
MEMORANDUM

BRC-C 7-2021

Subject: Update on Budget Engagement

Date: June 17, 2021

To: Regional Council

From: Peter Criscione, Communications Consultant

In the fall of 2020, the Region undertook a comprehensive public engagement campaign on the 2021 Budget. Engagement activities were held over several weeks starting in early September and included facilitated focus groups and an online survey.

Budget engagement activities gave a better understanding of our community's needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. They also probed opinions on select investment areas identified by the Region's 2019 Sustainability Review. A year into the pandemic crisis, the insights gathered from residents and the business community still resonate and will help inform staff's approach to budget planning for the coming year. Participants identified maintenance of essential services, the safety of seniors, mental health programs, caring for the homeless and helping businesses during this challenging period as the top five priorities for the Region. Residents also rated several existing Regional projects and initiatives on their order of importance. Transit, housing affordability, long-term care homes ranked at the top of the list of what existing initiatives the Region should continue to support.

Engagement on the 2022 budget will primarily focus on education and raising awareness about Regional services and budget planning. This will be achieved through an extensive campaign including social media, advertising and promotion, and media relations.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Peter Criscione

Communications Consultant