

2019 Budget Survey Results/Analysis

December 2018 staff released a 2019 budget survey to get feedback from the Community. In the past, public open houses have not yielded the results or attendance resulting in a change in strategy.

Online, anonymous feedback has proven successful with 152 responses coming in. There we a multitude of questions that will assist staff operationally, directionally and with preparation of the annual Municipal budget.

Please see [Appendix A](#) for the complete survey questions.

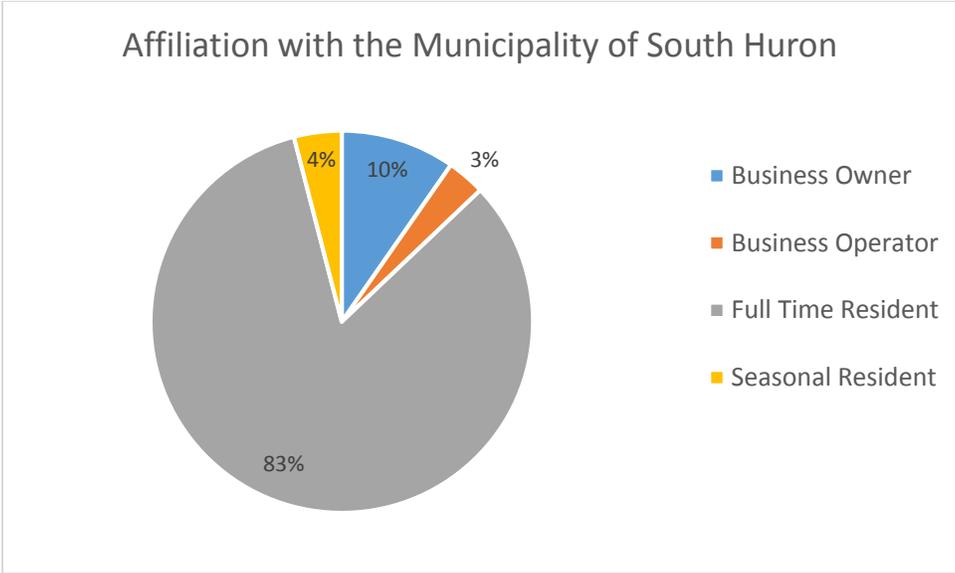
Data Disclaimer:

These data were collected using an open community survey hosted on the municipality's website and promoted using South Huron social media properties. This is a quick, inexpensive method for capturing community input to inform Council's decision; however, these results should only be considered as a summary of participant responses (i.e., descriptive statistics). No inferences can be made about how accurately survey results reflect the overall community sentiment without a random sampling method. Random sample (i.e., scientific) surveys are expensive, take more time to complete and are typically only conducted for large-scale capital projects.

Demographic Information

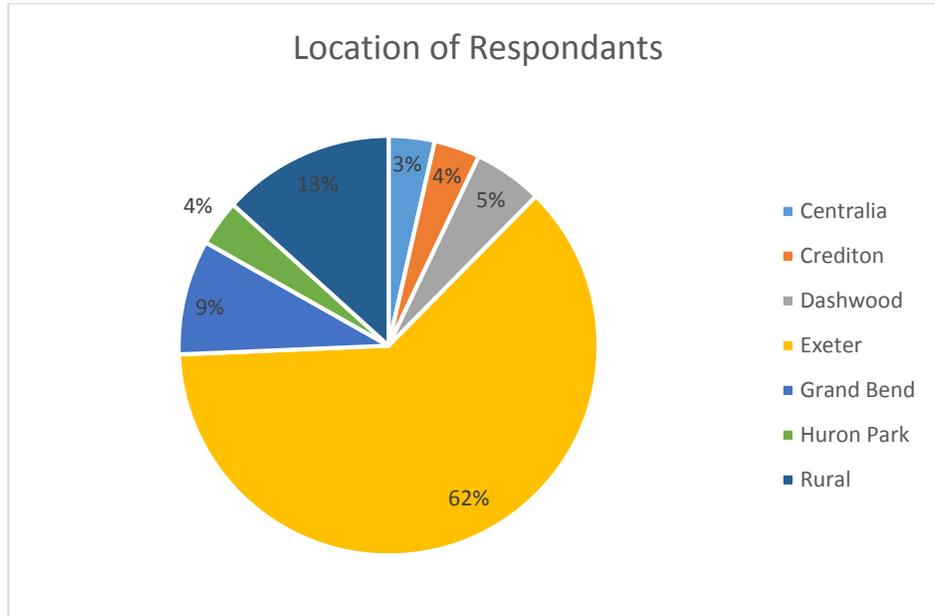
What is your affiliation with the Municipality of South Huron?

Respondents were able to pick more than one type of affiliation which has been reflected in the results. The largest representative group were full-time residents, which is to be expected.



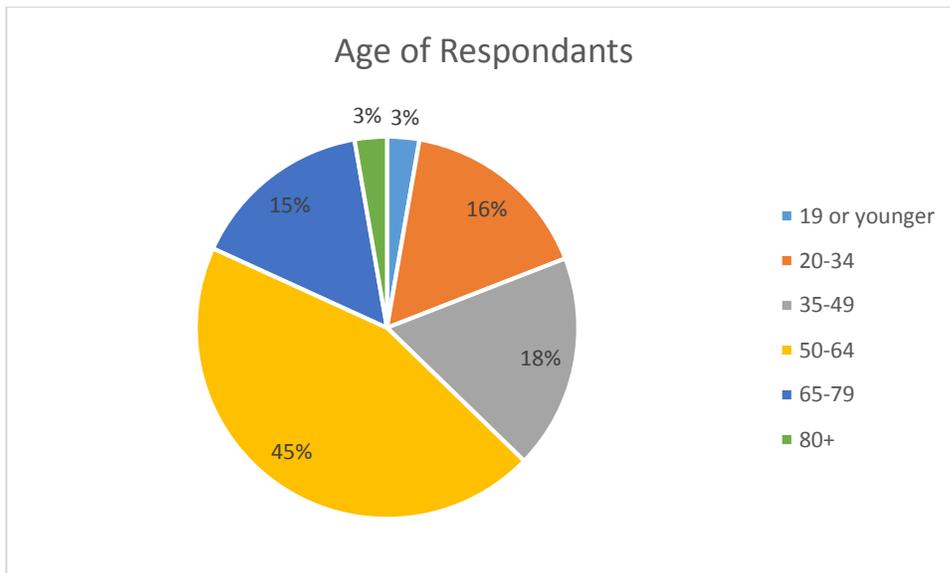
Where do you live in South Huron?

The most responses to the budget survey came from Exeter.



Please indicate your age range

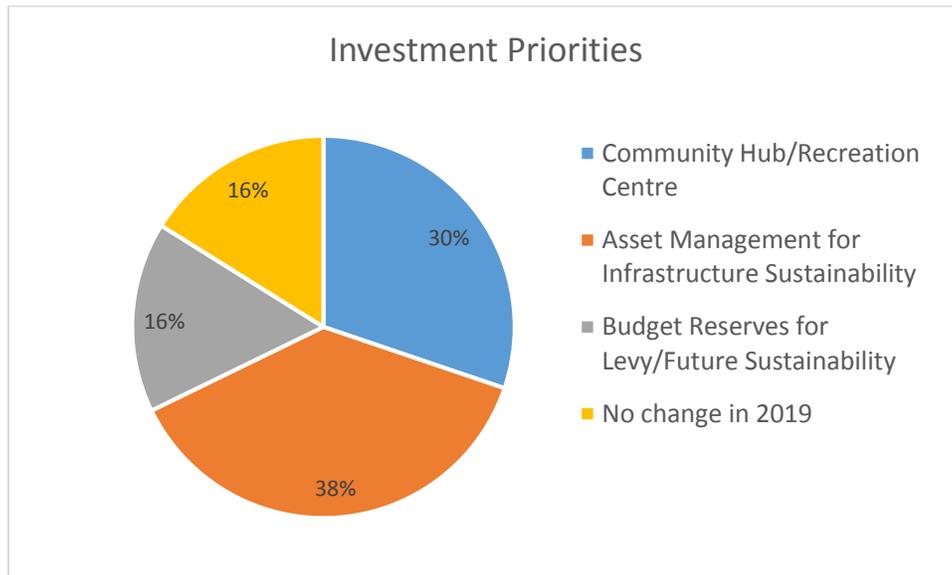
The age group with the most responses was the 50-64 year old category, however there is representation from the 20-49 groups as well as the 65-79. This showed a reasonable spread.



2019 Budget Directions (and beyond)

Where would you like to see investment in the 2019 budget?

Respondents were able to choose more than one option to reflect multiple priorities. This has been reflected in the % breakdown. The priorities seem to lie within the realm of asset management showing the demand for pre-planning and evidence based budgeting.

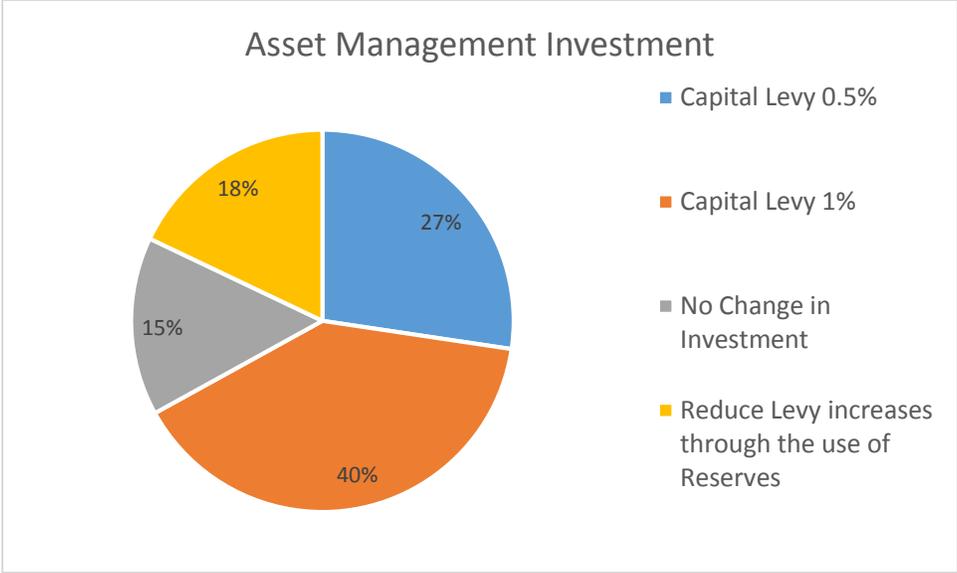


The Municipality is developing an asset management strategy to repair or replace our ageing core infrastructure. Which approach would you prefer?

This question was designed to assess the understanding and willingness/ability to engage in the strategies listed. It is a great question to serve the 2019 budget, but also operations and asset management planning which is going to be a great tool for the Municipality.

Ageing infrastructure is a problem in all Municipalities resulting in a backlog of major capital maintenance or asset replacements. The backlog requires a strategic, long-term financial strategy.

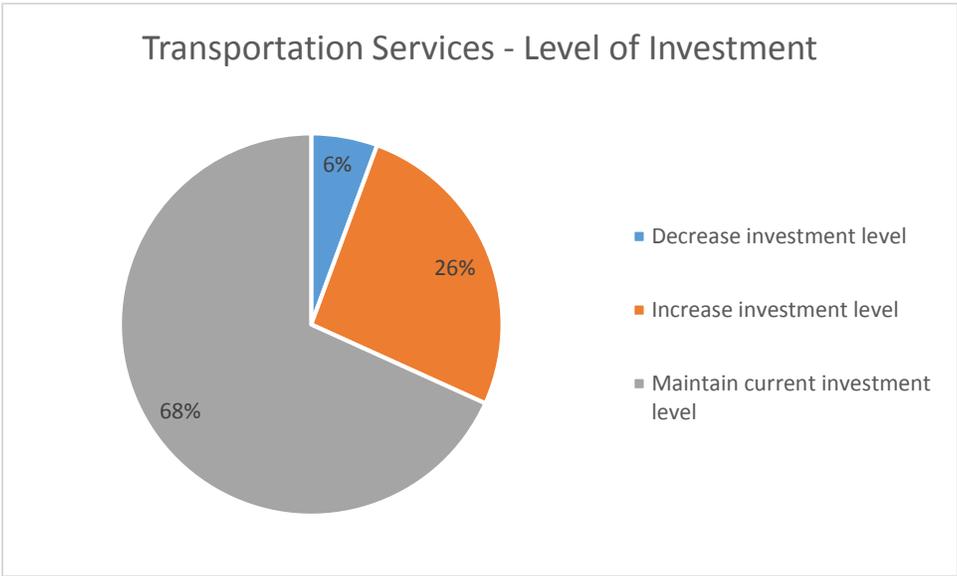
The following graph demonstrates there is value in the community to dedicated infrastructure (capital) funding. This is imperative for future direction and ensuring a proactive, efficient and economical approach to our asset that are used daily to provide the services.



Transportation Services

What would you like to see in 2019?

Respondents were given a choice between decreasing, increasing or maintaining the current level of investment. This is used to assess the appetite or willingness to pay for services. The result was to maintain the current investment level which, beyond typical changes in input prices, interest, contracts, etc., means efficiencies will need to be achieved in order to meet minimum maintenance standards.



Feedback from the budget survey:

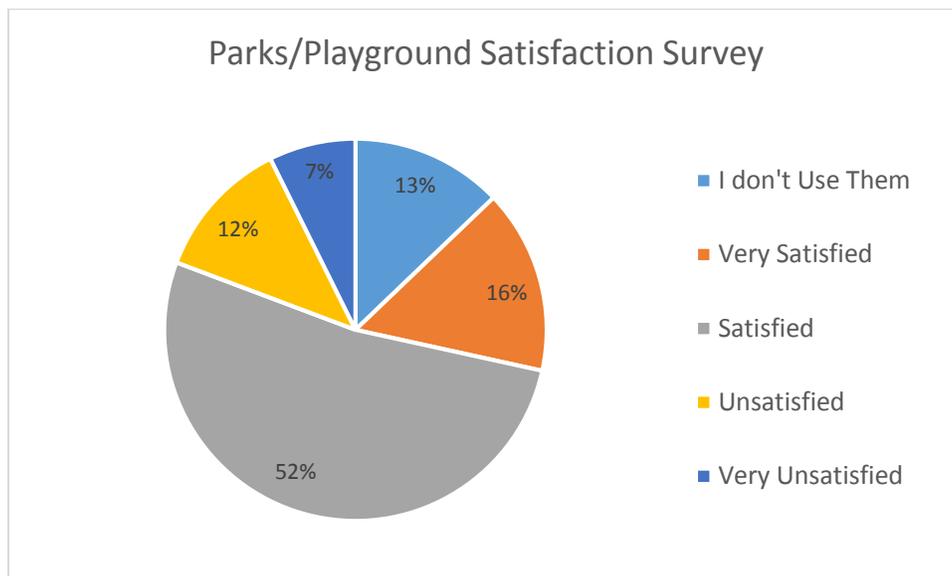
- Preventative maintenance to avoid future expensive, reactive investment requirements (ex. Mollard Line)

- Accessible parking spots in the downtown core
- Improve sidewalks in the smaller communities in South Huron
- Establish healthy reserves to ensure sustainability of our roads infrastructure
- Public transportation
- Invest in quality infrastructure as they are critical assets
- Pave gravel roads (plan)
- Meet minimum maintenance standards, specifically for sidewalks
- Asset Management Planning for Roads to ensure efficiency in spending
- Consider the impact of development North of Exeter
- Policy/Planning for storm water management

Recreation & Cultural Services

Considering our parks, playgrounds and their maintenance, how satisfied are you with these services?

It appears most residents are satisfied with the services offered by the parks and playgrounds. Some of the comments/suggestions have been included as feedback to provide context to this data.



Feedback and suggestions for the parks/playgrounds in the Municipality of South Huron:

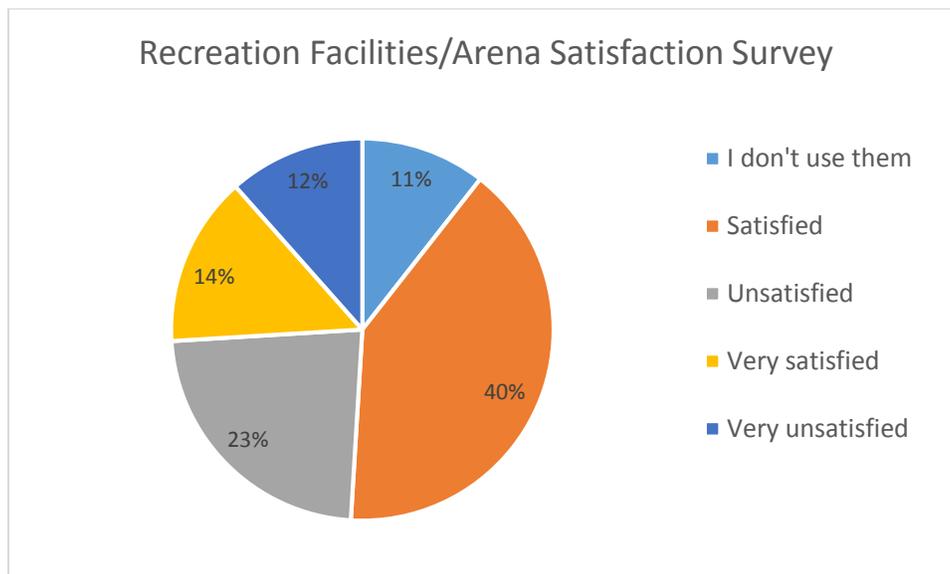
- Revamp the overnight campground in Exeter
- Multipurpose facility beyond ice rink usage; Example: gymnasium that could be used for other sports/programs
- Swing for accessibility at the parks (wheelchair accessibility)
- Waive the entrance fee at Port Blake for South Huron residents
- Increase involvement of the Community Groups in the parks (example: Lioness/Lions Club Park commitments)

- Increase the maintenance/service level of the ball diamonds throughout the Municipality (Centralia specifically mentioned)
- Dog Park in Exeter
- Walking Track indoors
- Update/maintain the arena(s)
- BBQ in McNaughton Park replaced with fully working units
- McNaughton Park parking lot – paved
- Significant lack of programs in South Huron
- Victoria Park Wading pool hours – suggestion was to survey young families to determine higher demand hours
- Victoria Park – barrier between the park facilities and traffic (ex. Hedge line, fencing, etc.) since this park is geared for toddlers
- Investment in a more permanent version of the farmer’s market
- More programming geared towards seniors
- YMCA programming mentioned numerous times
- Too many parks (costly maintenance, underserved, etc.)
- Received positive feedback on McNaughton trail

It is important to note that the aforementioned suggestions include constructive criticism and legitimate suggestions. There were many comments on the Community Hub under the parks section that will be saved for the arenas/facilities section.

How do you feel about the recreation facilities and arenas in South Huron?

It appears most residents are satisfied with the services offered by the recreation facilities and arenas. Some of the comments/suggestions have been included as feedback to provide context to this data.



Feedback and suggestions for the parks/playgrounds in the Municipality of South Huron:

- Updates to the South Huron Recreation Centre in Exeter

- Dressing room updates and accommodations at the South Huron Recreation Centre
- Upgrades to the halls for rental suitable for more weddings, etc.
- Indoor spaces with programs for kids in the winter
- Cooperation/partnership with neighbouring Municipalities
- No new facility just upgrade the existing
- Programming/Recreation in Huron Park Area
- Walking track has been consistent throughout both Recreation feedbacks spots
- Upgrade Dashwood Hall
- More investment in the cultural aspects in the Municipality (Arts)
- More programming is a very constant point of feedback from youth to seniors; Year round programming, not just summer
- Gymnasium for other types of activities to cater to a diverse set of interests and purposes
- Indoor pool – some stating their support and some stating the infeasibility with our small tax base
- Detailed studies on the recreation centre/hub with options contrasting building new or renovating existing for the most cost effective solution

It is important to note that the aforementioned suggestions include constructive criticism and legitimate suggestions.

Feedback to the Survey Respondents

- Paving specific areas/roads
 - This will be part of the asset management plan including risk of failure and consequence of failure metrics in addition to road/base condition analysis. Please refer specific requests to Council.
- Gas Tax Funding – where does this go?
 - Currently the Municipality has committed OCIF and AMO Gas Tax grant funding to the roads, bridges, and culverts.
- What does transportation services cover?
 - As defined in the budget survey introduction this includes the roads network including all bridges/culverts and the equipment/vehicles required to maintain them, municipal drain work, streetlighting, traffic lights, signage, etc.
- Increase maintenance on roads/sidewalks/winter control
 - The Municipality currently meets the Provincial Minimum Maintenance Standards. Any increase in maintenance beyond this would be at a cost. Levels of service will be considered as part of the asset management planning and include a public consultation aspect.
- What is the current level of funding?
 - The 2018 operating budget for Transportation Services included total expenses of \$3.18M.
- Utilize MPAC phase-in and growth of 5-6% annually for roads.
 - The MPAC amounts are generally required to offset increases in materials/construction contracts, utilities, insurance, service contracts, etc. The cost of operations increases annually, at least with a rate similar to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or Inflation as it does with households. Thus, an operating budget is anticipated to increase year over year so additional phase-in/growth amounts due to changes in MPAC assessment values are required to offset these costs.
 - The dedicated capital levy was put out as a palatable option for addressing a long term strategic financial strategy as part of the asset management planning.
- Neighbouring Municipalities working together to support Recreation & Cultural Services
 - South Huron continues to look at ways of partnering with neighbouring municipalities where feasible to do so.

Welcome!

This 10 minute survey provides information about the municipality's budget. It's also an opportunity for you - our ratepayers - to have a say in the process to establish priorities.

We're not collecting personal information with this survey and you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to.

Thank you for your input!

Types of Budgets

The **Operating Budget** consists of the day-to-day operations of each department. This includes providing services, maintenance/repair activities, as well as administrative activities.

The **Capital Budget** consists of major maintenance events or the replacement of assets to deliver services to residents, businesses and visitors.

Services Provided by the Municipality of South Huron

The Municipality provides dozens of services that the public relies on everyday. The following list identifies a few of these key services:

- Building and planning services for new developments, site plans and renovations
- Clerk services including marriages, commissioning, notaries, freedom of information requests and election management
- Municipal roads, bridges and culvert maintenance as well as storm water management activities to prevent flooding. We also ensure snow removal and safe road access in all seasons. Gravel road maintenance, dust control, and grading of municipal roads are also service we provide. This work is governed by the province's Minimum Maintenance Standards.
- Water services that ensure access to safe drinking water, which is strictly monitored 24/7 to meet provincial standards for water quality
- Sanitary sewer services ensure the removal and treatment of waste water, which is also heavily regulated by the province
- Arenas and community centers, which are used for recreational activities by all ages
- Parks and pools
- Economic and community development activities that enrich the community in which we live, work and play
- Cemetery plots and interments as per the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO)
- Financial and administrative services

- OPP and Police Board services
- Fire prevention, suppression and public safety education

“Own Source” Funding

To deliver public services, South Huron generates revenue through two means:

Tax Levy, which are the dollars levied by multiplying the tax rate and the assessment values in the community. This is the primary source of funding in order to provide the services.

User Fees such as include water/sewer fees, landfill charges, garbage/recycling fees, cemetery user fees and recreation user fees. User fees help reduce the tax levy.

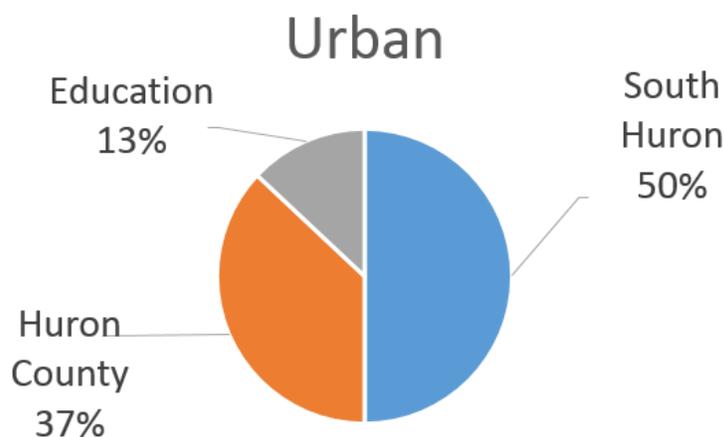
Tax Rates vs. Tax Levy

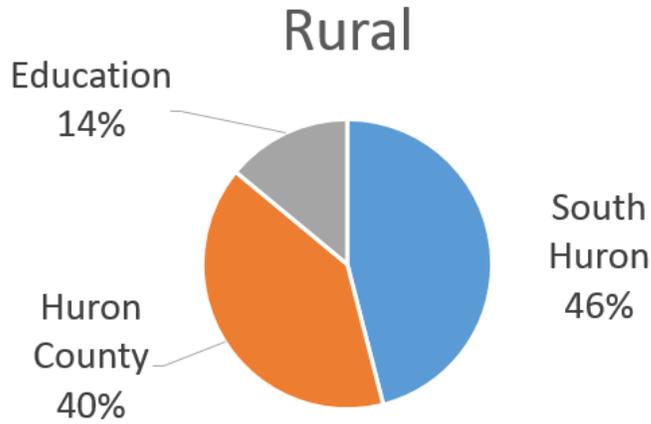
Tax Rate – Multiplied by the assessment value to get the total taxes owing.

Tax Levy – Total amount required to fund the operating and capital budgets for levy-based services.

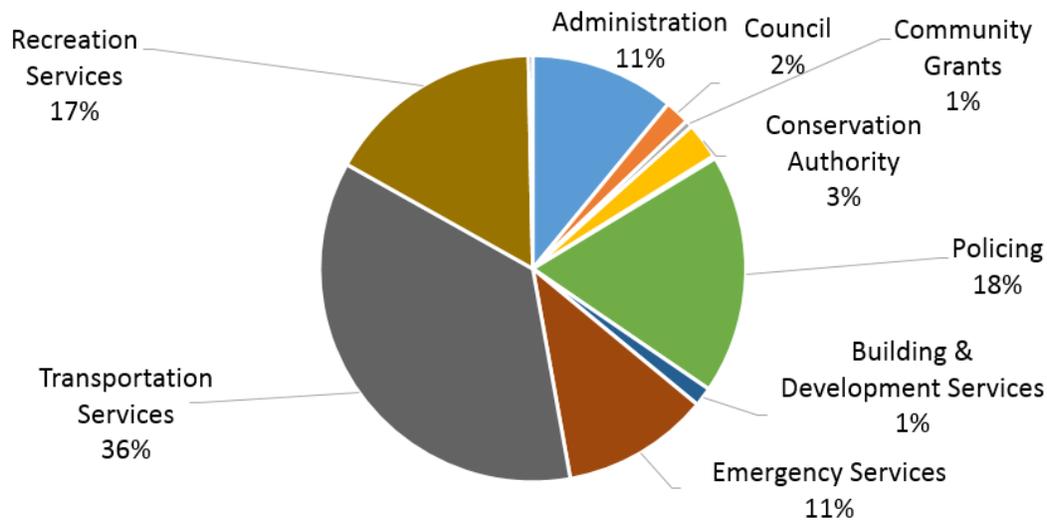
Your Property Tax Bill

A percentage of your tax bill funds the Municipality of South Huron. Your property tax bill also collects revenue to fund the County of Huron and local school boards, which are independent entities that determine their own tax rates. The charts, below, show how much of your tax bill goes to each governing body. The difference between rural and urban percentages is based on slightly different police service costs, as defined in the Amalgamation Order.





Percentage of Tax Bill by Department (based on 2018 budget)



What do you think?

Tell us a little about yourself and what your priorities are.

1. What communication methods do you prefer to receive information about the Municipality of South Huron? (you can choose more than one)

- Newspaper
- Municipal Website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Local Radio
- Word of Mouth
- Community Signs/Posters

2. What is your affiliation with the Municipality of South Huron?

- Full Time Resident
- Seasonal Resident
- Business Owner
- Business Operator

3. Where do you live in South Huron?

- Centralia
- Crediton
- Dashwood
- Exeter
- Grand Bend
- Huron Park

Rural

4. Please indicate your age:

- 19 or younger
- 20-34
- 35-49
- 50-64
- 65-79
- 80+

5. Where would you like to see investment in the 2019 budget? (you can choose more than one)

- A Community Hub / Recreation Centre Project
- Budget reserves to ensure levy stability and future sustainability
- Asset management to ensure the sustainability of our infrastructure
- I'd rather not invest and keep the 2019 budget to last year's amount.

6. The Municipality is developing an asset management strategy to repair or replace our ageing core infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges and culverts). Which approach would you prefer?

- Dedicate a capital levy of 1%, which amounts to an annual increase in your tax bill of approximately \$6.07 per \$100,000 of residential assessment value.
- Dedicate a capital levy of 0.5%, which amounts to an annual increase in your tax bill of approximately \$3.03 per \$100,000 of residential assessment value.
- Use some reserve money set aside for urgent repairs to ease levy increases over the short term.
- No change, I don't want to invest more in asset management.

Transportation

Transportation includes the following services and all the required equipment to service/maintain the assets in the network:

- Roads – paved/unpaved
- Sidewalks
- Storm Water Management
- Winter Control – snow removal/plowing, sanding/salting, etc.
- Roadside Operations – traffic lights, signage, streetlights, etc.
- Bridges and Culverts
- Municipal Drains

The main source of funding for roads is the tax levy due to the fact there is no way to recover user fees and roads need to be available and accessible for all residents, businesses and visitors.

Transportation must adhere to Ontario legislation dictating the minimum maintenance standards for the aforementioned services. This is one of the most robust departments within the Municipality yet critical to ensuring the movement of people within the Municipality of South Huron.

The asset network for Transportation Services is massive as the Municipality has approximately 178 km of gravel roads and 170 km of paved road, as per the 2016 Asset Management Plan. As part of each road there is a number of components, from surface to base to storm water aspects.

1. Transportation Services is dependent upon the tax levy for funding. What would you like to see in 2019?

- Increase investment level
- Maintain current investment level
- Decrease investment level

2. Please provide any general suggestions or recommendations for transportation services:

Recreation & Cultural Services

Recreation & Cultural Services includes the following services and facilities:

- Arenas
- Community Centers
- Programming – including pool, splash pad, playground, dance, karate, gymnastics, etc.
- Parks

Municipally administered recreation activities collect user fees to recover some costs associated with providing these services to the public (e.g., overhead, maintenance, staffing costs, etc). However, currently in South Huron recreation services are subsidized by the tax levy with goal to enable all residents access to participate.

1. Please consider our parks, playgrounds and their maintenance. How satisfied are you with these services?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied
- I don't use them

2. Based on your answer above, please provide reasoning or recommendations.

3. How do you feel about the recreation facilities and arenas in South Huron?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied
- I don't use them

4. Please provide any general feedback on your expectations regarding recreational facilities.

Economic & Community Development

Economic and community development activities lead to improvements in our local economy, environment and society.

What projects would you recommend to take place that would make South Huron a better place to live, work and play?

