



PORT COLBORNE

Future of Childcare in Port Colborne

Survey Results

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Survey	2
Overview	2
Overall Survey Observations	3
Summary of Survey Results by Question	4

Introduction

On February 3, 2025, the City of Port Colborne launched a comprehensive public engagement campaign to collect public feedback on the future of childcare in Port Colborne.

The campaign included:

1. Online survey
2. Paper survey

The survey closed on February 14, 2025. This document serves as a summary of the results of the engagement activities.

Please note that personal information collected during this public engagement project was collected under the authority of the *Municipal Act, 2001* and will be used to help Council make decisions related to the future of healthcare in Port Colborne. The disclosure of this information is governed by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Questions related to the collection of this information may be directed to the Deputy City Clerk at 905-228-8118 or deputyclerk@portcolborne.ca

Survey

Overview

The survey was designed to gather input from residents regarding the future of childcare in Port Colborne, including:

- Feedback about the current requirements for childcare spaces in Port Colborne
- Potentially using the former Visitors Centre (Main Street and Mellanby Avenue) as a new location for childcare
- The City's involvement with the creation of childcare spaces within Port Colborne

The survey was distributed online and in paper format.

The online survey was promoted through multiple channels to maximize reach and participation. These included the City's website, social media platforms, digital advertising, and media outreach.

Paper surveys were available at City Hall, Vale Health & Wellness Centre and Port Colborne Public Library.

The survey was launched on February 3, 2025, and closed February 14, 2025. The results shown in this appendix includes all responses received during that period.

Quick Facts

- 305 people completed the survey (295 online and 10 on paper)
 - 7 from City Hall
 - 2 from Vale Health & Wellness Centre
 - 1 from Port Colborne Public Library
- 315 open-field comments to analyze and categorize
- Average time to complete the survey: 3 minutes (online survey)
- Estimated completion rate: 91% - this is the number of people who started and finished the survey.

Overall Survey Observations

Need for more licensed childcare spaces in Port Colborne

- 86% of respondents believe Port Colborne requires more licensed childcare spaces
- 38% of respondents who have a child/children in childcare go outside of Port Colborne for care
- 82% of respondents believe the City has a role in creating facilities for licensed childcare

Support for using the former Visitors Centre as a location

- 73% of respondents believe using the former Visitors Centre (Main Street and Mellanby Avenue) for licensed childcare is a good idea
- 73% of respondents agree with renovating the former Visitors Centre to use it for licensed childcare

Concern about raising property taxes for development and funding

- Only 8.5% of respondents would accept an increase to property taxes to fund the development of a licensed childcare facility
- 86% of respondents believe that funding should come from grants from upper levels of government to develop licensed childcare

Summary of Survey Results by Question

Q1. Where do you live?

Answer Choices	Responses
Port Colborne	278
Wainfleet, Welland, Fort Erie	19
Somewhere else in Niagara	6
Somewhere else in Ontario	1
Other	0

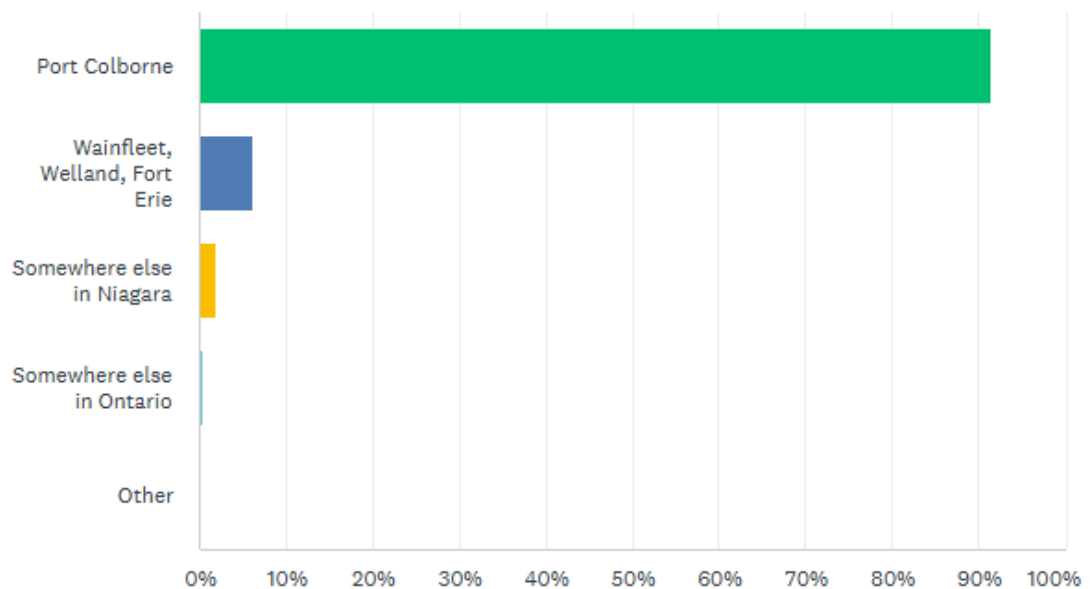
91% of respondents were from Port Colborne. 98% of respondents were from Port Colborne, Wainfleet, Welland or Fort Erie.

Answered 304

Skipped 1

Where do you live?

Answered: 304 Skipped: 1



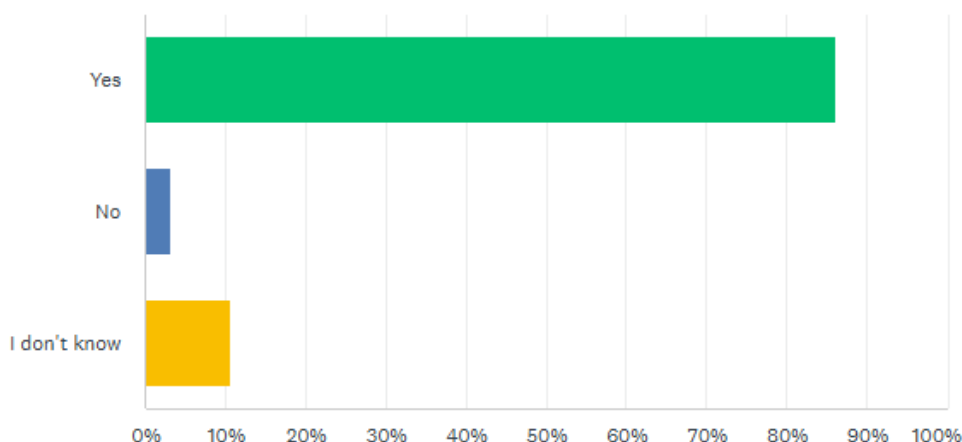
Q2. The City has received feedback from residents noting the community does not have enough licensed childcare spaces. Do you think Port Colborne requires additional licensed childcare spaces?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	261
No	10
I don't know	32
Answered	303
Skipped	2

86% of respondents believe Port Colborne requires additional licensed childcare spaces.

The City has received feedback from residents noting the community does not have enough licensed childcare spaces. Do you think Port Colborne requires additional licensed childcare spaces?

Answered: 303 Skipped: 2



Q3. Do you have any children?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	235
No	67

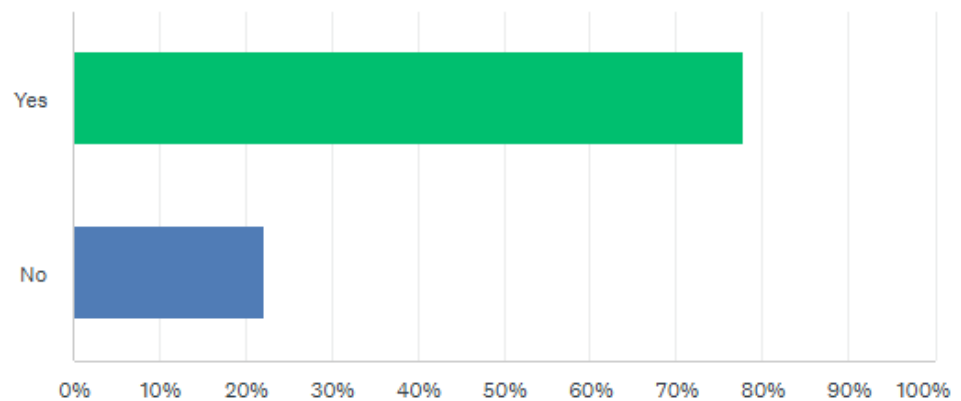
**78% of survey
respondents reported
they have children.**

Answered 302

Skipped 3

Do you have any children?

Answered: 302 Skipped: 3



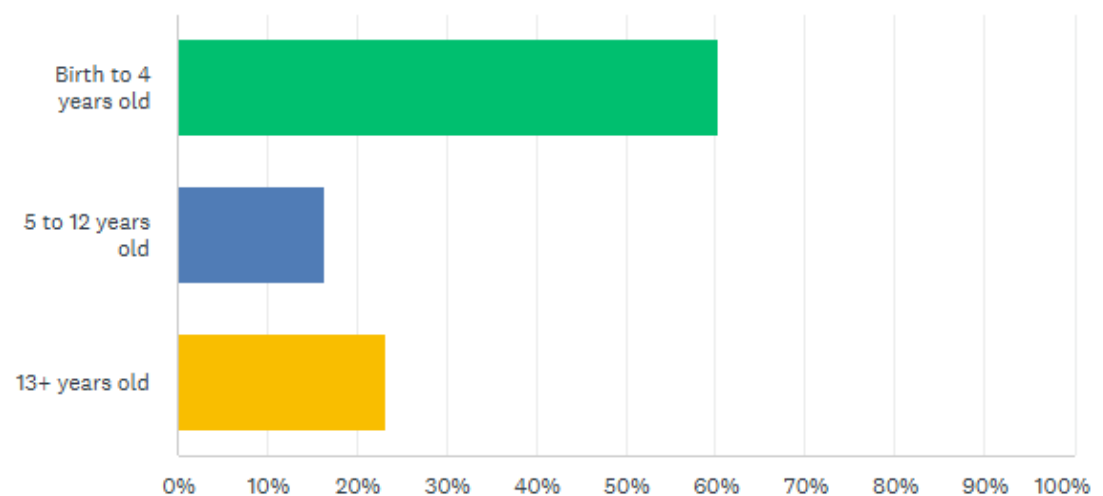
Q4. How old are they?

Answer Choices	Responses
Birth to 4 years old	143
5 to 12 years old	39
13+ years old	55
Answered:	237
Skipped:	68

Of those with children, 60% of respondents reported their children were aged birth to 4 years old.

How old are they?

Answered: 237 Skipped: 68



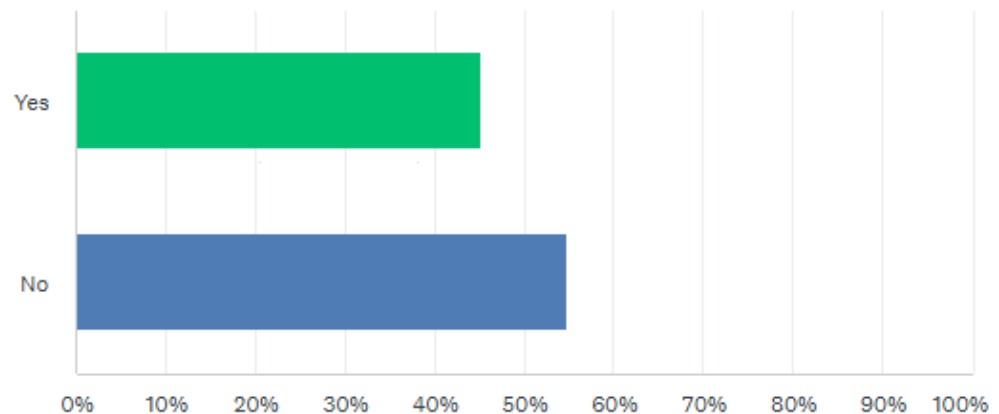
Q5. Do your children go to some type of childcare?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	107
No	130
Answered	237
Skipped	68

Of respondents with children, 45% are currently using some form of childcare.

Do your children go to some type of childcare?

Answered: 237 Skipped: 68



Q6. What type of childcare is it (currently/most recently)?

Answer Choices	Responses
Licensed childcare centre	65
Licensed home childcare	16
Independent home childcare	21
Parents, family or friends	25
Other (please specify)	5

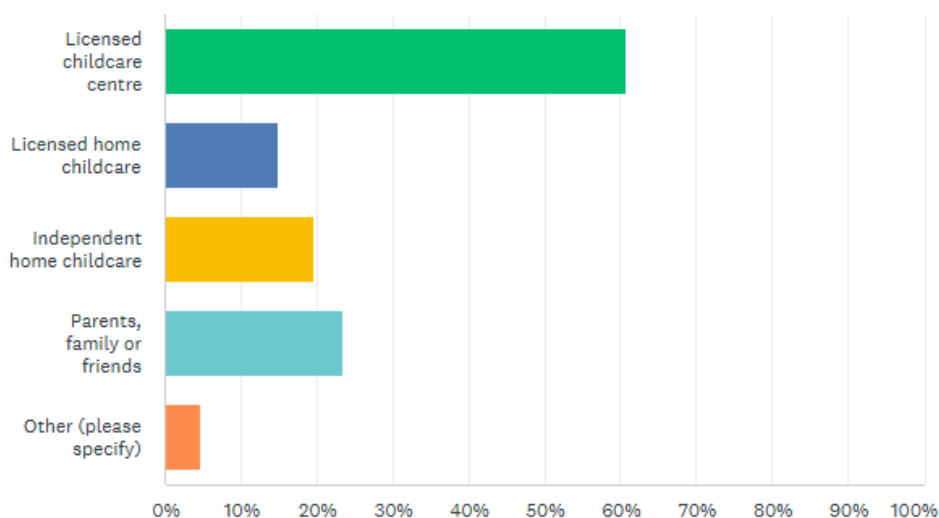
Of those respondents who have children who go to childcare, 61% are using a licensed childcare centre.

Answered 107

Skipped 198

What type of childcare is it (currently/most recently)?

Answered: 107 Skipped: 198



Question 6 also allowed for respondents to offer “other” answers. Answers included responses such as: before and after school care; private forest school; Montessori school; waitlisted.

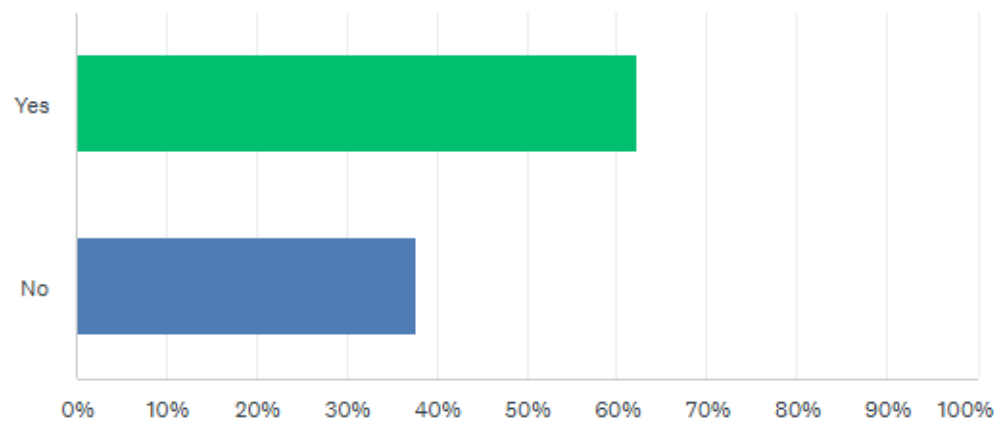
Q7. Is the childcare in Port Colborne?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	66
No	40
Answered	106
Skipped	199

38% of respondents with children in some sort of childcare go outside of Port Colborne for that care.

Is the childcare in Port Colborne?

Answered: 106 Skipped: 199



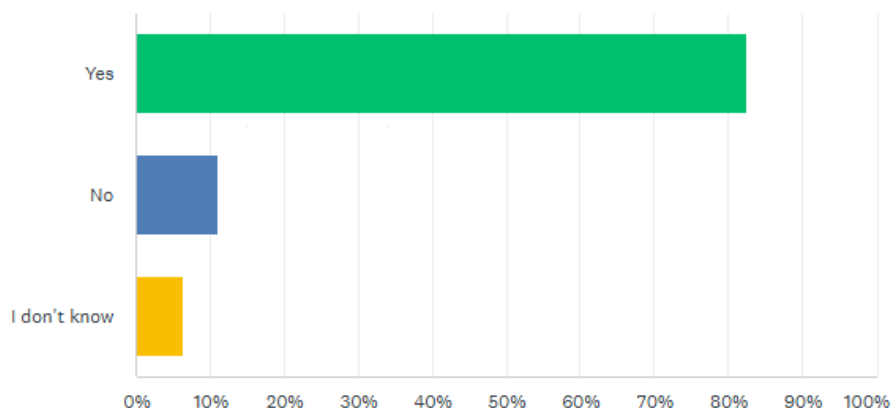
Q8. Do you think the City of Port Colborne should be involved in creating facilities or providing space that could be leased to licensed childcare providers?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	230
No	31
I don't know	18
Answered	279
Skipped	26

82% of respondents agree that the City should be involved in the creation of licensed childcare facilities.

Do you think the City of Port Colborne should be involved in creating facilities or providing space that could be leased to licensed childcare providers?

Answered: 279 Skipped: 26



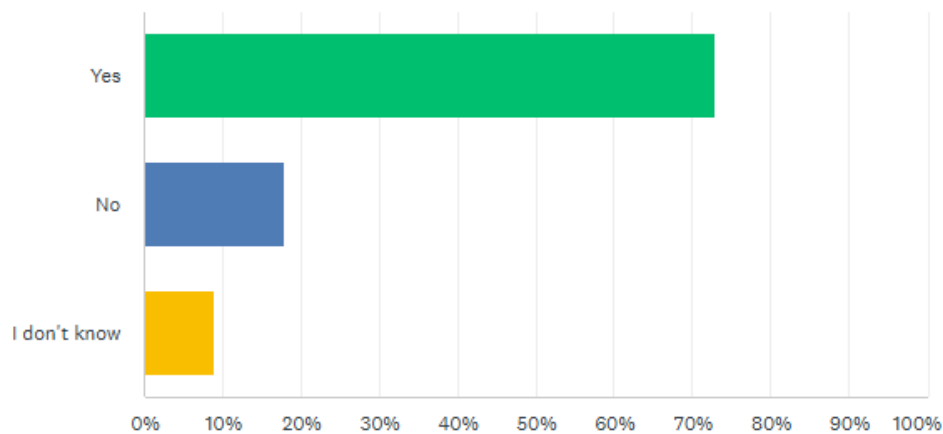
Q9. The City is currently investigating the option of repurposing the empty former Visitors Centre (Main Street and Mellanby Avenue) to house a licensed childcare facility. Do you think this is a good idea?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	203
No	50
I don't know	25
Answered	278
Skipped	27

73% of respondents think it is a good idea to use the former Visitors Centre as a location for a licensed childcare centre.

The City is currently investigating the option of repurposing the empty former Visitors Centre (Main St and Mellanby Ave) to house a licensed childcare facility. Do you think this is a good idea?

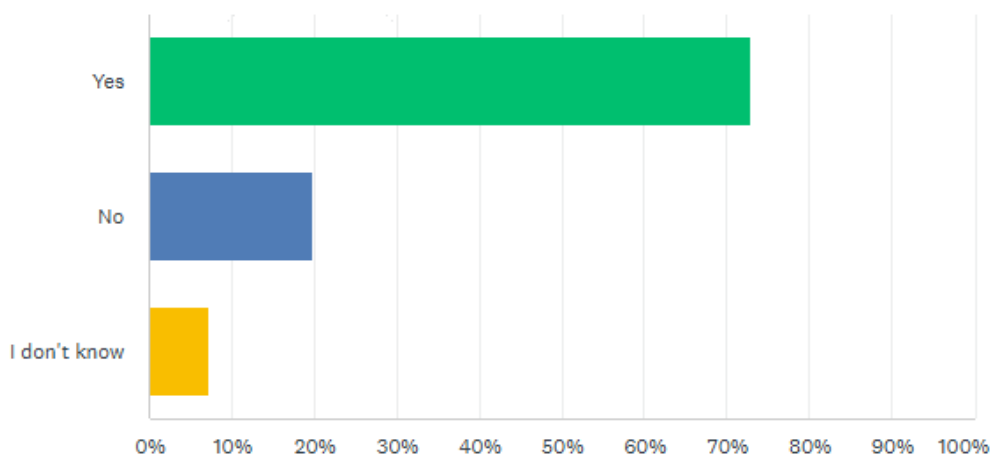
Answered: 278 Skipped: 27



Q10. The former Visitors Centre is a designated heritage building. If the project is approved, the City would keep the existing historic elements of the building, but add an extension to the back of the facility. The extension would be designed to tie into and compliment the historical elements of the existing building. A designated heritage planner would be part of the project. Would you support using the Visitors Centre for expanded childcare in Port Colborne?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	203
No	55
I don't know	20
Answered	278
Skipped	27

73% of respondents support renovating the former Visitors Centre to allow for licensed childcare spaces.



Q11. Do you have any concerns about the historical nature of the Visitor Centre and the required renovations?

Answered 134

Skipped 171

This was an open-ended question which allowed respondents to fill in comments. 134 comments were provided.

A full list of comments is available at www.portcolborne.ca/childcare

A summary of the reported concerns about the use of the former Visitors Centre as a potential location for licensed childcare is shown below.

Overall, the community's response indicated that although there was some concern for historical preservation, a majority have no concerns about using the location of the former Visitors Centre for expanded licensed childcare spaces. Preservation of the historical nature of the building and the potential financial burden for taxpayers were the most repeated concerns.

Q11 Open-Ended Response Summary	
Concerns about Historical Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commenters expressed concerns about preserving the historical nature of the building. • Some commenters would prefer for the building to be used for purposes that align with its historical significance, such as reopening the Visitors Centre or creating a museum.
Support for Childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commenters support the idea of converting the building into a childcare centre, citing the need for more childcare spaces within the city. • Some commenters specify that they only support the idea if the historical nature of the building is properly preserved.
Financial Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commenters expressed concerns about the cost of renovating a historical building and the potential impact on taxpayers.

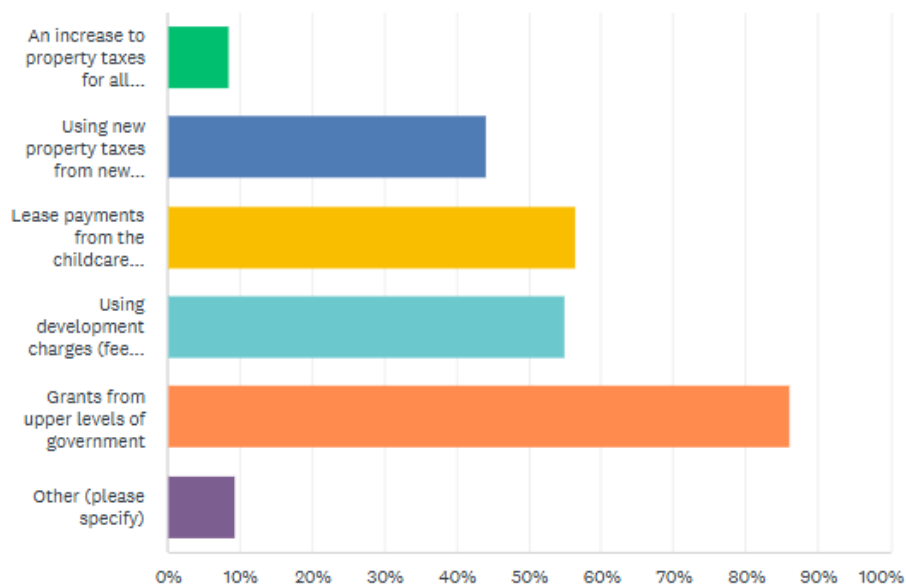
Q12. A capital funding model for the facility is in development. Would you support any of the following funding sources? (choose all that apply):

Answer Choices	Responses
An increase to property taxes for all residents in Port Colborne	23
Using new property taxes from new developments in Port Colborne	119
Lease payments from the childcare provider	152
Using development charges (fees charged to developers who build new homes or business in the community)	148
Grants from upper levels of government	232
Other (please specify)	25
Answered	269
Skipped	36

86% of respondents would like to see grants from upper levels of government used to fund the licensed childcare facility.

A capital funding model for the facility is in development. Would you support any of the following funding sources? (choose all that apply):

Answered: 269 Skipped: 36



Q13. A licensed childcare operator would pay a lease payment to occupy and operate out of the facility. If the lease payment does not cover all the capital costs needed to renovate and expand the facility, would you support the City contributing to the project through any of the following funding sources (choose all that apply)

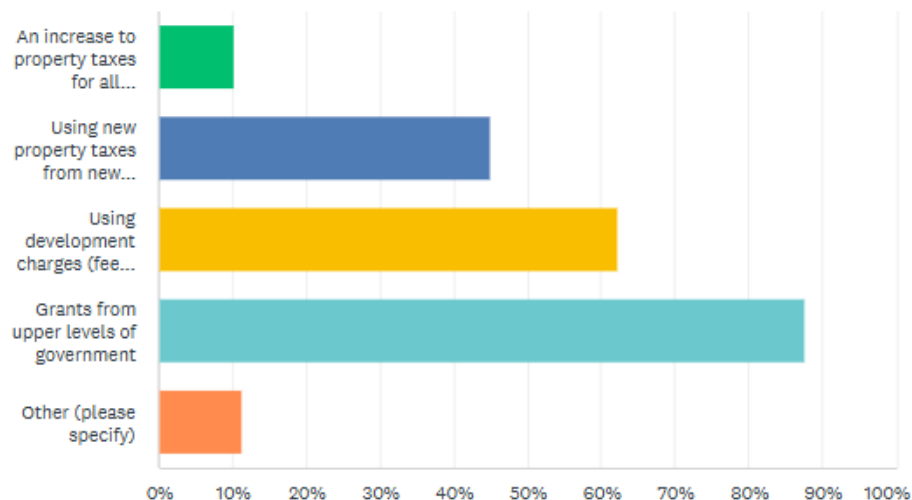
Answer Choices	Responses	88% of respondents would like additional required funds for the development of the facility to come from grants from upper levels of government.
An increase to property taxes for all residents in Port Colborne	27	
Using new property taxes from new developments in Port Colborne	119	
Using development charges (fees charged to developers who build new homes or business in the community)	165	
Grants from upper levels of government	232	
Other (please specify)	29	
Answered	265	
Skipped	41	

Question 13 also allowed respondents to offer “other” answers. 29 comments were received.

Of the 29 other comments, 10 directly opposed the use of the Visitors Centre as a site for expanded licensed childcare. Of the remaining 19 comments, a recurring sentiment included concern about the financial burden of raised taxes for residents.

A licensed childcare operator would pay a lease payment to occupy and operate out of the facility. If the lease payment does not cover all the capital costs needed to renovate and expand the facility, would you support the City contributing to the project through any of the following funding sources (choose all that apply):

Answered: 265 Skipped: 40



Q14. Do you have any other thoughts you'd like to share about increasing the availability of licensed childcare spaces in Port Colborne?

Answered 122

Skipped 183

This was an open-ended question which allowed respondents to fill in comments. 122 comments were provided.

A full list of comments is available at www.portcolborne.ca/childcare

Overall, respondents agreed that more childcare spaces are needed within Port Colborne, but the creation of facilities should be done without increasing property taxes. Parents with young children expressed concerns about waitlist times as well as being able to secure childcare that was accommodating for non-traditional work hours.

Q14 Open-Ended Response Summary	
Need for More Childcare Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many respondents emphasized the urgent need for more licensed childcare spaces, citing long wait lists and the difficulty of finding spots for their children.
Location and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several respondents mentioned the importance of choosing appropriate locations for new childcare centres, with concerns about traffic congestion and safety. Suggestions included using existing buildings like schools, Vale Health & Wellness Centre, and vacant properties to create new childcare spaces.
Funding and Taxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is significant opposition to funding new childcare spaces through increased property taxes. Many respondents feel that the cost should not be passed on to the residents. Alternative funding suggestions included government grants, sponsorships and development charges.
Flexible and Extended Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A common theme was the need for childcare services that accommodate parents who work non-traditional hours, such as shift work or extended hours.
Quality and Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns were raised about finding qualified staff for new childcare centres, with some noting that early childhood educators are leaving the field due to low wages.

Q14 Open-Ended Response Summary	
Home Child Care Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several comments suggested increasing the number of licensed home child care options to fill the gap in available childcare spaces.
Community Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respondents noted that the lack of childcare options is affecting the community, with young families struggling to find care and considering moving to other areas.• The need for childcare was linked to broader community growth and the ability to attract new residents.