

Township goes online to get budget feedback

Do-your-own budget web page for residents debuted Monday

DAN FERGUSON / Feb. 18, 2013 9:00 a.m. / NEWS

A do-your-own Township of Langley budget went online Monday, giving residents a taste of the budget process while allowing Township planners a glimpse of what the “top of mind” financial issues are in the community.

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The online budget simulator is viewable until Feb 26 at tol.ca/budget.





People who log on will be greeted by a message that states “Balancing a \$350 million budget for 105,000 people demands difficult choice.”

Then the user is led through a series of choices, what the web site defines as “top of mind issues,” that demonstrate the impact of cuts or spending hikes on the bottom line.

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The concept is similar to web budget simulators deployed by the City of Vancouver, B.C. provincial government and other local, provincial and state governments in Canada and the U.S.

In a press release issued last Tuesday, Councillor Michelle Sparrow said the simulator will give the Township more input than it would glean from the usual process of public meetings.

“Having 30 people at an open house is not an effective measure of public opinion,” said Sparrow.

While certain budget items, such as wages, cannot be changed, Sparrow said information collected through the "Citizen Budget" will give the Township an indication of what people do and don't want.

"It may give people an idea of the difficult choices involved in doing the job we do," she added.

"Sometimes the budget is hard to fathom and it looks scary, but when you realize it is only costing you so many dollars for all these valuable services, it makes sense,"

An open house on the budget is set for this Monday (Feb. 25).