



PUBLIC SATISFACTION ENGAGEMENT REPORT

June 2025



This report was developed for the Town of Onoway in June 2025 with full objectivity, placing survey results through an objective lens to ensure accuracy, and to analyze responses for thematic relevancy.

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Executive Summary

In Spring 2025, the Town of Onoway went through its second cycle of consistent public engagement, focused on two core topics:

1. To gauge Onoway resident satisfaction with current services provided by the Town organization.
2. To gain an understanding of specific resident opinions of value to the Town's budgeting process.

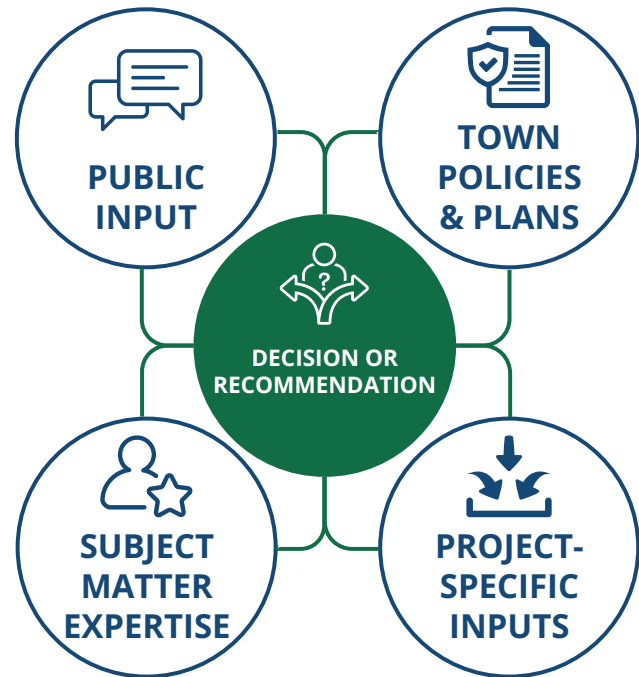
Surveys of this nature align with industry best practice, providing Council and Administration, alike, with important insights into residents' opinions and perceptions on numerous topics of organizational relevance. By establishing a baseline of public sentiment, and building off those findings on a consistent basis from that point forward, trends can be identified that go beyond a snapshot in time. This ensures that Council and Administration have a greater understanding of both short-term and long-term resident opinions.

Resident input represents one input of many for Council's consideration, accompanied by advice from administration, studies and reports of relevance, subject matter expertise, local history, and more.

Council's [2023-2032 Strategic Plan](#) includes five core pillars, each of which is addressed in some way by undertaking this process, including for two pillars in particular:

Service Excellence

- Develop a service inventory and identify priority services that make living and working in Onoway attractive by consulting with residents and the business community.



- Evaluate the efficiency and accessibility of all municipal services to provide value to residents.

Good Governance

- Value and embrace a healthy respect for democracy through all our actions, policies, and values.

Financial Sustainability

- Set up public engagement opportunities to be transparent to the community about Onoway's financial position, challenges, needs, and opportunities.

PARTICIPATION

This year's survey garnered 29 responses from throughout the community, representing 3% of the Town's total population, based on a total population of 966 (*Statistics Canada 2021*). A response rate of this nature carries a margin of error of around 14%. As such, results should be considered as directional, and not statistically

representative of the broader population.

Despite the low response rate, the results can still provide useful directional insights, especially in communities the size of Onoway. Qualitative feedback is still highly valuable, where trends are drawn; it is likely, as well, that quantitative data still reflects key perspectives. Strengthening results, survey participants were provided appropriate context related the various areas and subjects explored through this survey.

Thank you to all residents who participated in the Town of Onoway's 2024 Public Engagement Survey. We appreciate the time, effort, and

How we engaged

This 2025 Onoway Satisfaction Survey was hosted online, with print versions made available at Town facilities for those who preferred completing the survey by hand. The survey was promoted through various means, including on the Town website, on social media, through the use of physical materials such as posters, and through traditional media.

thoughtfulness put into responding to this survey, and commit to considering residents' input appropriately moving forward.

Findings Overview

Age Distribution: Most respondents were 35-44 and 45-54 (24% of respondents, each).
Connection to Onoway: Over 65% of respondents live in town, while the remaining participants either own businesses or work in town, or utilize Town services.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS	
Statement	% Agree
Great place to live	62%
Safe community	69%
Good place to raise children	59%
Good place to retire	66%
Welcoming community	69%
Good place to do business	56%

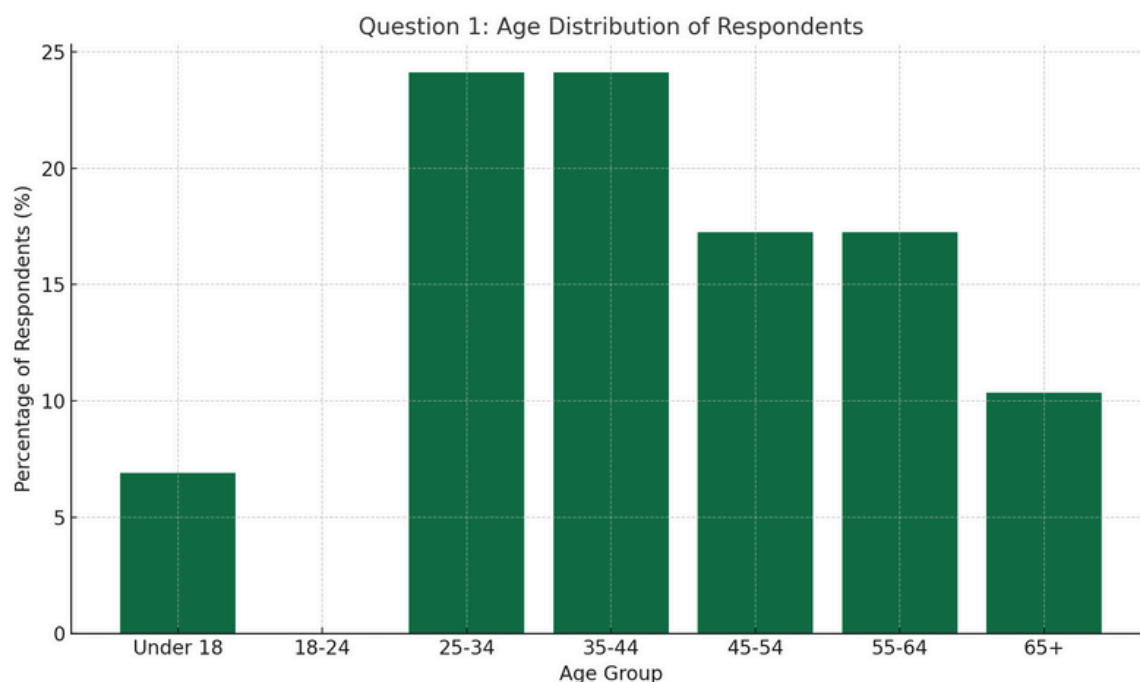
SERVICE LEVEL SATISFACTION	
Highest Satisfaction	
Onoway Public Library	
Fire Services	
Snow removal and winter maintenance	
Lowest Satisfaction	
Economic development	
Bylaw enforcement	
Community emergency preparedness	

The 2025 Public Satisfaction Survey results show a community that values Onoway as a safe, welcoming, and family-friendly town. While residents are generally satisfied with core services, they express a clear desire for improvements in areas such as economic development, infrastructure maintenance, and recreational amenities. The majority are open to modest tax increases to support essential infrastructure and to maintain service levels.

The following section presents a detailed breakdown of the responses gathered through the Town of Onoway's 2025 Public Satisfaction Survey. With the survey designed to gauge resident perspectives on a wide range of topics, including service level satisfaction and future planning priorities, respondent input provides valuable insight into how residents view the Town today, what services matter most, and where they believe future efforts and investments should be focused.

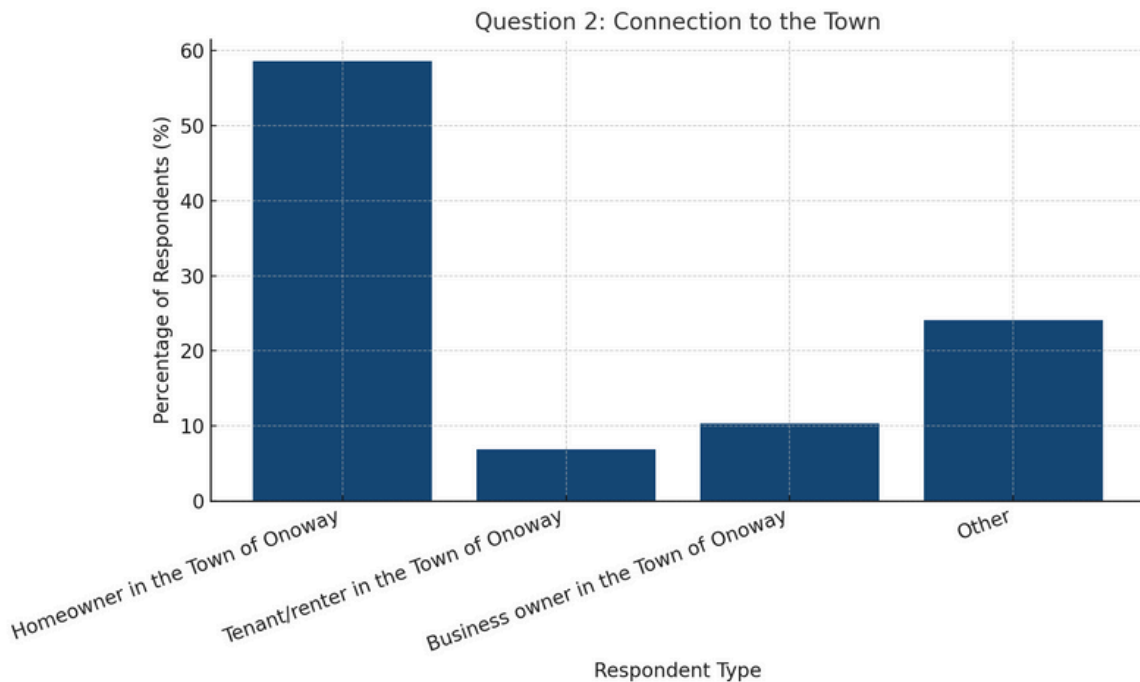
This breakdown includes both quantitative and qualitative feedback, offering insight into community sentiment to help guide decision-making and direction-setting for Council and Administration.

1.1 Demographics



The two largest respondent groups represented ages between 25-34 and 35-44, each representing 21.4% of the total, and followed closely by 17.2% representation across both the 45-54 and 55-64 age groups. Seniors (65+) represented 10.3% of respondents, while a small number of respondents (6.9%) were under the age of 18. There were no responses from community members between the ages of 18-24.

This distribution suggests that the feedback primarily reflects the views of adult residents in the early and middle stages of their careers and family life—those most likely to be engaged with community services, schools, infrastructure, and future planning decisions. Notably, the absence of young adults aged 18-24 may indicate a need to explore additional engagement strategies for this demographic.

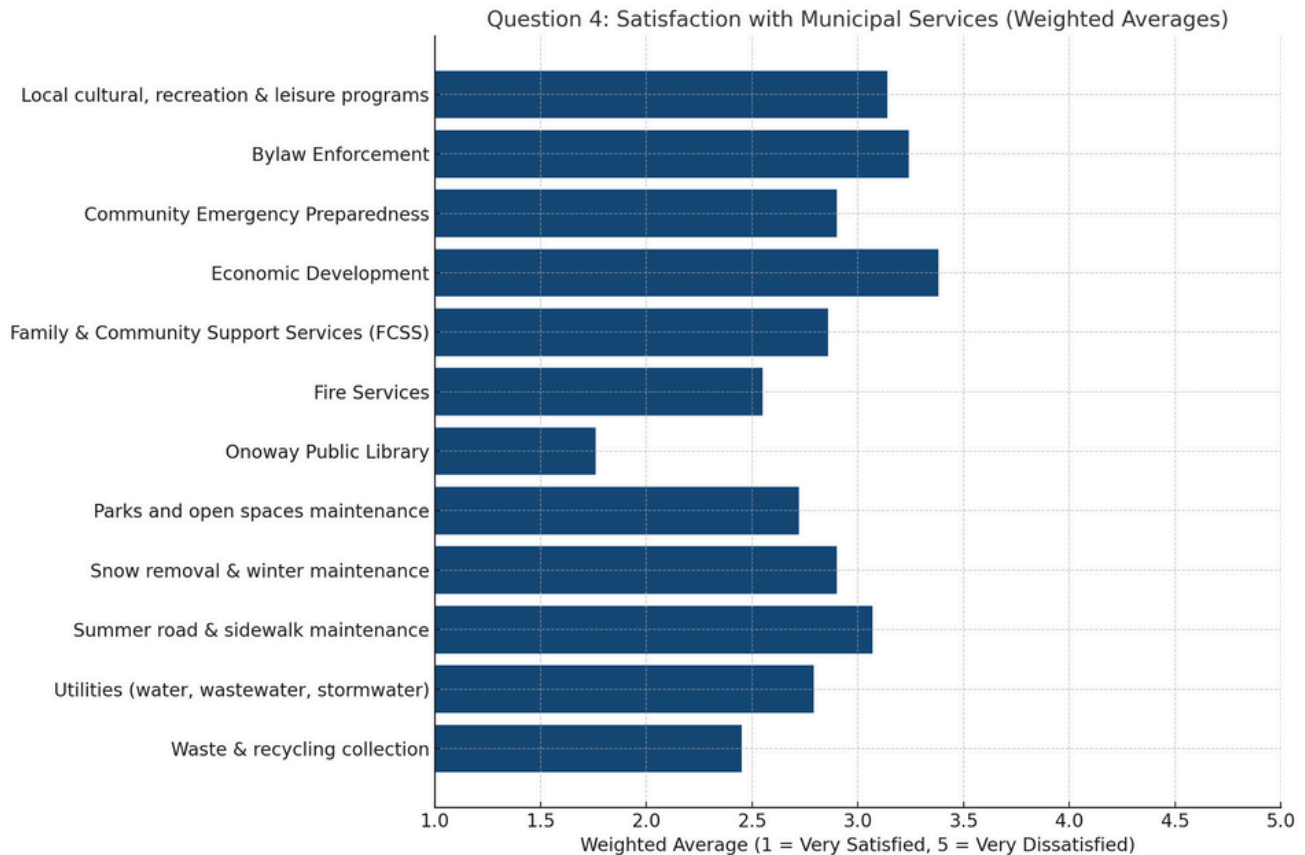


This question explored the nature of survey respondents' relationships with the Town to better understand the perspectives represented in the survey results. The vast majority of respondents live in the community, with 58.6% homeowners and 6.9% tenants/renters in Onoway. Meanwhile, 10.3% of respondents identified as business owners, while the remaining 24.1% selected "Other." Those in the latter category specified their relationship either as working in town, owning property in town but not living in Onoway, or living in the County but using Onoway services.

1.2 Community Perceptions



Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with six statements about the community, with a generally positive perception of Onoway. More than 65% agreed the Town of Onoway is a safe and welcoming community, and a good place to retire. Over 60% agreed that Onoway is a great place to live, while over 55% agreed the town is a great place to raise children and do business.



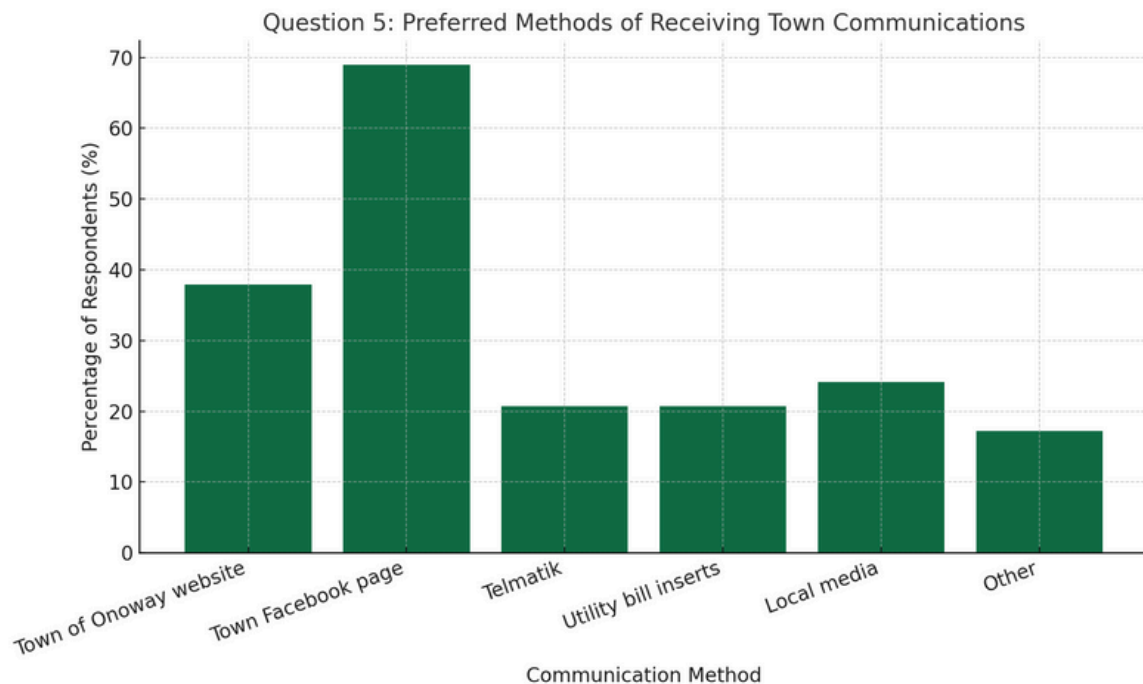
Survey participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with 12 key municipal service areas, using a scale from “Very Satisfied” to “Very Dissatisfied.” The results reflect a mix of strong satisfaction with core services, and lower levels of satisfaction in areas related to infrastructure and growth.

The Onoway Public Library received the most favourable score of all services, indicating high satisfaction and strong community support. Similarly, Fire Services and Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) were rated positively.

Several services received mid-range scores of moderate satisfaction rates, such as Parks and Open Spaces Maintenance, Community Emergency Preparedness, Snow Removal and Winter Maintenance, and Utilities. While not cause for concern, these scores may point to areas where performance can be further strengthened in the future.

Respondents were less satisfied with Bylaw Enforcement; Local Cultural, Recreation and Leisure Programs; and Summer Road and Sidewalk Maintenance. The lowest-rated service area was Economic Development, consistent with what was seen in the results of the Town’s 2024 survey.

Overall, while satisfaction is strong in several foundational areas, survey responses highlight a clear opportunity for the Town to focus on enhanced economic development, infrastructure investment, and bylaw enforcement.



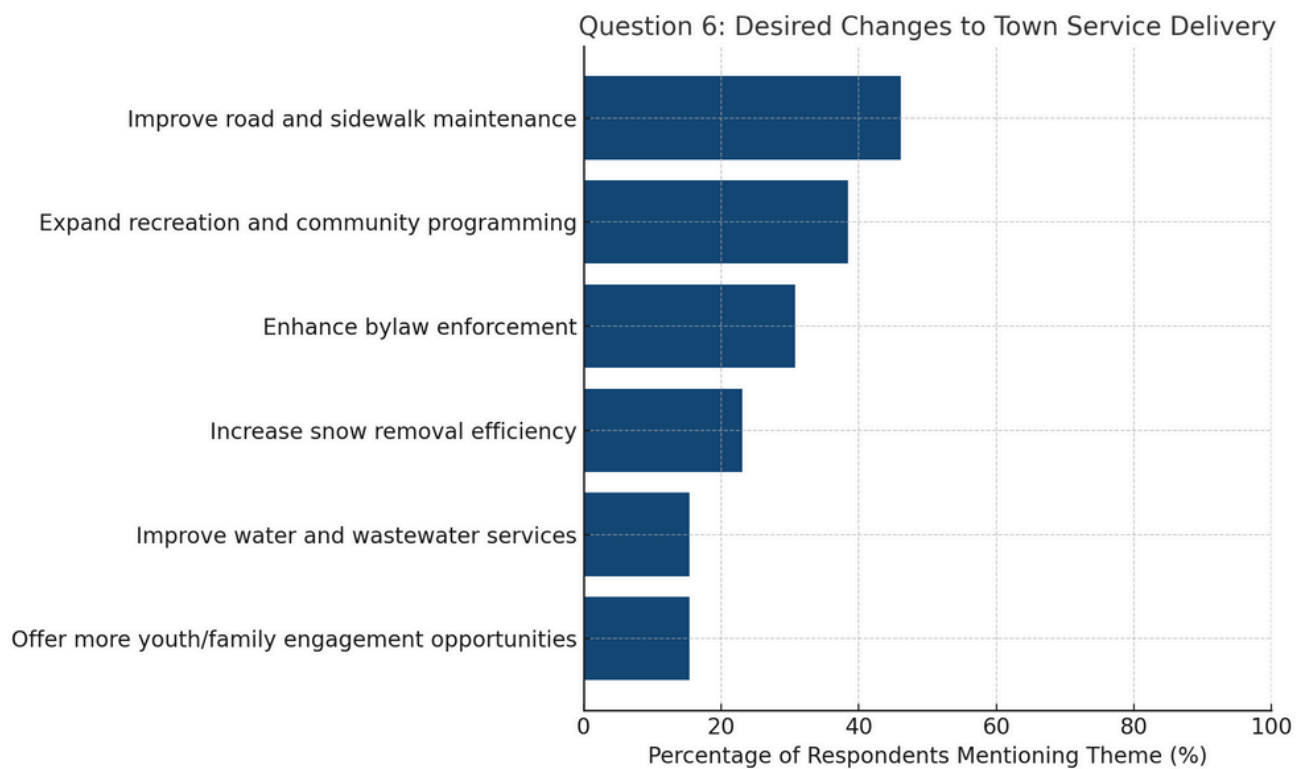
Grade 7 students visiting Onoway's Town Office. (Town of Onoway © 2024)

Asked to select their preferred methods for receiving information from the Town of Onoway, respondents were able to choose from multiple methods of communication, providing insight into the most effective channels of sharing information publicly.

Unsurprisingly for a community of Onoway's size and demographic build, the most preferred platform was the Town's Facebook page, selected by nearly 70% of respondents, followed by the Town's website (38%). While this shows a strong preference for investment into digital communications by survey respondents, traditional methods also held relevance, with utility bill inserts and Telmatik each selected by 20.69% of respondents, and local media by 24.1%.

Qualifying their responses with additional specificity, the remaining respondents who selected "Other" pointed to such methods of communication as hard-copy materials posted to community bulletin boards, and information shared through word of mouth or in-person updates.

Residents were asked an open-ended question around desired changes to Town service delivery, including specific shifts they would like to see. Only 13 individuals responded, offering a variety of constructive suggestions. Several common themes emerged from the feedback, as outlined below:

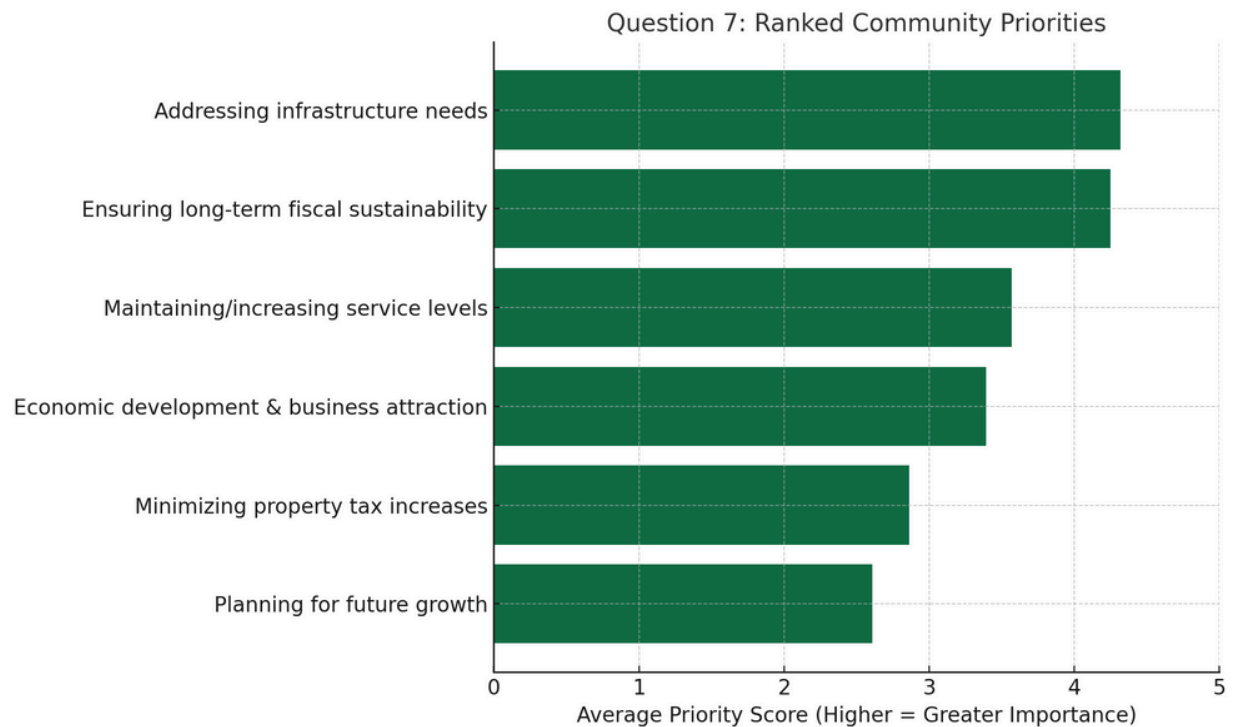


These suggestions largely align with the levels of satisfaction outlined in Question 4. Desired improvements to road and sidewalk maintenance represented more than half of written responses. Respondents expressed concern with the state of local infrastructure, calling for more consistent upkeep, particularly in the summer months.

A desire for expanded recreation and community program followed closely, with specific mention of events, activities, and opportunities for local engagement (particularly for youth and families). Several respondents emphasized the need for enhanced bylaw enforcement, citing issues around property upkeep, traffic enforcement, and loose animals. Others called for improvements to snow removal efficiency, better water and wastewater services, and more youth-focused initiatives.

Overall, comments suggest—again—that core services are appreciated, though there is a desire for more proactive service delivery.

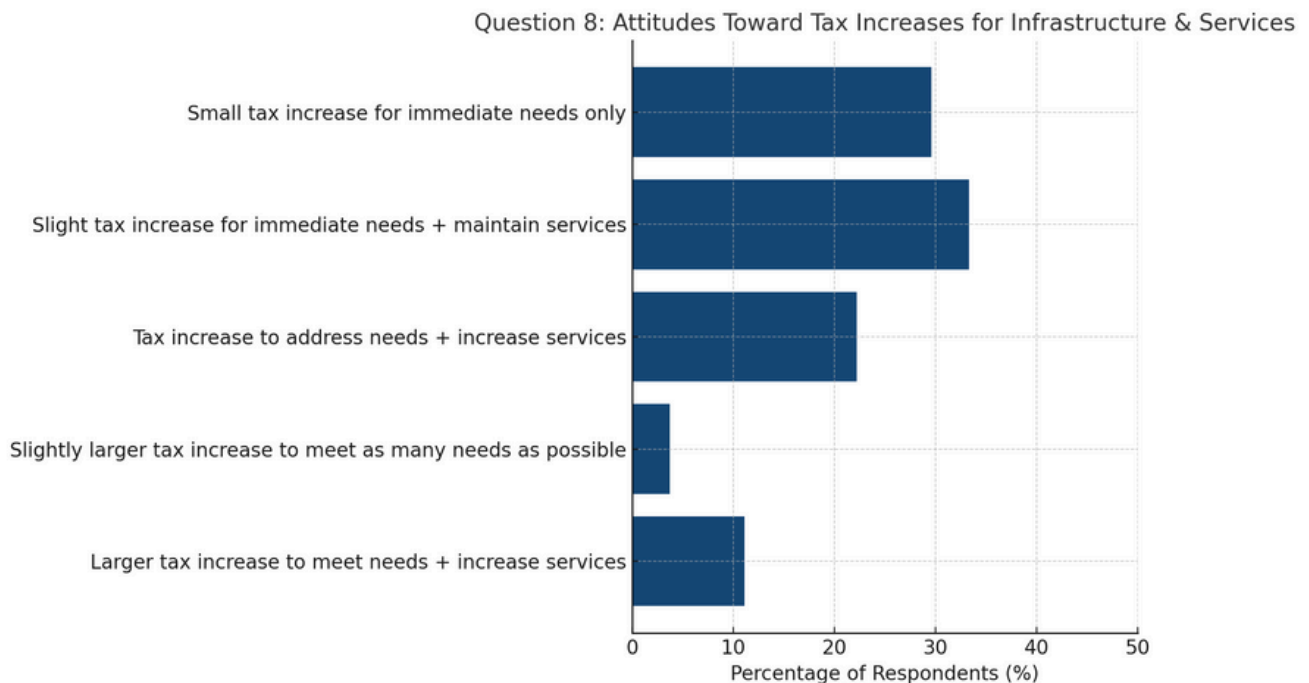
This largely aligns with ranked community priorities, an overview of which is outlined in Question 7, below. Again, addressing local infrastructure needs took the top spot, followed by a desire for ensured long-term fiscal sustainability for the Town. The third-highest priority was maintaining or increasing service levels, followed by economic development and business attraction, minimizing property tax increases, and planning for future growth.



The emphasis placed by survey respondents on issues such as infrastructure needs, long-term sustainability, and maintaining or increasing service levels, above the desire for minimized property taxes, shows that residents understand the correlation between these high-priority items and cost.

1.3 Budget Priorities

That understanding of monetary pressures associated with infrastructure and service expectations are further emphasized through Question 8, below:



The option was not provided for no tax increase to occur, recognizing the reality of current municipal challenges in Onoway, and for municipalities across Alberta, and in many cases, throughout Canada. It is therefore not surprising that the majority of respondents selected a desire for a constrained tax increase, breaking down as follows:

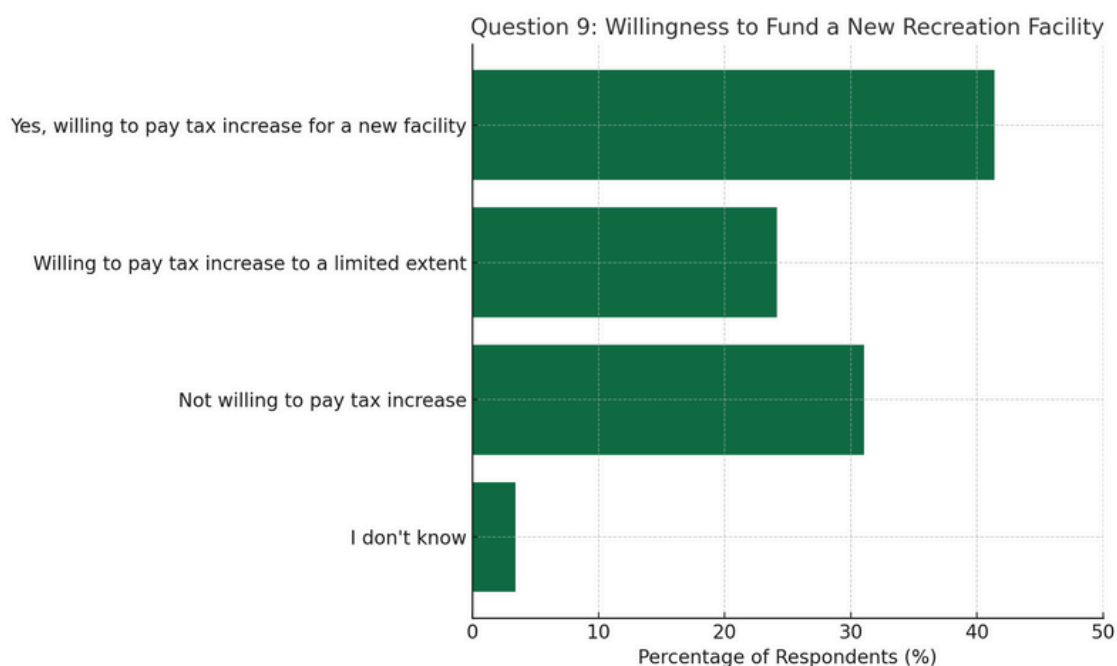
- 33.33% supported a slight tax increase that would allow the Town to address immediate infrastructure needs while maintaining current service levels.
- 29.63% preferred a small tax increase to address only the most urgent needs, even if it meant larger tax increases later.
- 22.22% were open to a moderate tax increase that would both address infrastructure and enhance service levels.

A smaller number of respondents (11%) supported a larger tax increase to meet infrastructure needs and expand services. The remaining 3.7% favoured a slightly larger tax increase to address as many needs as possible now, without reducing service levels.

These results suggest that while Onoway residents are sensitive to tax increases, respondents recognize the need for action to address pressing infrastructure issues. The majority appear to prefer a balanced approach, favouring modest increases that avoid service cuts and ensure long-term stability.

1.3.1 Recreation Facility

The 2024 public engagement survey results showed a significant desire amongst respondents for more recreation services in Onoway. Through this year's survey, it was acknowledged that opportunities to build a new local multi-use recreation facility would likely range in cost between \$10 and \$20 million, depending on scope. As such, survey respondents were asked whether they would be comfortable with a tax increase specifically to fund such a project.



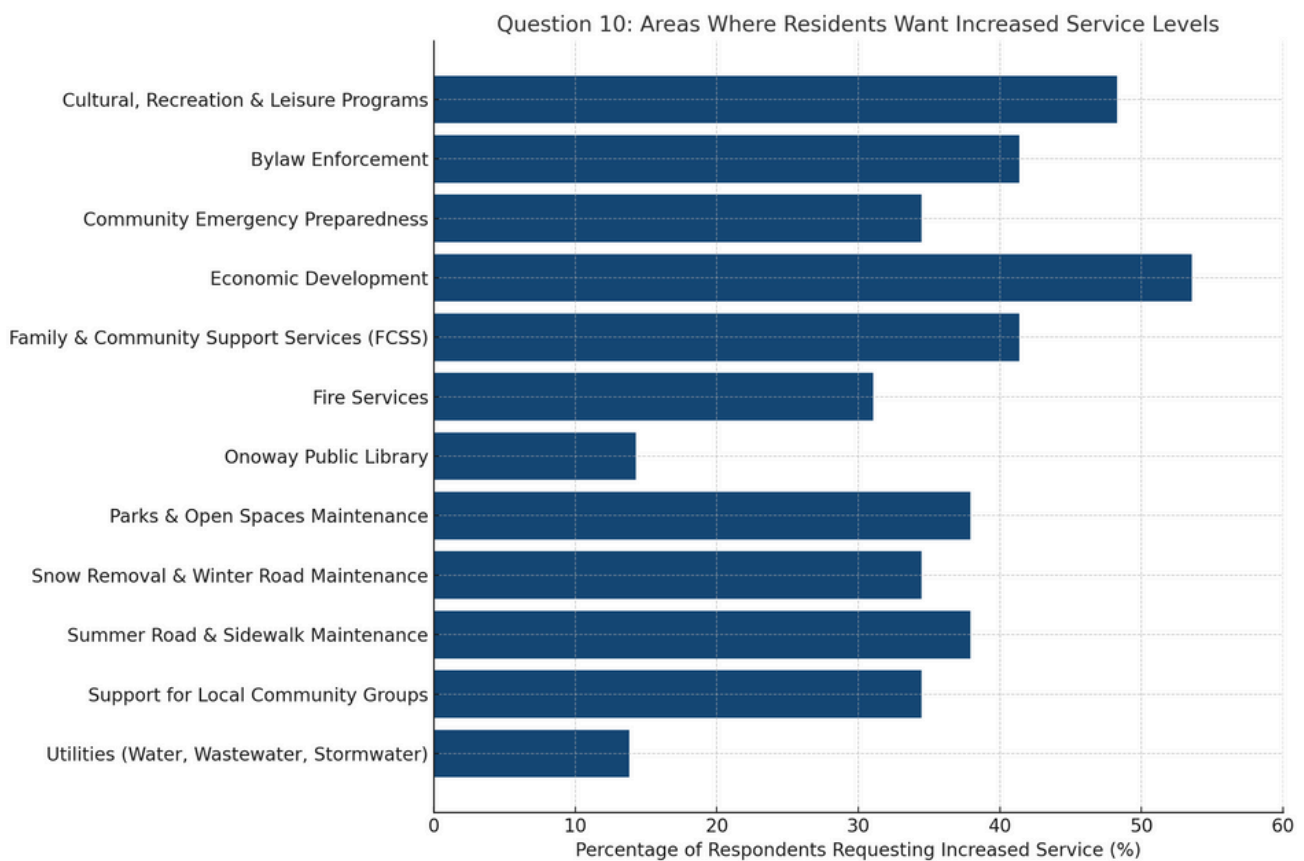
The responses reveal a divided but generally supportive view among residents.

- 41.38% of respondents indicated they would be willing to pay a tax increase specifically to support the development of the new recreation facility.
- 24.14% were willing to pay a tax increase to a limited extent, suggesting conditional or modest support depending on the final project scope or cost.
- 31.03% stated they would not be willing to pay a tax increase for this purpose, reflecting some resistance to new spending in this area.
- A small portion (3.45%) were unsure.

Overall, a majority of respondents (65.5%) expressed some level of willingness to contribute to a new facility, underscoring a strong interest in enhanced local recreation options—but also highlighting the importance of clear cost-benefit communication and transparency in decision-making.

1.3.2 Future Investment

Respondents were asked whether they would like to see service levels increased, maintained, or decreased across 12 municipal service areas. The results demonstrate that most residents favour maintaining current services, with many also expressing a desire for enhancements in select areas.



The strongest support for increased service was in:

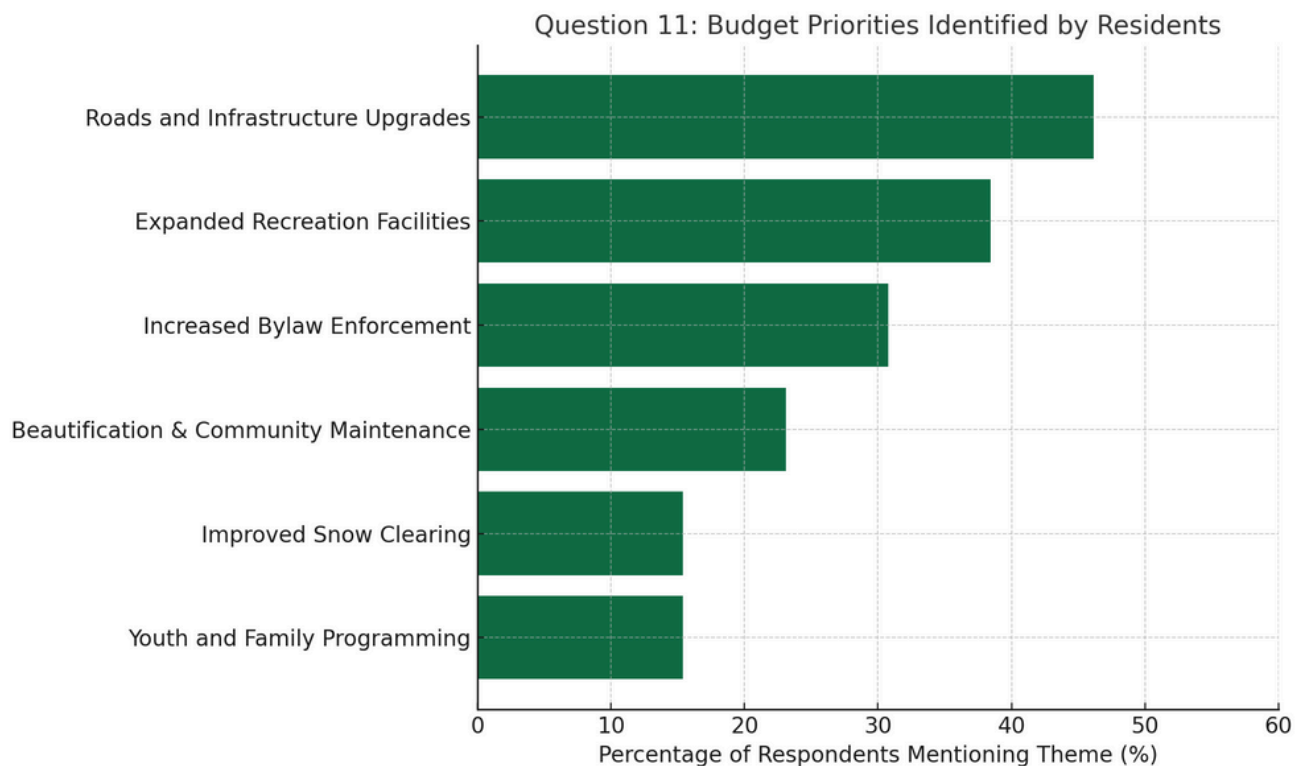
- Economic Development, where 53.57% of respondents wanted a greater focus on business growth and attraction.
- Cultural, Recreation & Leisure Programs, supported by 48.28% seeking expanded events and offerings.
- Bylaw Enforcement and Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) also saw notable support for increases (41.38% each), reflecting concerns about property standards, community well-being, and access to social supports.

Other areas (such as Community Emergency Preparedness, Snow Removal, Summer Maintenance, and Support for Local Community Groups) saw a general desire for maintained service levels, with moderate calls for service increases (ranging from 34–38%).

Conversely, Fire Services (31.03%) and the Onoway Public Library (14.29%) were heavily favoured by a desire for maintained service levels, though there was a 31% desire for increased service levels in fire and 14% for the library.

Overall, the data reflects a strong interest in targeted growth and quality-of-life improvements, especially in economic development, recreation, and enforcement, while reinforcing satisfaction with foundational services such as fire protection and utilities.

Question 11 asked residents to identify what they believe should be top priorities in the Town of Onoway's budget planning, through written responses. Thirteen responses were received, and several common themes emerged.



At this point in the survey, key themes are being repeated and substantiated. Once again, the top three areas of focus were:

- Roads and infrastructure upgrades
- Expanded recreation facilities
- Increased bylaw enforcement

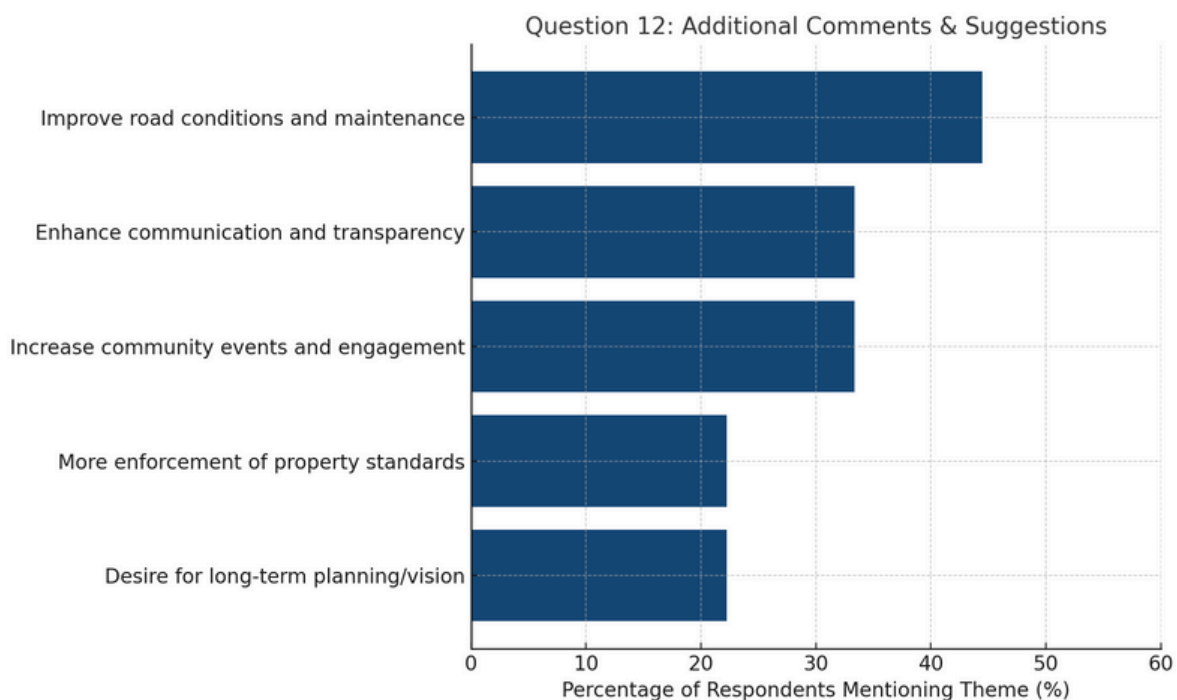
Nearly half of respondents cited the need for better road maintenance, sidewalk repairs, or general infrastructure investment, again reinforcing concerns also seen in earlier survey questions. Next, expanded recreation facilities were highlighted by a significant portion of respondents. Comments called for enhanced amenities and the creation of new public spaces to support family and youth engagement. Increased bylaw enforcement also appeared as a recurring theme, with calls for stronger enforcement around property standards, traffic violations, and public safety.

Other identified priorities included beautification and community maintenance, improved snow clearing, and youth and family programming. These responses suggest interest in enhancing the community's livability and appearance, while also investing in services that directly impact quality of life.

Taken together, the responses reflect a community focused on both functional improvements and investments in people and place—seeking a balance between infrastructure and social well-being.

1.4 Additional Comments

This final open-text question invited residents to share any additional thoughts or ideas that had not yet been addressed in the survey. Nine responses were received, providing candid and constructive feedback on a range of topics.

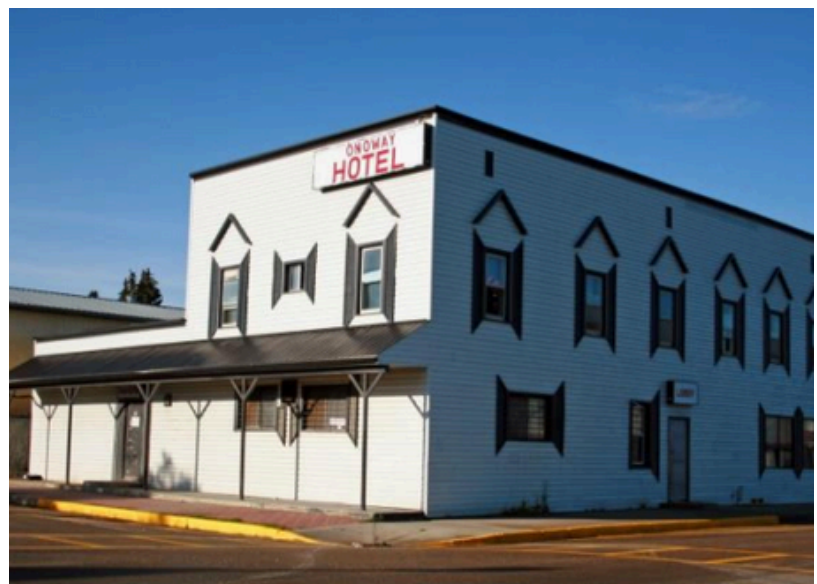




The most common theme was a continued emphasis on improving road conditions and maintenance, reinforcing concerns identified throughout earlier questions. Respondents highlighted the need for better upkeep of local roads and sidewalks, particularly during seasonal transitions. Several residents also called for enhanced communication and transparency from the Town. Suggestions included more frequent updates, greater visibility into decision-making processes, and improved clarity on project timelines and community plans.

There was also a notable interest in increasing community events and engagement opportunities, with comments supporting more local programming, celebrations, and activities to bring residents together. Other themes included a need for more enforcement of property standards—particularly around cleanliness and visual appeal—and a desire for long-term planning and vision, including better alignment between short-term actions and broader goals for Onoway's future.

While small in number, these responses offer valuable qualitative insight and reinforce key patterns seen throughout the survey: Residents want a well-maintained, communicative, and future-focused community that invests in both infrastructure and quality of life.



2

Trended Comparison

With the Town having now conducted surveying for two consecutive years, with a similar question set, it's valuable to begin to identify trends and themes that are echoed or which vary year-over-year. Over the coming years, continued engagement that follows similar threads will allow the Town to identify long-term themes, trends, or notable shifts in public opinion.

2.1 Demographics

Metric	2024	2025	Change/Insight
Responses	59 (≈6.1% of population)	29	50.8% decrease in participation year-over-year. May suggest the need for renewed outreach or survey fatigue.
Most Represented Age Group	45-54 (28.81%)	25-44 (combined 48.28%)	Slight demographic shift toward younger working-age adults.
Homeowners	86.44%	58.62%	Substantial drop; greater representation of "Other" (24.14%) in 2025. Possibly more non-resident stakeholders or commuters.

2.2 Community Perceptions

Statement	2024 - Agree %	2025 - Agree %	Trend
Great place to live	55.17%	62.07%	▲ Slight improvement
Safe community	58.62%	69.00%	▲ Improved perception
Good place to raise children	43.10%	58.60%	▲ Notable increase
Good place to retire	37.93%	65.50%	▲ Significant improvement
Good place to do business	27.12%	50.00%	▲ Better but still lowest-rated
Welcoming community	44.82%	69.00%	▲ Large improvement

There are significant positives here worth acknowledging. Overall sentiment improved across all categories, especially in retirement friendliness and community welcome. The biggest area of concern in 2024—business environment—still rated lowest but improved significantly.

2.3 Service Level Satisfaction

Service	2024 – Satisfied %	2025 – Satisfied %	Trend
Library	77.60%	79.30%	➡ Consistently high satisfaction
Fire Services	50.80%	62.10%	▲ Improvement
FCSS	27.60%	62.10%	▲ Strong improvement
Parks & Open Spaces	39.70%	48.30%	▲ Mild improvement
Snow Removal	62.10%	48.30%	▼ Slight decline
Summer Maintenance	38.60%	48.30%	▲ Modest improvement
Bylaw Enforcement	24.10%	41.40%	▲ Moderate improvement
Community Emergency Preparedness	19.30%	34.50%	▲ Perceived as more reliable
Economic Development	10.20%	34.50%	▲ Still low, but improving
Utilities	–	62.10%	Not listed in 2024

Most services saw improved satisfaction. Economic development and bylaw enforcement remain weaker areas. Snow removal saw a dip, which could be tied to seasonal variability or expectations. Regardless, very few respondents saw the need for a sharp change in service levels, with the majority favouring maintained service levels (below).

Change Preference	2024	2025	Trend
Maintain or increase budgets/services	90.80%	Consistent across categories	➡ Same high expectations
Strongest increase request	Children’s programs (47.5%)	Economic Development (53.6%)	Shift toward business focus
Most targeted for reduction	Town-produced events (25.9%)	No clear drop in any area	▼ Less focus on cuts

2.4 Budget Priorities

Priority Area	2024 – Ranked 1st	2025 – Highest Average Rank	Shift
Economic Development	Tied for 1st (20.3%)	4th (3.39 avg.)	▼ Deprioritized
Infrastructure Needs	4th (13.6%)	1st (4.32 avg.)	▲ Rose to top concern (3-point increase)
Fiscal Sustainability	5th (10.2%)	2nd (4.25 avg.)	▲ Increased to second top priority (3-point increase)
Maintaining Services	6th (3.4%)	3rd (3.57 avg.)	▲ 3-point increase
Minimizing Property Tax	Tied for 1st (20.3%)	5th (2.86 avg.)	▼ Significantly deprioritized (4-point decrease)
Planning for Growth	3rd (17.0%)	6th (2.61 avg.)	▼ 3-point decrease

There is significant change in budget priority expressed between 2024 and 2025 results, as 2025 respondents shifted focus toward infrastructure and financial sustainability, possibly reflecting deeper awareness of long-term pressures. Interest in limiting taxes dropped slightly in priority.

The other potential reason for the major shift in priority may stem from a significant decrease in respondent demographics. The shift in average respondent age from the category of 45-54 year-olds to the 25-44 age group means that younger participants may be embracing a different set of priorities than their older counterparts. This change in priority reflects a deeper desire for sustainability.

This is reflected similarly through the evaluation of tax tolerance. However, there is a notable mitigating factor that cushions the extent of this change, as the 2024 survey did include the option for no tax increase.

Statement	2024	2025	Trend
OK with any form of tax increase	59.60%	88.90%	▲ Significant rise in tax tolerance
Opposed to tax increases	40.40%	11.10%	▼ Strong decrease

2.5 Open Comment Thematic Comparison

Theme	2024	2025	Change
Road/Infrastructure Complaints	High	High	➡ Consistent concern
Recreation Requests	High	High	➡ Strong demand persists
Bylaw Enforcement Criticism	High	Moderate	▼ Slightly reduced but still present
Communication and Transparency	High	Moderate	▼ Less prominent in 2025
Fiscal Concerns	High	Moderate	▼ Less criticism of taxes in 2025
Youth Engagement	Low-Moderate	Moderate	➡ Consistent and growing demand



The Town of Onoway's 2025 Public Satisfaction Survey marks the second consecutive year of community-wide engagement in Onoway, providing valuable insight into how residents perceive their community, the services they receive, and the Town's priorities for the future. Though participation declined year-over-year, the quality and clarity of feedback remain strong, allowing for meaningful year-over-year comparisons and trend analysis.

Overall, community sentiment has improved notably across most key indicators. Residents increasingly view Onoway as a safe, welcoming, and livable community. Perceptions of Onoway as a good place to retire, raise children, and live, all improved. While the local business climate is still the lowest-rated among perception statements, it showed a market increase in support compared to the previous year, suggesting that while there is still work to be done, the Town's recent economic development efforts are beginning to shift public opinion.

Satisfaction with municipal services also showed improvement across most categories. Fire Services, FCSS, and Parks and Open Spaces Maintenance were rated more positively in 2025 than the year prior, while the Onoway Public Library continued to enjoy exceptionally high satisfaction. Although some areas, such as Snow Removal and Bylaw Enforcement, continue to generate moderate dissatisfaction, the overall trend indicates a growing appreciation for core services.



Infrastructure investment emerged as the most urgent and important issue for residents in 2025, displacing economic development and tax minimization, which were top priorities in 2024. This shift suggests that residents are increasingly aware of the long-term challenges associated with aging infrastructure and are willing to support appropriate investments to address them. Of course, there is something to be said for the potential that this shift stems directly from the younger demographic completing the 2025 survey compared to 2024. Still, the trend is further reinforced by a significant increase in tax tolerance, depicting a shift in public expectations and a recognition that necessary infrastructure investments, along with even maintained service delivery, require an investment.

This rings true against residents' demonstrated support for service level maintenance or increases across nearly every category, with particular interest in expanding cultural and recreational programming, economic development, and community engagement opportunities. Meanwhile, calls for budget reductions in any service area were minimal, highlighting a continued desire for a well-rounded, responsive municipal government.



Finally, while communication preferences continue to shift toward digital platforms, with Facebook standing out as the dominant channel, this change in particular can likely be aligned with the increase in youth survey participation. It's not, however, out of alignment with what's being seen more broadly throughout local government, where organizations are actively identifying opportunities for improved digital service offerings, to the extent of incorporating AI chatbots and self-service portals, while leaning into Customer Experience Strategies to identify resident needs and interaction opportunities. Further, the decline in survey participation this year suggests that a renewed emphasis on community outreach will be required in future engagement efforts, including communicating through multiple formats and encouraging participation across the community in full.

Taken together, the 2025 results point to a renewed optimism in Onoway. Respondents have clearly communicated a perceived value in long-term planning, fiscal responsibility and sustainability, and ongoing investment into residents' quality of life. Additional emphasis is placed on proactive measures in achieving these goals. As Onoway moves forward, the insights captured through this process provide a clear, community-driven foundation for strong, strategic and intentional decision-making.





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