

Online Citizen Budget Engagement FAQs

As part of Council's ongoing commitment to transparency and engaging with residents, the Town of View Royal implemented a two-year trial of an online Citizen Budget engagement tool in 2020. This online tool enables residents to provide input and voice their opinions on the annual budget prior to final adoption.

An online citizen engagement tool specific to budget provides real-time, objective, and transparent communication about the budget process, revenue sources and spending priorities, and collects informed feedback to Council.

This FAQs document will be added to as we receive further questions from citizens about Citizen Budget.

Q: I don't have a home computer. How can I participate?

A: Computers are available for public use at your local library and the View Royal Reading Centre at 266 Island Highway. Please call 250-479-2723 for hours of operation for View Royal Reading Centre. You can also visit the View Royal Town Hall where a computer will be available for use from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday.

Q: I can't use a computer. How can I provide feedback?

A: Paper forms are available at View Royal Town Hall (45 View Royal Avenue).

Q: How will my privacy be protected? What information will be collected?

A: Our service provider (Ethelo) has assured us that their platform complies with rigorous security protocols. If you are concerned about privacy, you'll want to carefully review the privacy policy under the *Terms and Conditions* link on the left side bar of the tool to learn what information is collected, how it is stored, who has access to it and how to change your privacy settings. Ethelo will never provide your personal information to any third parties without your express prior consent.

Q: How will my input be used?

A: Citizens can offer their opinions and preferences for how their tax dollars are used before the financial plan bylaw is adopted in May. Your feedback will help Council identify priorities for future city budgets. In addition, the tool is an educational device, by which residents can learn more about their tax contribution through an interactive visual model, based on individual assessed value.

Q: What if I need help?

A: For residents seeking assistance, a dedicated support person will be available at View Royal Town Hall at 45 View Royal Avenue from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Paper copies of the questions will also be available at the Town Hall from Friday, March 12 to Wednesday, March 31, 2021. *Paper copies must be completed and returned to View Royal Town Hall by 4:30 pm Wednesday, March 31, 2021 to be included in the results reported to Council.

Q: Will there be a report out on the results of the Citizen Budget pilot project?

A: Yes. View Royal staff will bring the *Citizen Budget Results* report to a Committee of the Whole meeting starting at 3:30pm on April 13, 2021. All View Royal Council members are participants in the Committee of the Whole. Council and Committee of the Whole meetings are webcast live and recorded for viewing after the meeting. Look for the [Live Webcast](#) link at www.viewroyal.ca.

Q: How much did the Citizen Budget engagement cost and how is it being paid for?

A: The program cost \$11,500 over two years (\$6,500 in year one; \$5,000 in year two). We expect the cost to be offset by eliminating the Budget Open House sessions held in previous years, which have historically had very low attendance (typically less than 5 people). The balance of costs will be paid out of the General Government Services budget.

Q: Why is this only being done for two years?

A: Launching the online Citizen Budget engagement tool as a two-year pilot will enable us to get a clear picture of how well-used the tool is by citizens and how helpful citizens found the opportunity to participate in the budgeting process. Use of the tool in future years will be assessed based on the success of the first two years.