

Attachment 3 – Feedback Questions Summary

<u>Date of Contribution</u>	<u>Guestbook Entry</u> (question – green / answer – red)	<u>Login</u> (screenname)	<u>Location</u>
Jan 08 24	<p>Q: I want to understand how the county is dealing with the elimination of developer charges and whether these costs will be transferred to existing property owners. How is the county going to pay for the infrastructure that is servicing growth in the Paris area?</p> <p>A: Thank you for your question. Development Charges (DC) are not being eliminated in the County of Brant. Recent Provincial Legislative changes have provided DC exemptions for non-profit housing and additional residential units, as well as affordable housing that meet specific requirements. The changes also include DC discounts for purpose built rental units, and a phase-in of new DC rates. To date, the County has only been impacted by the exemptions for non-profit housing such as the Trillium Way apartment, and additional residential units. The County is completing a DC update and the new DC rates implemented in September 2024 will be phased in. Property taxes as well as water and wastewater user rates will make up the revenue lost from exemptions and phased-in rates. The vast majority of the infrastructure servicing growth in the Paris area has been and will continue to be funded by Development Charges.</p>	Secooke	Mount Pleasant

<u>Date of Contribution</u>	<u>Guestbook Entry</u> <u>(question – green / answer – red)</u>	<u>Login</u> <u>(screenname)</u>	<u>Location</u>
Jan 09 24	<p>Q: Can you include green bins into the budget?</p> <p>A: Thank you for your question. Green Bins have not been included in the Draft 2024 Budget, but are being considered as part of the County's Garbage and Recycling Services Review, which can be followed through Engage Brant at EngageBrant.ca/WasteServices. The County will be entering into a new Waste Collection Contract in 2024, which will be effective for 2025. As such, green bins and the results of the Services Review will be a discussion brought forward for the 2025 Budget Deliberations.</p>	Ingrid Douglas	Glen Morris
Jan 11 24	<p>Q: With all the new building. Extra taxes and construction levy's why are we seeing such a dramatic increase. Shouldn't those increased taxes help offset this? It's possible we might need to look at the structure of departments are start making some cuts.</p> <p>A: Thank you for your question. The County of Brant has experienced considerable growth over the past few years and as a result has seen increased tax revenue. The increased revenue from 2023-2024 is primarily the difference between a 14.9% increase in Net Levy (total increase in expenditures) and the proposed 10.5% Tax Levy increase. Also noting that with new housing construction comes increases in services, for which costs are funded through tax revenue. The planning and building fees as well as Development Charges are specifically allocated to development-related costs</p>	jsibbick	Burford

<u>Date of Contribution</u>	<u>Guestbook Entry</u> <u>(question – green / answer – red)</u>	<u>Login</u> <u>(screenname)</u>	<u>Location</u>
Jan 11 24	<p data-bbox="420 240 1228 673">Q: Being fairly new to the County of Brant I wanted to understand better the Financial Plans of the County. I am not sure if the 2024 Budget is developed based on the 2023 Budget or whether there is a comparison to 2023 Actuals or Actuals plus Forecast for 2023. I could not find the 2023 Actuals presented in a similar manner as 2024 Proposed Budget. On first review I was surprised to see the 2024 budget is in the neighbourhood of a 10% year over year increase. Are we trying to compete with Toronto for the highest increase in the budget. Without a representation of actual 2023 expenditures all we are looking at is a partial comparison</p> <p data-bbox="420 714 1249 1258">A: Thank you for your question. The 2023 Budget and budget-to-actuals served as a starting base for the 2024 Draft Budget. Over the past few months, known or expected increases in costs have been added to the budget, as well as initiatives that were approved by Council, either as part of the 2023 budget discussion or mid-year. Though the year-end actuals are not currently available, as final year-end payments and revenues are still in process, the most recent variance report is available for reference. The 2024 Draft Budget is prepared based on actual anticipated cost increases, not on municipal comparators. The 2024 Budget Overview presentation also provides some further context on how the 2024 Budget was developed and the drivers that resulted in a proposed 14.9% Net Levy and 10.5% Tax Levy increase.</p>	Highlander	Paris

<u>Date of Contribution</u>	<u>Guestbook Entry</u> <u>(question – green / answer – red)</u>	<u>Login</u> <u>(screenname)</u>	<u>Location</u>
Jan 12 24	<p>Q: Where is the link to the budget? I don't see it</p> <p>A: Thank you for your question. The Proposed 2024 Budget Presentation and Proposed 2024 Budget Breakdown webpage link are available in the “Important links and resources” section of this page. You will also find other informative links and documents in this section.</p>	Brad Edward	
Jan 22 24	<p>Q: Could you please provide a list of organizations and not for profits that are exempted from paying tax for their properties? For example, the South Dumfries Historical Society. Could you please provide the criteria for qualifying for this tax break. Thank you.</p>	Langford Conservancy	

Additional Question Received via E-mail:

Q: Thank you for the link to the Financial Plan for 2024. I still am of the opinion that a 10.5% year over year budget increase is substantial especially in an economy where essential living costs (accommodation or renting, food, transportation) are escalating for all households.

Do you have a staffing plan for 2024. For example Corporate Strategy plans on 43.5% increase in Salaries, Wages and Benefits in 2024. Hopefully, that is not an expected financial increase for a similar or same staffing plan from 2023.

Some municipalities are further along in their planning and a number of surrounding areas are around the 5% or less increase (Mississauga, Hamilton, Oakville, Kitchener for example)

I recognize there are many demands the County faces and a lot of work goes into developing the financial plan. If you have a link to your fiscal priorities and major accomplishments that will be delivered in 2024 that would be helpful. The budget has “Budget Drivers” for change but not what will be accomplished as a results of the financial change in 2024.

Thanks for helping me to better understand the County we chose to move to.

Rick Ashall

A: I believe that the below e-mail was sent to the County's general e-mail inbox (info@brant.ca) after the response to your original question was posted, so I will attempt to respond to some of the additional questions you have posed.

One of the significant Budget Drivers relates to Council-approved reorganizations and in-year positions. The Corporate Strategy Department, as you referenced, is a new department created in 2023 and as such, there are annualized costs which make up a large part of the increase for that group. Overall, the staffing plan for the 2024 budget consists of additional positions approved by Council in 2023 as various needs were identified and presented to Council and the decision package recommendations being put forward to Council for consideration as part of the budget.

Some of the municipalities that have reported single-digit increases have done so on a different basis than the County is reporting its all-in budget. Our proposed expenditures are based on the best estimate of actual costs expected in 2024, not in the interest of comparing to other jurisdictions as it is very difficult to compare on a completely even basis when all municipalities have different needs, services and pressures.

The County has taken great strides to formalize its fiscal priorities and strategic plans, through the drafting of the Long Term Financial Plan and the upcoming Strategic Plan, both of which are still in progress. Further, the accomplishments and goals for each department are outlined in the Departmental Overviews, available for viewing through the following link:

<https://engagebrant.ca/40928/widgets/170356/documents/121896>

I assure you that Council and staff are very concerned that a 10.5% budget increase is substantial in light of other living costs. Many of these economic pressures and increased costs are also felt by the municipality, which makes it difficult to put forward a budget that meets our legislative and infrastructure needs as well as maintains the levels of service that our residents have come to rely on. These are not easy decisions and not taken lightly. The next Council meeting on the budget is scheduled for February 1, 2024, at which time Council will begin deliberations on the budget numbers.