police budget (21%)	 <i>Stop giving the police so much money.</i>
5	Increase property taxes/fees (14%)	 <i>Please increase property taxes to an appropriate level to maintain and increase services.</i>

Businesses (n=255)

1	Increase taxes (for the wealthy/corporations) (25%)	 <i>Tax the wealthy.</i>
2	Do not cut services (24%)	 <i>Don't cut budget allocated for public services. These are the foundations for a healthy and functioning society.</i>
3	Address housing issues (23%)	 <i>Affordable housing above all.</i>
4	Decrease the police budget (23%)	 <i>Redistribute some of the police budget into city services.</i>
5	Streamline City services/departments (12%)	 <i>Continuing to simplify and streamline processes within the City and in how projects are planned and delivered...</i>
5	Reduce cost of living (12%)	 <i>Vancouver is an extremely unaffordable city to live in.</i>

Base: Those answering

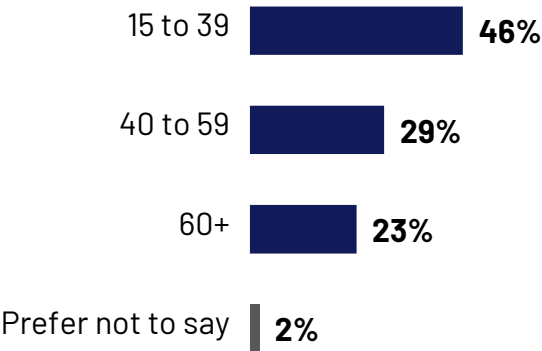
Q5. Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to add about the 2026 Budget? Please type in your comments in the space provided.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

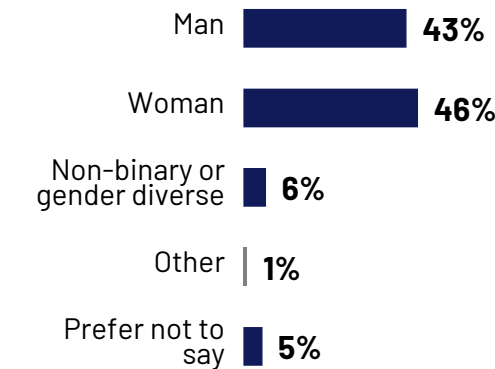
Sample Characteristics: Residents

(adjusted to match the age, gender and geographic distribution of Vancouver's population as reported in the Census)

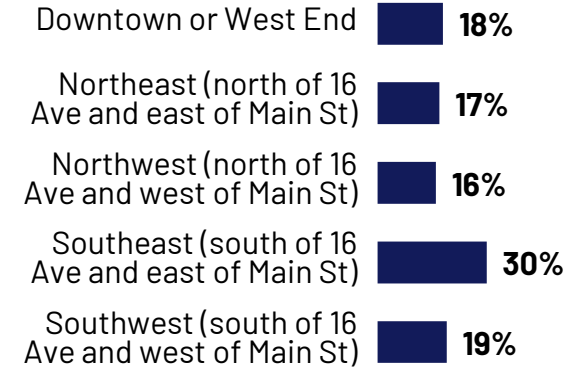
Age



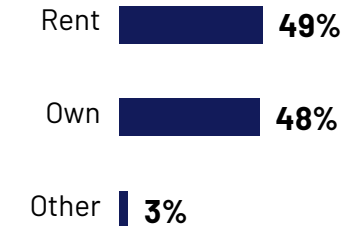
Gender Identity



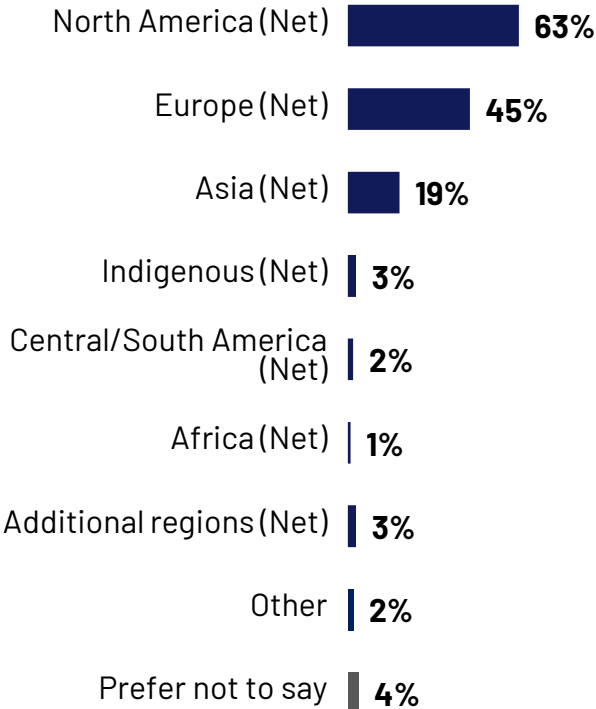
Area of City Live In



Housing Situation



Ethnic Origin



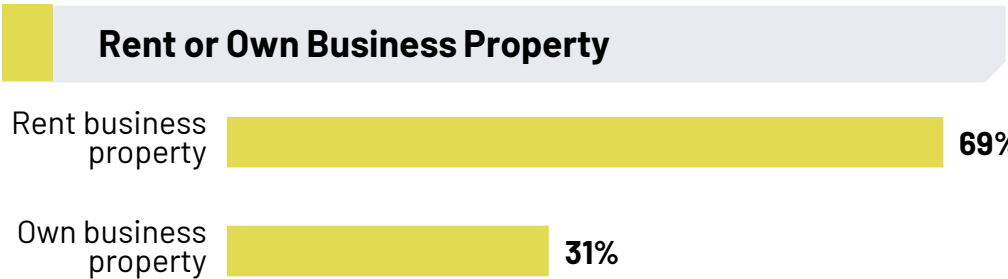
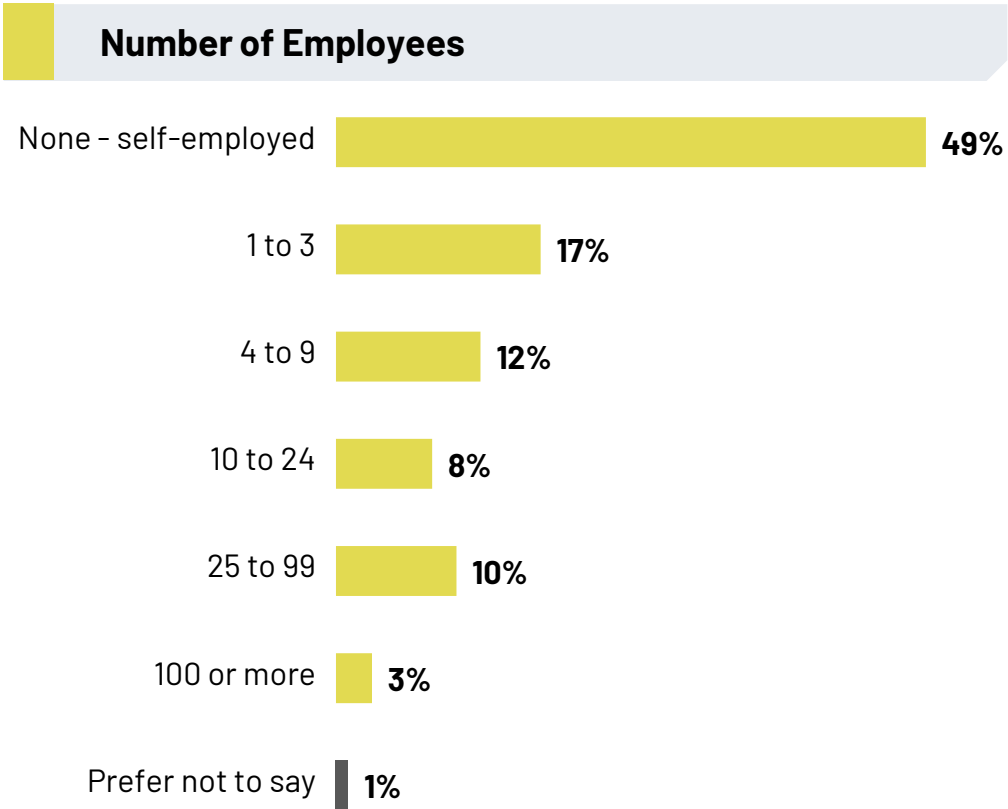
Base: All residents (n=5417)

Note: Ethnic origin has been collapsed into over-arching categories (Nets) for reporting purposes.



Sample Characteristics: Businesses

(adjusted by business size to align with BC Stats business counts for Vancouver)



Base: All businesses (n=929)

