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**TO:** Committee of the Whole

**FROM:** Jennifer Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** March 18, 2021

**RE:** **Pre-Budget Survey**

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**ISSUE:**

Administration is reporting the results of the pre-budget survey (attached).

**BACKGROUND:**

At the initial budget meeting on Jan 14, 2021, the committee expressed interest in obtaining feedback from the community on budget priorities for 2021.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no financial implications.

**ANALYSIS:**

The pre-budget survey was conducted using Google surveys from Jan 28 – Feb 28, 2021. The survey link was published on the Town's Facebook page and website, and hard copies were available at the Town Office. There were 94 responses received.

The majority of respondents were ages 25-39 (40.4%). The top 3 infrastructure areas of importance to residents are Water and Sewer (86.2%), Roads (53.2%), and Health Services (51.1%). The top 3 infrastructure areas that most need improvement are Water and Sewer (89.4%), Roads (55.3%), and Economic Development (42.6%).

**ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION(S):**

THAT the 2021 Pre-Budget Survey results be received as information.

**ATTACHMENT:**

2021 Pre-Budget Survey Results

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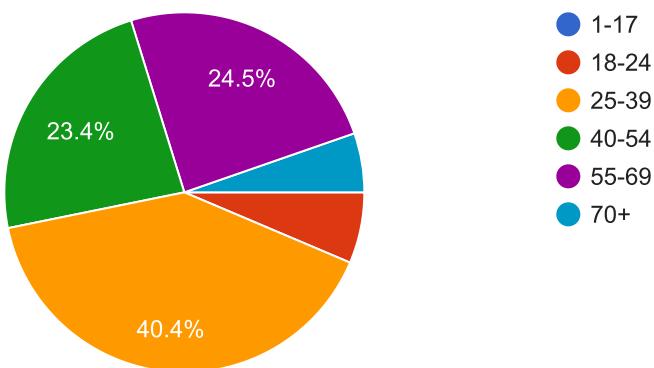
# Town of Wadena Pre-Budget Survey

94 responses

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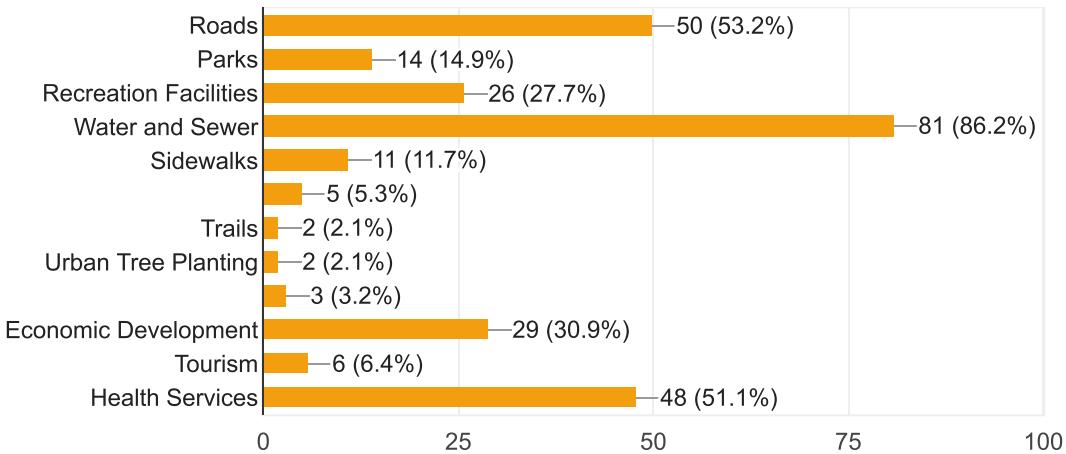
What is your age?

94 responses



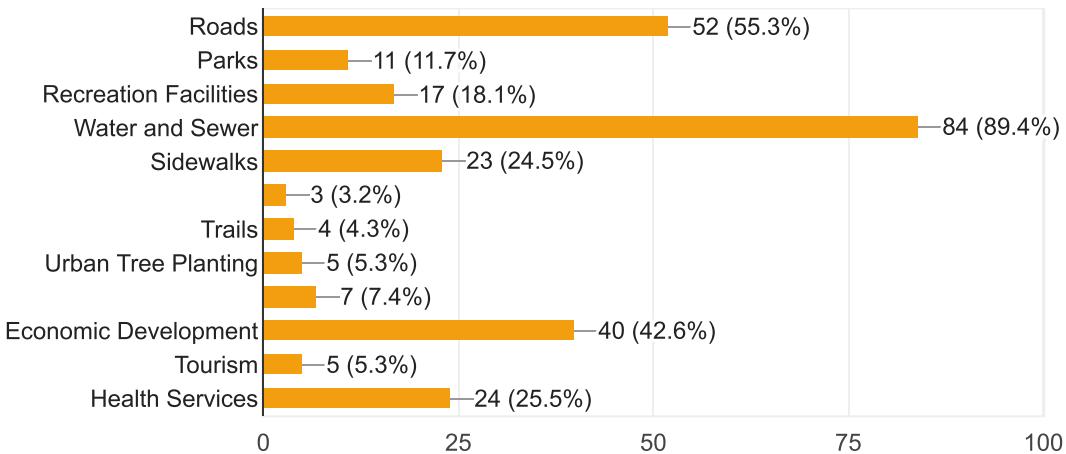
What three (3) areas of Wadena's infrastructure are most important to you?

94 responses



What three (3) areas of Wadena's infrastructure do you consider most in need of improvement?

94 responses



If you have additional budget-related comment/feedback, please let us know.

27 responses

Fenced unleashed dog park would be awesome

I am really concerned about the number of fire hydrants that are inoperative, sometimes two in a role along street. I want to have confidence that the water and sewer system is being maintained and rebuilt where needed. Seems like we had an inordinate amount of broken lines and boil water orders. We are small town with a shrinking tax base we need to start concentrating on the basics.

We have a beautiful pool. It is unfortunate that there have been so many issues with the water heater. It forces families to leave town during the summer and in turn money is spent out of town on food services and other recreation. The park by the campgrounds could also use some upgrading. In an ideal world where money was of no object, a water park would be fantastic! However, it seems that town water and pipes should be first priority.

There is a trial plan and it is all ready to go, surveyed and all, there are many grants available now that would pay for a project like this one.

If we don't have good reliable water we have nothing. I am not sure why we can't get better quality water or at least put a plan in place so we know we will have it at some point

the criteria for taxable assessments

Fix the brown water, put in reverse osmosis.

Employee salaries are way high in certain areas and way low in others; CAO salary is VERY high for a municipality of Wadena's size. Recreation facilities are the heart of the community and need to be taken care of- fix the pool liner and rink roof. Water quality is unacceptable and has been overlooked for way too long.

I hope that you don't foolishly spend money on things like the million dollar bathrooms at the rec facility again. You'll have to budget for all of the curb replacements from the guy clearing snow with the grader this winter.

Too many managers, left doesn't know what the right is doing. Facilities are falling apart. The workers have no direction because the managers aren't giving them direction. Too many little things are getting missed.

Property taxes on newer homes are too high in comparison to other like sized communities and many larger centres with better amenities. Continued increases discourages building activity and growth in the community. A tiered mill rate so that people with higher assessed homes are not "penalized" or discouraged from improving their residence further.

Less money on the skating rink/ swimming pool.

We need slow signs on 6th st.n.e. The traffic going by here is unreal and 8/10 are speeding. It's more like a freeway & one day someone is going to get hurt. We have asked numerous times over the past 6 years to have something done & nothing has ever been done!

An outdoor rink. More outdoor recreation development for the town and area residence to utilize. It seems the town has no focus on these interests, and people are forced to turn to Foam Lake, Kelvington and Wynyard to access vital outdoor activities to maintain optimal health.

Your Rec facilities draw a lot of money into the town for local businesses.

Wadena needs to find away to bring in business to includes the tax basic. For example another grocery store so person has a choose and not just be controlled by the coop. My next question my not be budget related but they do support local business. Since CN does not allow semi parking the town should have a semi parking . In winter those people that use there back alley as their access the town once the mains are done go down those back alley. It is a matter of safety too. On the tax bill the town should tell people what they are charged for the Greenland on a separate paper at least a person knows.

Our town needs to clean up the looks of the out skirts of town. The old market on south end of town looks disgusting. The town also needs to be replacing trees in the older parts of town.

I could easily check off a few more options.

Development of activities for community members.

Would like to see a fenced dog park

The water treatment plant that we have is old and needing to be replaced. As well the condition of our water is harsh. We need not only a new water treatment plant do we have water but we need clean drinkable water. What we have now is not what I consider clean or drinkable. Reverse osmosis would be a god send to the community and the people that live here.

The water that we have destroy washing machines, dishwashers, pressure washers and the building pipes.

Would be nice to have tap useable water without having to buy it by the water jug. Paying for water twice is not acceptable

Prior to making major financial decisions, such as was done with the debt-financing of the unnecessary and unwanted addition to the arena, please consult with the community members. Our community will be paying for this poor decision, that benefits so few members of the community, for a very long time. Debt-financing is appropriate for infrastructure such as water and sewer but not for ridiculous recreational nice-to-have's. It is an embarrassment that that we have a million dollar toilet attached to an end-of-life recreational facility yet we have perpetually blocked sewers and undrinkable water and a failing distribution system and nearly non-existent storm water management. I, for one, am tired of buying drinking water at the store and taking a bath in brown water. Please DO NOT spend further capital on recreation until our essential services, water and sewer, have been upgraded to a reliable status.

What is planned for the growing water infrastructure reserve funds? We have been doing without decent drinking water while the funds sit in the bank, likely earning little to no interest. Has administration been directed to apply for grants to help fund infrastructure upgrades and stretch our available reserves? Why are our neighbouring communities accessing these grant funds yet Wadena is

only doing so on a minimal basis? It's great to see the library was funded for repairs, but we have needs much greater than this.

Sidewalks are an important element of our transportation system in this community. There are many people who are dependent on walking and wheelchair use to move around our community. I challenge ever member of council to try to travel from north to south and east to west in our community by wheelchair before you make a single budget decision. I also suggest you assess what appears to be significant damage to the sidewalks and curbs as a result of snow removal this winter season prior to making budget decisions. The curbs are not just for looks -- they are part of the storm water management system and should be in good repair prior to spring flood season. Training the operators who perform snow-removal may be a good investment to avoid such significant damage in the future.

Not everyone is able bodied. Not everyone is physically capable of carrying bottles of water home from the store when the town water is undrinkable. Please, make sure our basic needs are attended to well before recreational needs. Water is essential for life. Hockey is not.

Water issue needs to be fixed NOW, we been having issues with it now since 2017 and still brown and crap water!

Need to address the water issues in our community. Also fix the roof at the Recreation Centre

We need TOWN WIDE drinkable water at a reasonable rate! Other towns pay less per month for better quality water then we have. There is no reason for this!

We need working fire hydrants, and a functional pool or back fill it. We also need to stop dreaming about how important the rink really is. Its NOT worth having if we can't have drinkable water/drivable roads!

Is it possible to include what groups need volunteers on you mailouts? You may have done this in the past and I've just missed it but it might be helpful for the community to know who is looking for volunteers and then they can follow up based on their interests.

Beautifying Downtown Areas / Urban Tree Planting / Trails - is there a way to have businesses that are interested in sponsoring this have signage place up as advertising?

Are there empty lots or areas that the Town owns that would be suitable for community gardening, run by volunteers with each person taking a portion of the produce, and with a portion being donated to the foodbank? Or is that already being done and I'm just not aware of it?

Good water should be the Town's main priority.