



Results of Online Resident Engagement

2021-2022 Budget Process

Resident feedback about the 2021-2022 Proposed Budget was sought through the online Budget Simulator and a Social Media Town Hall. The online Budget Simulator was open from June 12 through June 30, 2020. The Social Media Town Hall was held on June 23, 2020 and polls were available until June 30, 2020. There were 3,165 completed budgets in the simulator and 9,768 votes cast on the Social Media Town Hall topics.

Budget Simulator

In the online Budget Simulator, participants made reductions in services in order to balance a budget that started with a \$4.7 million deficit. There were 16 options available for adjustment, totaling \$160 million of the \$254 million General Fund budget. The amount of budget required to fund each option varied, from \$53 million for Police Emergency Response to \$1 million for Code Enforcement.

The Budget Simulator was launched on June 12 and a total of 3,165 budgets were completed. Participation peaked when the tool was publicized on June 15 and during the Social Media Town Hall event on June 23. The Budget Simulator was online until June 30.

Participation in the Budget Simulator was higher this year when compared to 2019, when 1,442 budgets were completed. Last year, the Budget Simulator closed before the Social Media Town Hall was held. This year, both were held simultaneously, and based on comments during the event this year, people appreciated being able to provide further feedback through the simulator. The higher participation in 2020 can also be attributed to more interest in the budget process and a more streamlined tool. In 2019, there were 40 topics, while in 2020, there were 16.

It can be difficult to compare 2019 results to 2020, since there were more topics last year and some topics from 2019 were combined in 2020, such as Libraries. However, many of the options were the same, particularly in the Police Department and Fire Department. Compared to 2019, the services with the greatest decreases in rank order were Police Emergency Response, which dropped from 2 to 11, and Property Crime Enforcement, which dropped from 6 to 10. The services that increased their rank the most were Municipal Court, from 21 to 7, and Libraries, from 33 to 5.

Social Media Town Hall

The Social Media Town Hall event was held on June 23 from 2:00-4:00 pm. Six posts, which allowed participants to vote on a variety of budget-related topics, were included on three social media platforms: Facebook, Nextdoor, and Twitter. This is a different format than prior years, when videos or photos were posted and participants were simply asked to comment. The voting option was chosen this year due the ease of use for participants and its prioritization in the Facebook algorithm. The voting buttons were available for one week, concluding on June 30, 2020.

Table 1: Budget Simulator Results

	Average Reduction	Rank
Fire and Medical Response	-1.21%	1
Persons Crime Investigations	-3.00%	2
Pavement Maintenance	-3.50%	3
Municipal Court	-4.05%	4
Libraries	-4.14%	5
Animal Control	-4.19%	6
Recreation	-4.47%	7
Park Maintenance	-4.47%	8
Traffic Signals and Signs	-4.60%	9
Property Crime Investigations	-4.66%	10
Police Emergency Response	-4.79%	11
Street and Park Trees	-4.84%	12
Arts & Cultural Support	-4.88%	13
Street Cleaning	-5.18%	14
Code Enforcement	-5.96%	15
Traffic Patrol	-6.70%	16



A total of 9,768 votes were received on the three topics across the three platforms. Results are reported on page 3. Users were restricted to voting once on each topic on each platform. Nextdoor user addresses are validated when their accounts are set up. Most of the results for each topic were consistent from one social media platform to the next. The one exception was a question as to how the City should address the funding gap for MABCD—the options were either fewer inspectors or a decrease in funding for tall grass and weeds mowing. While Facebook and Twitter had a nearly 50/50 split, Nextdoor users clearly favored reducing the amount of inspectors.

The most conclusive result among the Social Media Town Hall topics had to do with City streets. Participants from all three social media platforms overwhelmingly favored reducing street expansions (93%) rather than reducing street maintenance (7%). The topic of reducing mowing cycles for either right-of-way areas or parks was also fairly conclusive, with 78% of participants from all three platforms voting to reduce the mowing cycles for right-of-way areas rather than City parks.

Conclusion

This year's online budget engagement resulted in more feedback than prior years. This is the result of the format and the interest in the budget. In addition to the quantitative results from the Budget Simulator, narrative data from the budget simulator will be analyzed this fall in order to provide perspective for future strategic planning and budgeting efforts.



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**Table 2: Social Media Town Hall Results: Votes by Topic and Option
June 23-30, 2020**

Topic	Option	Facebook	Nextdoor	Twitter	Total	Percent
Animal Control	Prioritize Field Operations	236	328	33	597	41%
	Prioritize Shelter	466	355	43		59%
	Total: Animal Control	702	683	76		
Mowing	Reduce Park Mowing	149	207	18		22%
	Reduce Right-of-Way	689	561	68		78%
	Total: Mowing	838	768	86		
Code Enforcement	Reduce Tall Grass & Fewer Inspectors	264	372	31		48%
		262	419	36		52%
		526	791	67		
Libraries	Retain Library Hours	515	494	67		68%
	Purchase New	222	255	20		32%
		737	749	87		
Streets	Reduce Street	36	64	11		7%
	Cut Back Expansion	623	733	85		93%
		659	797	96		
Trees	Prioritize Dead Trees	435	681	76		57%
	Prioritize Planting	420	400	94		43%
		855	1,081	170		
Total Responses:		4,317	4,869	582	9,768	