

Online Citizen Budget Engagement FAQs

As part of Council's ongoing commitment to transparency and engaging with residents, the Town of View Royal uses the online Citizen Budget engagement tool that 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.

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 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 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Paper copies of the questions will also be available at the Town Hall from Monday, March 13 to Friday, March 31, 2023. *Paper copies must be completed and returned to View Royal Town Hall by 4:30 pm Friday, March 31, 2023, in order to be included in the results reported to Council.

Q: I get an error message, or the tool doesn't seem to be working as I expect?

A: The service provider is standing by to assist with technical issues or questions View Royal staff can't answer. Contact Ethelo support at support@ethelo.com.

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

A: Yes, View Royal staff will bring the *Citizen Budget Results* report to a Committee of the Whole meeting starting at 3:30 pm on April 11, 2023. All View Royal Council members are participants in the Committee of the Whole.

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

A: The program costs about \$6,000 annually. The cost is partially 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 are paid out of the General Government Services budget.