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TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: David Whitaker, Director 
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: Febuary 17, 2021

RE: **Legislative Policy Divison Community Outreach Ordinance
Community Budget Priorities Virtual Forum Report (Revised)**

On October 20, 2020 the City of Detroit enacted the Community Outreach Ordinance to demonstrate the city’s commitment to community outreach that promotes transparency and accountability and ensures community awareness on legislation, contracts, agreements, and resolutions related to various City Wide Proposals and Neighborhood Class A-D Proposals as defined by the ordinance. A “City-Wide Proposal” includes all initiatives considered by City Council relating to the Mayor’s annual recommended budget, bond proposals, any City-Wide Non-Motorized Urban Transportation plan, any City-wide park improvement plan, and ballot initiatives that are led by either the administration or City Council.

Included in the City-Wide Proposals process is the requirement of the ordinance that prior to submitting a City-Wide Proposal to City Council for consideration, a representative of the Administering Department in collaboration with the Department of Neighborhoods, will hold one outreach meeting in each of the seven City Council districts. This report will detail the results of the community engagement from the City-wide Community Budget Priorities Forums held January 14-27, 2021 in each City Council district¹.

¹ According to the Community Outreach Ordinance, the City Council will appoint a liaison from the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) to monitor the community outreach process set forth in the ordinance to provide updates to City Council. This report is an update from LPD on the Community Budget Priorities Forums held January 14-27, 2021.

Background

In accordance with the recently passed, Community Outreach Ordinance, city-wide community meetings were held in each council district. Council members met with their respective constituents in a virtual Zoom meeting to discuss and determine the public's priorities for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2021-2022 budget. All seven districts' meetings were streamed on Facebook Live and each meeting has accumulated over 1,000 views. During the meetings, the staffperson from the Budget Division of the Office of Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), Janet Anderson, presented the results of the annual budgetary survey compiled by the office of Council President Brenda Jones and Councilmember Janeé Ayers, which was completed by Detroit residents to assess their goals for the new fiscal year. The survey was made available online and posted on the City of Detroit's website. It was open from October 7, 2020 to November 4, 2020. The survey garnered 718 participants and 732 comments.

The process was a collaborative effort between the OCFO and Detroit City Council, known as Outcome Budgeting. Outcome Budgeting uses the data gathered from the survey to implement improvements and strategies that reflect the priorities of the public, while increasing transparency and efficiency in government and city services. Fiscal Year 2021-2022 is the first year the survey was employed as a part of the budget process, ahead of the Mayor's presentation of the annual budget and the 4-year budget review on March 6, 2021.

While the mayor's recommended budget is \$2 billion, the general fund component is only \$1 billion, which is the more fluid portion of the budget. The five main revenues the city collects – income tax, property tax, wagering tax, state revenue sharing, utility uses tax – provide financial support for services to citizens as well as provide the majority of administrative support. The non-general fund portion of the budget is both grants, which are granted for specific purposes by funders, and enterprise funds, where the revenue collected can only be used for the functions for which it was collected – examples, DWSD, DDOT, BSEED – because of bond covenants, federal or state law.

Only the more fluid portion of the budget, the general fund activities, were covered in the survey, which included 5 priority outcomes coupled with a choice between several strategies to reach each desired outcome. The 5 outcomes are: 1) improving public safety, 2) vibrant and beautiful city, 3) increased economic opportunity and decreased poverty, 4) strengthened city service operations, and 5) effective government surveys.

Results Overview

Home repair grants, affordable housing, and home ownership opportunities dominated the discussion, with approximately 13%² of residents expressing dissatisfaction with the amount of investment the city has allocated to housing. Residents are concerned about developers pricing long-time residents out of their neighborhoods, investors purchasing homes from Wayne County auctions and allowing them to remain vacant, as well as, possible compensation for illegal foreclosures due to over assessment of property taxes.

² See top 5 Priorities pie chart on page 9

Protests that erupted nationwide in response to police brutality and misconduct has raised controversial and difficult to answer questions about what is the proper amount of funding the Detroit Police needs in order to handle their commitment to public safety and what aspects of their current operations could be exported to other departments or organizations. Support for shifting police funding to other programs or departments accounted for about 12% of comments across all 7 districts. In particular, it was the highest-ranking concern in District 1 and 6. Expectedly, residents who wanted to decrease funding for the police department were also opposed to granting the \$40-million-dollar budget increase requested by the Police Department for fiscal year 2021-2022.

Participants in the forum argued that reducing the city's reliance on the police could release that excess funding to invest in beautifying parks and opening recreation centers, which accounted for about 8% of the total comments. Providing programs such as mental health initiatives and jobs programs, which can educate, uplift, and prevent the circumstances that lead to crime would ultimately create safe, stable communities, thus diminishing the need for police intervention. A few residents cited 3 program examples that could be implemented in the city as alternatives to police interaction: 1) the crisis intervention program known as Cahoots in Portland, OR, 2) the violence prevention program called D-live (DetroitLive.org) out of Mt. Sinai Hospital, and 3) the creation of a Park Rangers program to tackle issues occurring in city parks.

Residents present at the budget forum, mentioned community outreach efforts are not adequately reaching Detroiters due to insufficiencies in the notification process, lack of awareness of the meetings occurrence, and misunderstandings about the impact the budget has on city affairs and the residents of Detroit. Residents recommended updating the community outreach process by utilizing all forms of media to announce meetings. Some residents who participated in the survey had difficulty understanding the survey's format and language, in addition to, how the listed outcomes would impact them. It was suggested City Council could combat misunderstandings by conducting forums more often to educate the public on terms, definitions, city functions, and the budget process to promote transparency in government, as well as, informed public participation.

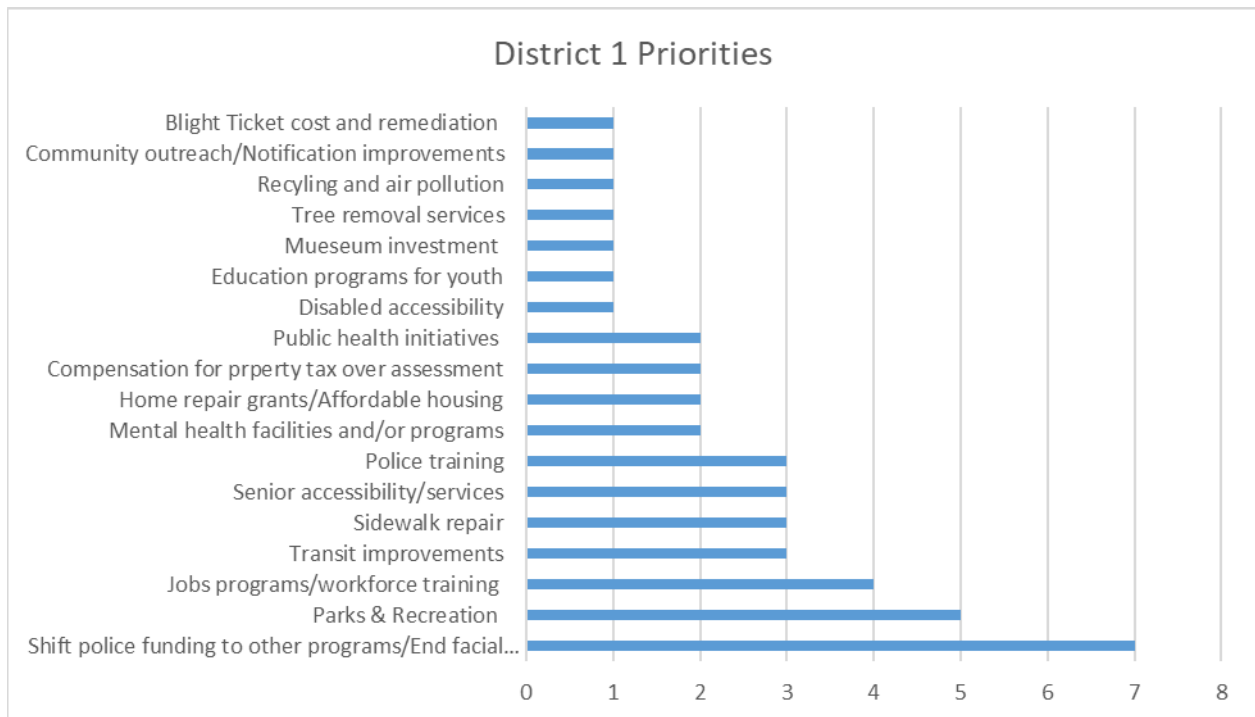
Many Detroiters do not have access to a vehicle. Consequently, the need for transit improvements is one of the top 5 priorities city-wide, comprising of approximately 8% of all comments during the budget forum. Most complaints were about scheduling deficiencies, frequency of bus routes available to get across the city in a reasonable amount of time, and bus stop accessibility for disabled persons. According to many residents, it can take up to 90 minutes to get across the city and disabled residents do not have paved bus stops or bus stop coverings in numerous areas throughout the city. Residents would like to see more investment in expanding transit operations across the city.

Results by District

District 1- Monday January 25, 2021

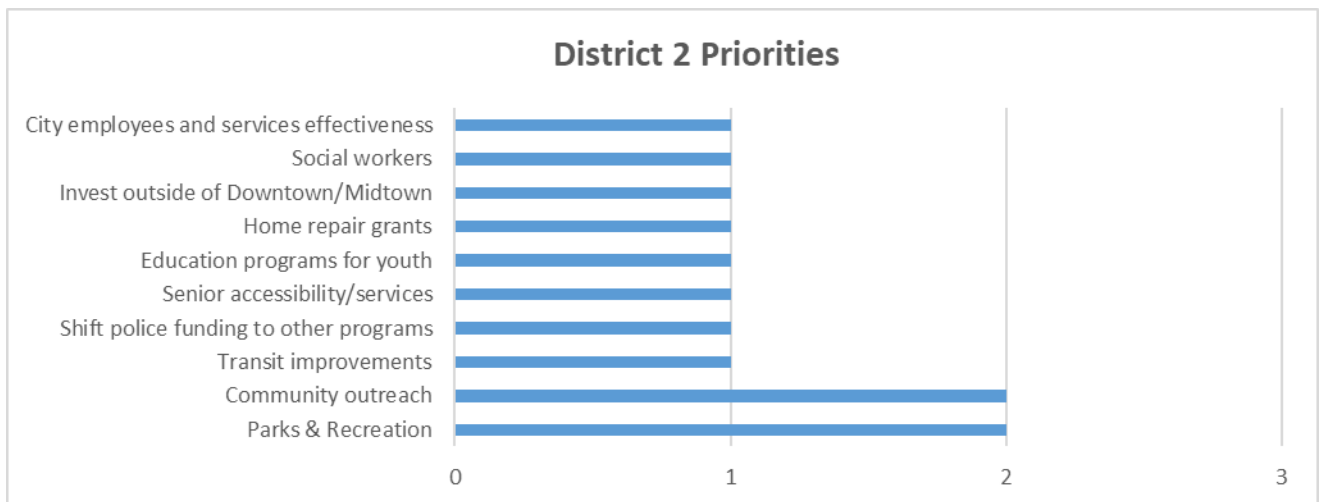
There were a total of 13 comments. Residents from District 1 are most concerned about the amount of money allocated to the Detroit Police Department. It was revealed that 7 of the 13 comments wanted to not only disband the Green Light program, but also would like to shift

funding from the police to parks & recreation, jobs programs, and transit improvements. Other major concerns included creating mental health facilities, sidewalk repair, increased accessibility for disabled people and seniors, and increase police training for mental health interactions. All comments have been summarized in the chart below.



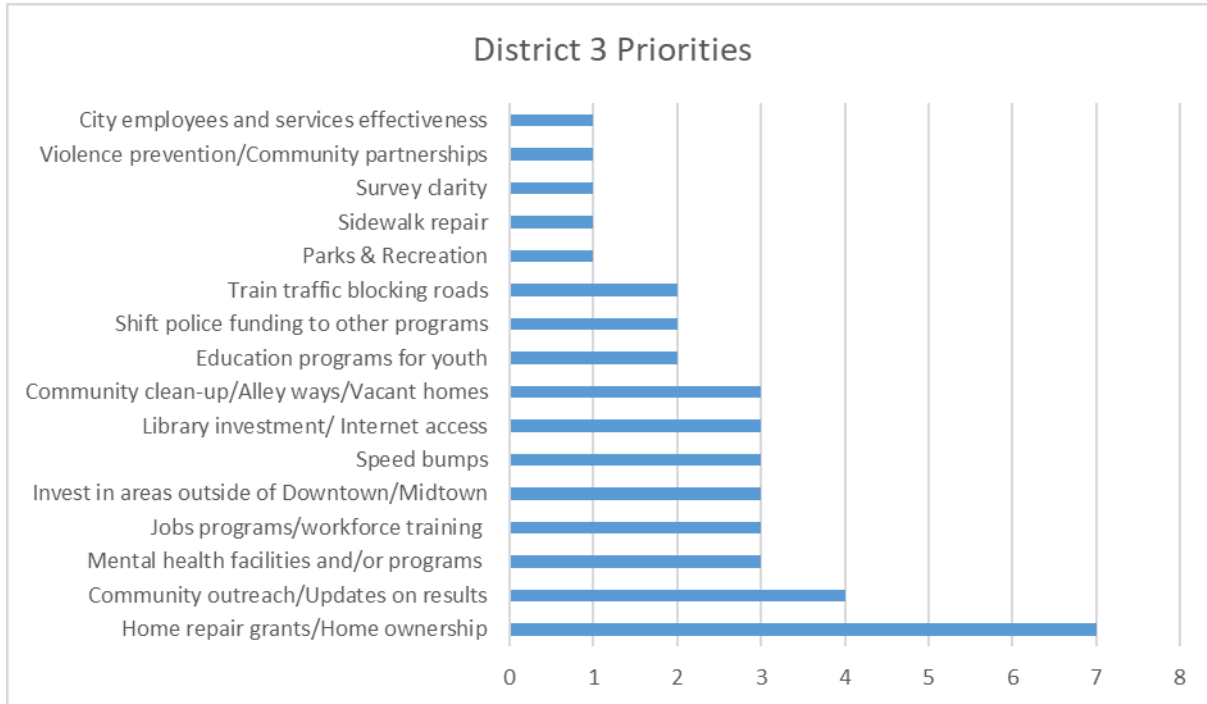
District 2- Friday January 22, 2021

There were a total of 6 comments. Residents of District 2 are most concerned about community outreach, parks, and recreation. Other concerns included shifting funding from the police department to investing in social workers, mental health facilities, transit improvements, and senior home repair grants. All comments have been summarized in the chart below.



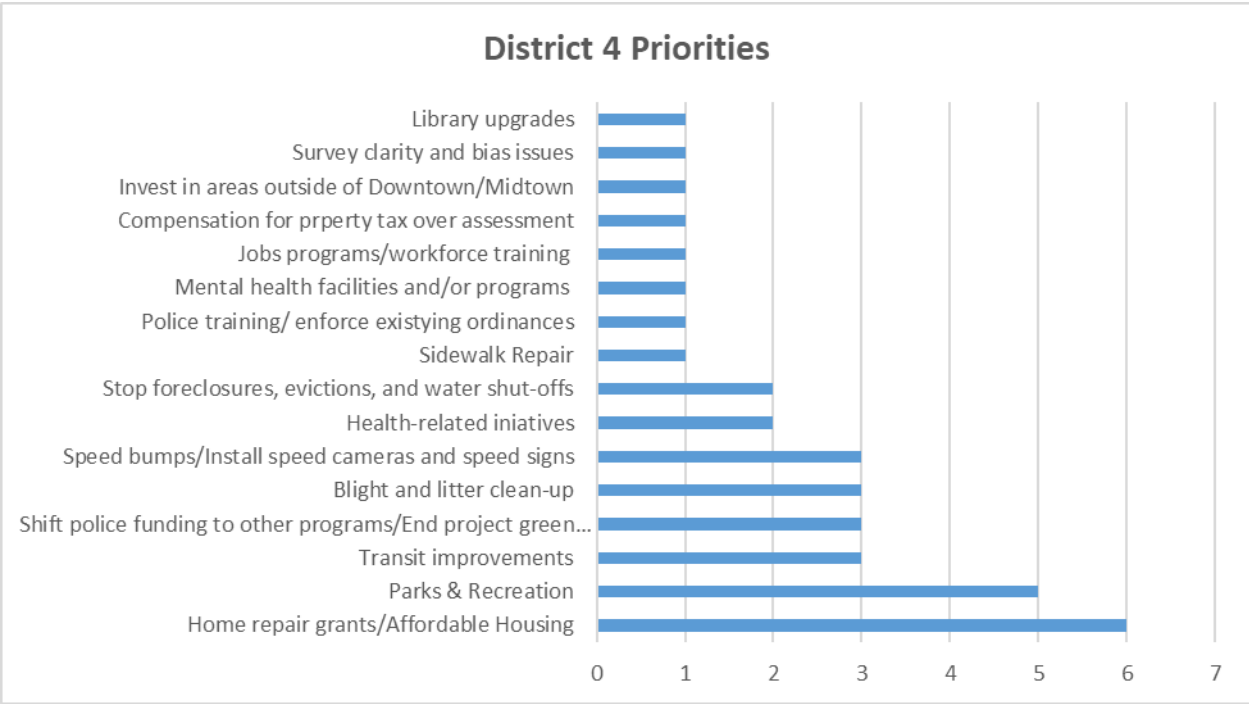
District 3- Friday January 15, 2021

There were a total of 14 comments. Residents of District 3 are most concerned with home repair grants, increasing home ownership, community outreach, and updating the community on the results of said outreach and other programs. Other major concerns included increase investment in libraries, particularly internet service, cleaning up alley ways and vacant homes, installing more speed bumps, and increasing mental health facilities and programs. All comments have been summarized in the chart below.



District 4- Thursday January 14, 2021

There were a total of 12 comments. Residents from District 4 are most concerned about home repair grants, affordable housing, transit improvements, parks, and recreation. Other major concerns included shifting funds from the police to other programs such as blight and litter clean-up, transit improvements, installing more speed bumps, speed signs, and/or speed cameras. All comments have been summarized in the chart below.



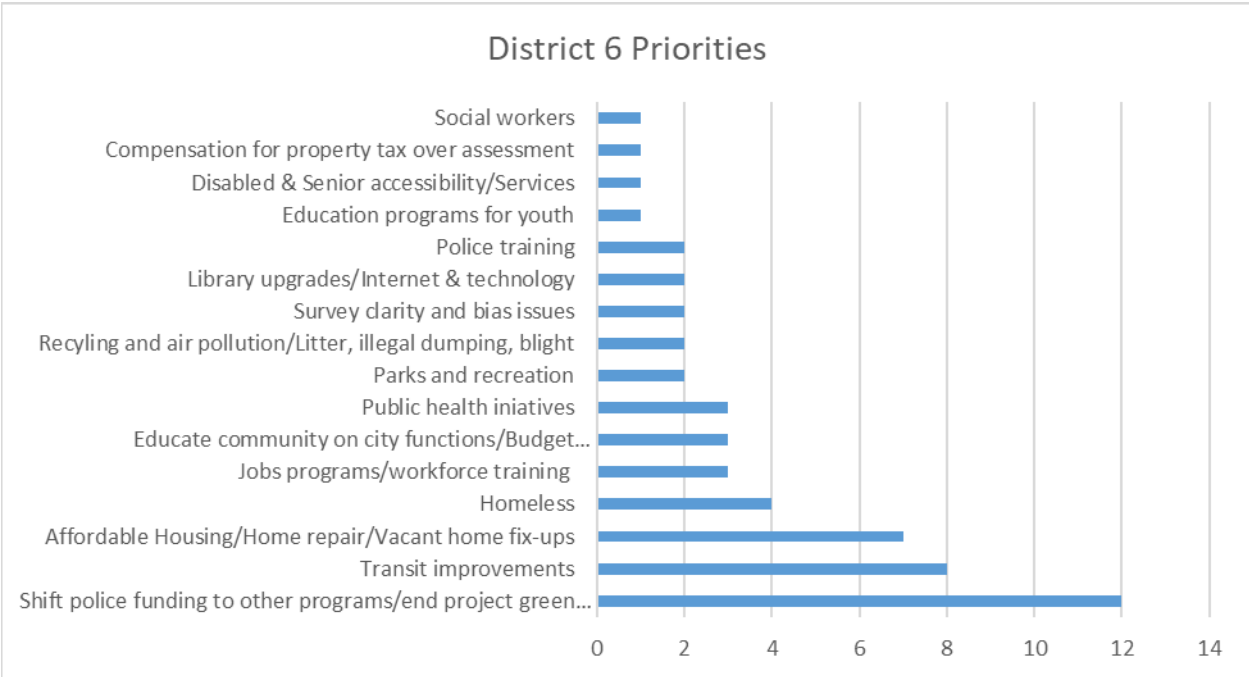
District 5- Thursday January 21, 2021

There were a total of 16 comments. Although, residents are mostly satisfied with community outreach in District 5, they would also like to have more informational community forums to educate the public about the impact of the budget on city functions. Residents are most concerned about the removal of facial recognition technology and shifting funds for the police to home repair grants, affordable housing, parks, and recreation. There were also concerns regarding the clarity of the survey the forum was based on. All comments have been summarized in the chart below.



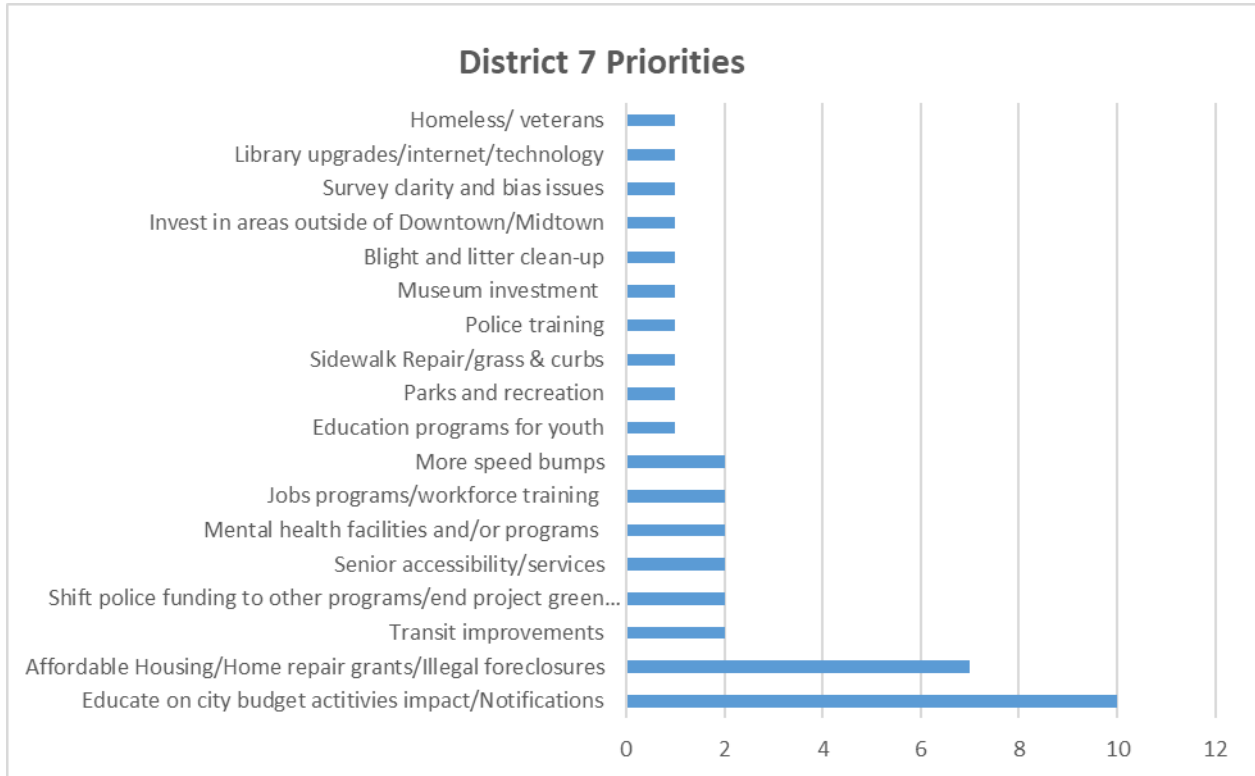
District 6- Wednesday January 27, 2021

There were a total of 16 comments. Residents in District 6 are most concerned about shifting funding for the police to home repair grants, affordable housing, and transit improvements. As many as 6 residents were against City Council recently approving \$200,000 for legal counsel to counter-sue protestors. Other major concerns included homelessness, more community outreach, and jobs programs. All comments have been summarized in the chart below.



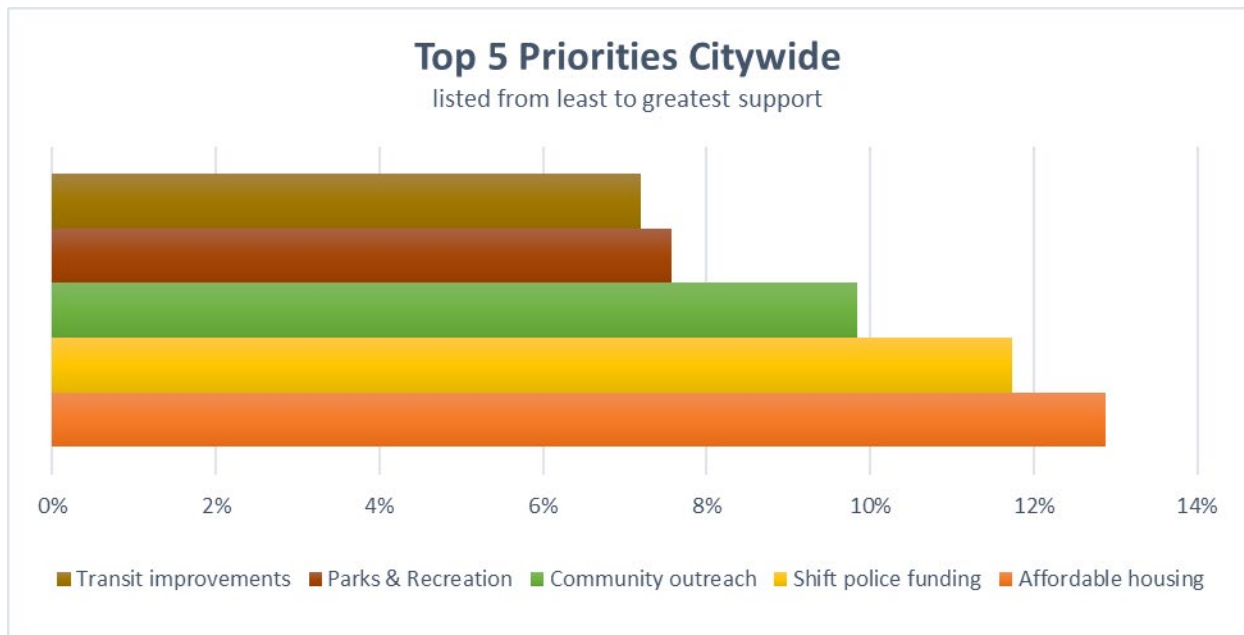
District 7- Tuesday January 26, 2021

There were a total of 14 comments. Residents in District 7 are most concerned about home repair grants, affordable housing, transit improvements, and community forums to educate the public about budget terms, definitions, and impact on city functions. Other major concerns included shifting police funding to other programs such as transit improvements, jobs programs, senior services, and installing more speed bumps. All comments have been summarized in the chart below.



All 7 Districts

Overall, residents in each district that attended the budget forum outlined an average of approximately 16 priorities per district³ that mattered the most to residents. The line graph below summarizes the top 5 priorities, listed greatest to least support, from all 7 Districts combined.



In accordance with the Outreach Ordinance, the administration will provide City Council a community outreach report detailing the itemized concerns raised by the impacted neighborhood during the community outreach process and a proposed method to address each of those concerns. LPD understands this report will accompany the Mayor’s proposed Fiscal Year 2021-2022 budget presented to Council on Friday, March 5th.

Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

- cc: Tanya Stoudemire, Deputy CFO/Budget Director
- Steven Watson, Deputy Budget Director
- Jan Anderson, Project Manage-Outcome Budgeting/Special Projects
- Avery Peoples, Mayor’s Office

³ Based on the charts for each district.