



Office of Budget and Management

2020 Budget Public Engagement

Delivering on a campaign promise, in August, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot announced that she would be hosting a series of Budget Town Halls throughout the City to ensure residents have an opportunity to learn more about the budget process and the upcoming 2020 budget, to illuminate key considerations from residents for next year's budget and to gain insight on where the public wants to reduce and increase spending.

Budget Survey

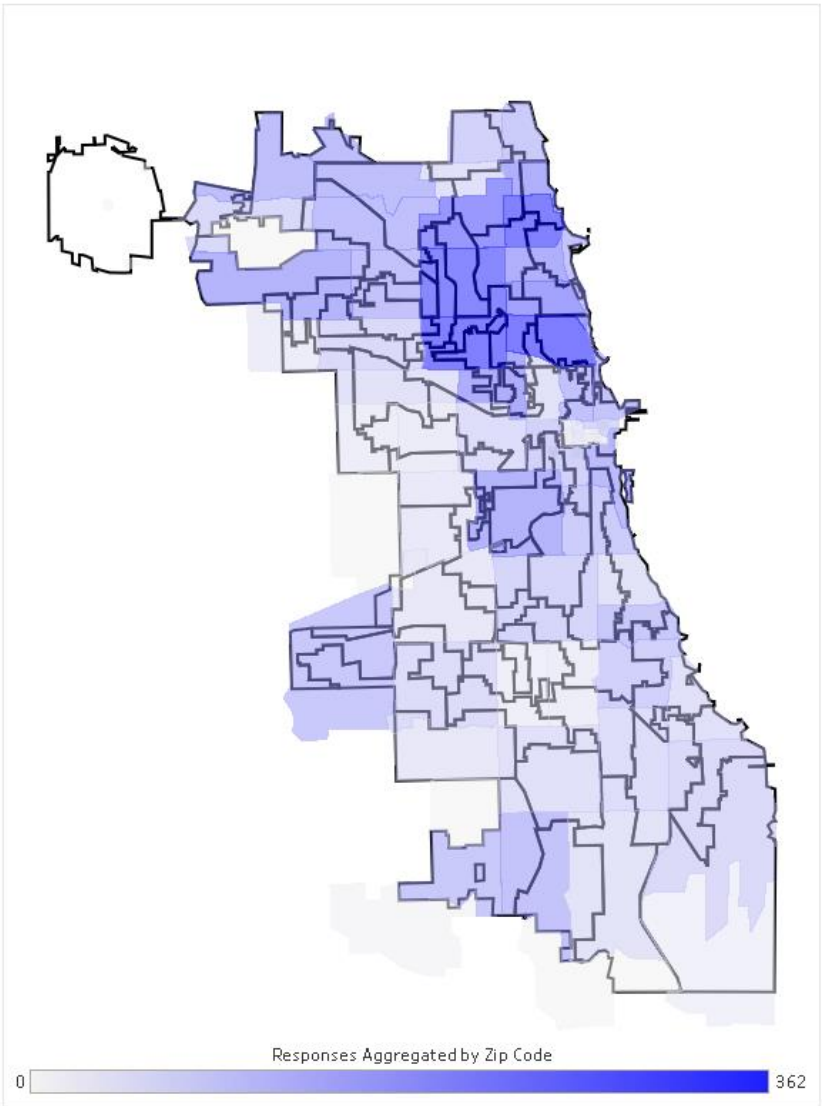
To give the Budget Town Hall meetings a framework of the topics residents wanted to discuss or learn more about, as well as provide an opportunity to communicate the difficult choices to be made through the budget process, the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) also launched a public survey at www.Chicago.gov/2020survey.

In a Chicago Tribune [article](#) about the City's budget survey, Better Government Association President David Greising stated, "Those who complete the SurveyMonkey poll, as I have, will get just a whiff of how difficult a mayor's choices can be. Mayor Lightfoot will use the tool to prepare for an Aug. 29 address to the city, followed by a series of neighborhood meetings, but it could also serve to gain understanding – even sympathy – from the voters who put her in office."

The survey opened on August 16, 2019, receiving 7,347 responses before closing on October 3, 2019. The survey was distributed on Survey Monkey across multiple channels, including social media and news outlets.

Based on survey responses, Budget Director Susie Park presented information on property taxes and City pensions at each town hall, as well as posted responses to frequently asked questions and ideas on OBM's website at www.Chicago.gov/2020budget. Every residential zip code in the City was represented in the responses received.

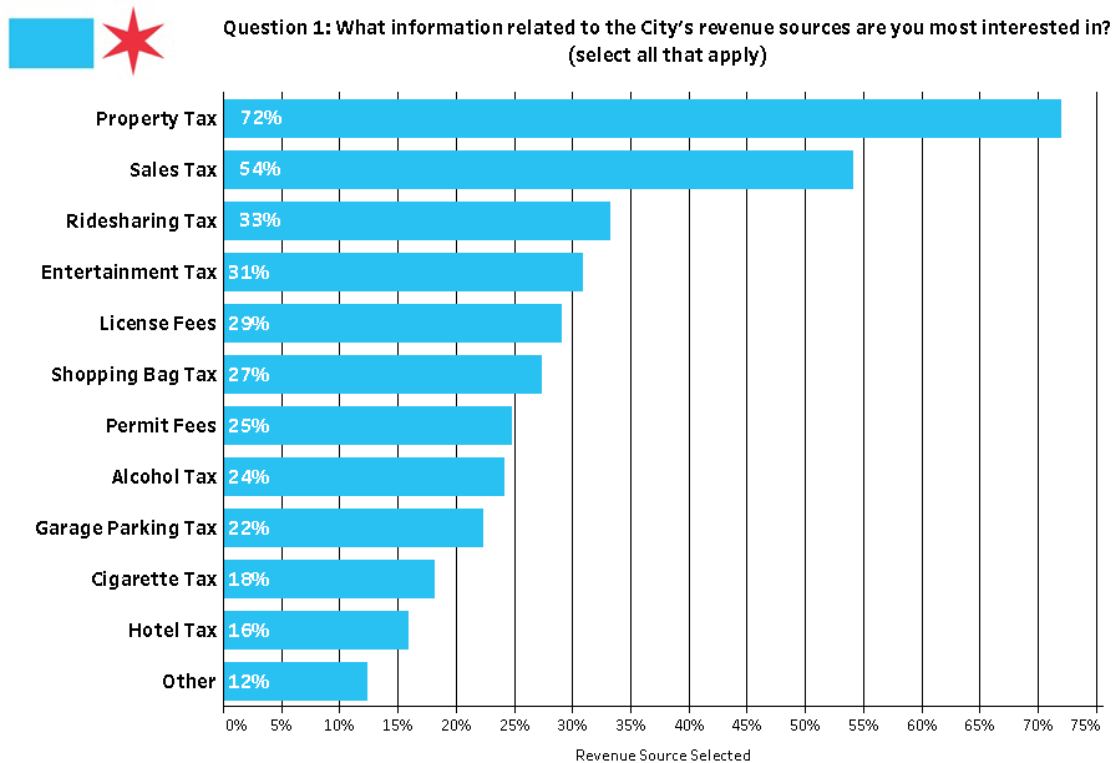
Location of Survey Responses by Community Area: 7,347 Total Responses



Revenue

Most respondents expressed an interest in learning more about property taxes. According to the results, respondents want to leave property taxes the same, and would prefer an increase to cigarette, alcohol or ridesharing taxes in order to balance the budget.

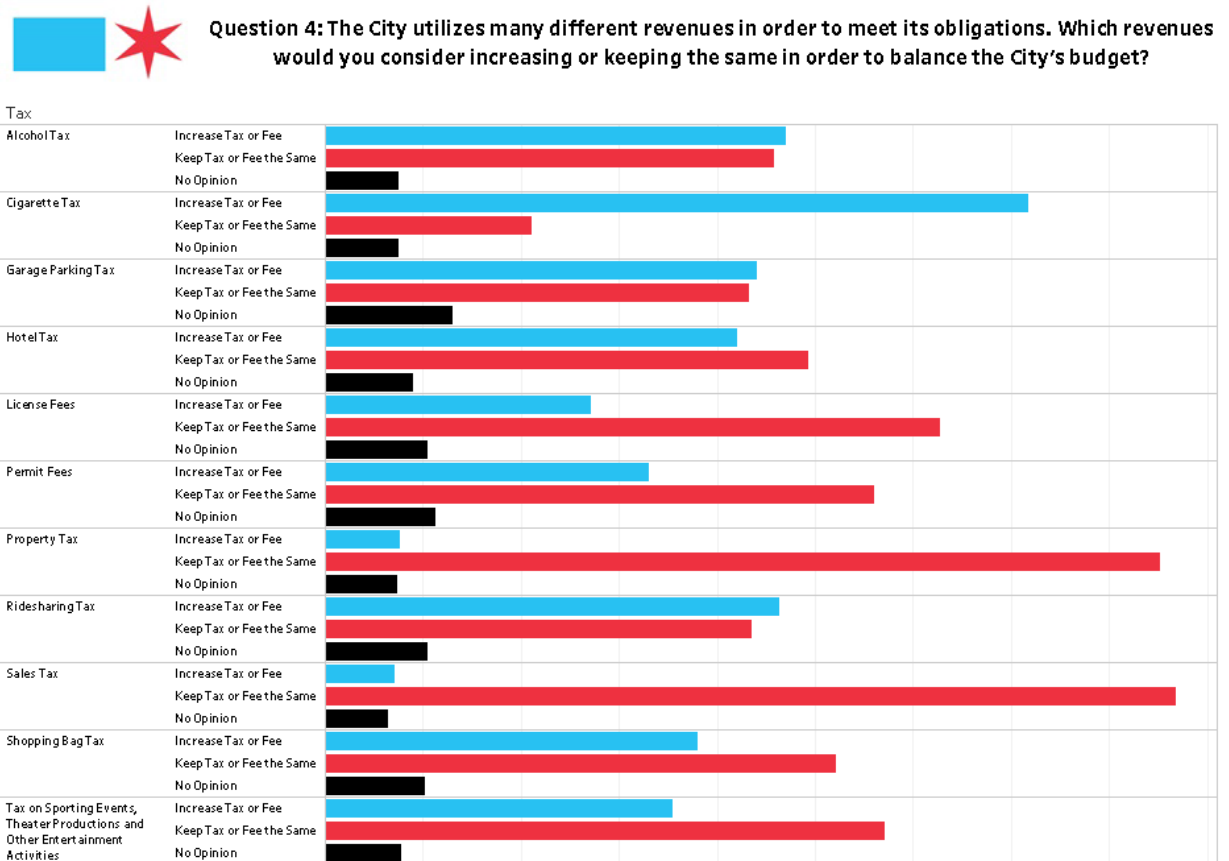
When asked what information related to the City’s revenue sources are of most interest, 72 percent of respondents indicated an interest in learning more about property taxes, and more than 54 percent indicated an interest in sales taxes. In the “Other” response, there were 907 responses, of which Real Estate Transfer Tax was mentioned 86 times, and tax increment financing (TIF) was mentioned 45 times.



The survey asked residents which revenues they would consider increasing or keeping the same in order to balance the City’s budget. The survey received many comments indicating disappointment that decreasing revenues was not a possible response for this question. In the FAQ posted on the City’s website, this is addressed:

“On August 28, 2019, the City released the 2020 Budget Forecast which projects an \$838 million gap for 2020. In order to balance the City’s budget, the City will need to both identify savings and efficiencies and identify increased or new revenue. The survey question was intended to provide an opportunity for residents to express opinions on which of the revenues included in the survey they would consider increasing in order to balance the budget.”

From this question, nearly 72 percent of respondents indicated an interest in increasing the tax on cigarettes, while more than 85 percent feel property taxes should remain the same. Nearly 87 percent said they also feel sales tax should remain the same. The revenues that received a majority “Increase the tax or fee”, include ridesharing tax (46 percent), alcohol tax (46 percent) and the garage parking tax (44 percent).

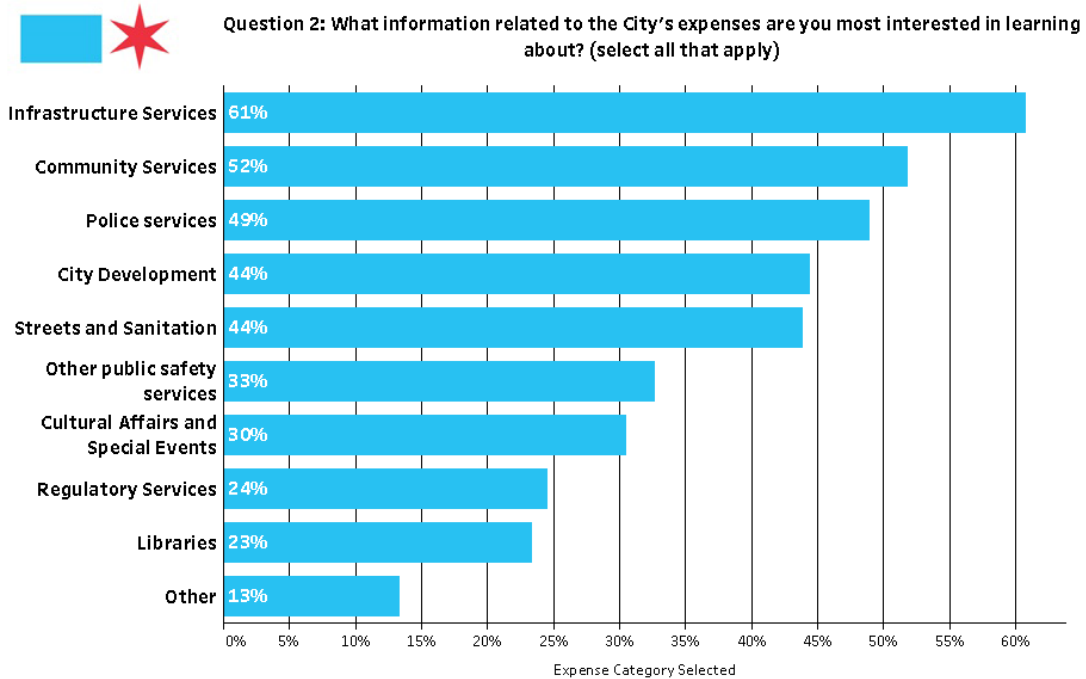


Expenditures

Most respondents indicated an interest in learning more about infrastructure expenditures. According to respondents, most people would like to see the streets and sanitation budget remain the same, while almost half indicated an interest in reducing the city development budget. When asked to allocate \$1,000 to nine general categories of the City's budget, the percent allocated was within three percentage points of the City's 2019 budget among each of the categories, showing residents responding to the survey allocated funding similarly to how the City allocates resources.

When asked what information related to the City's expenses are of most interest, nearly 61 percent indicated infrastructure expenses. Also of interest was community services (52%) and police services (49%). In the "Other" response, there were 978 responses

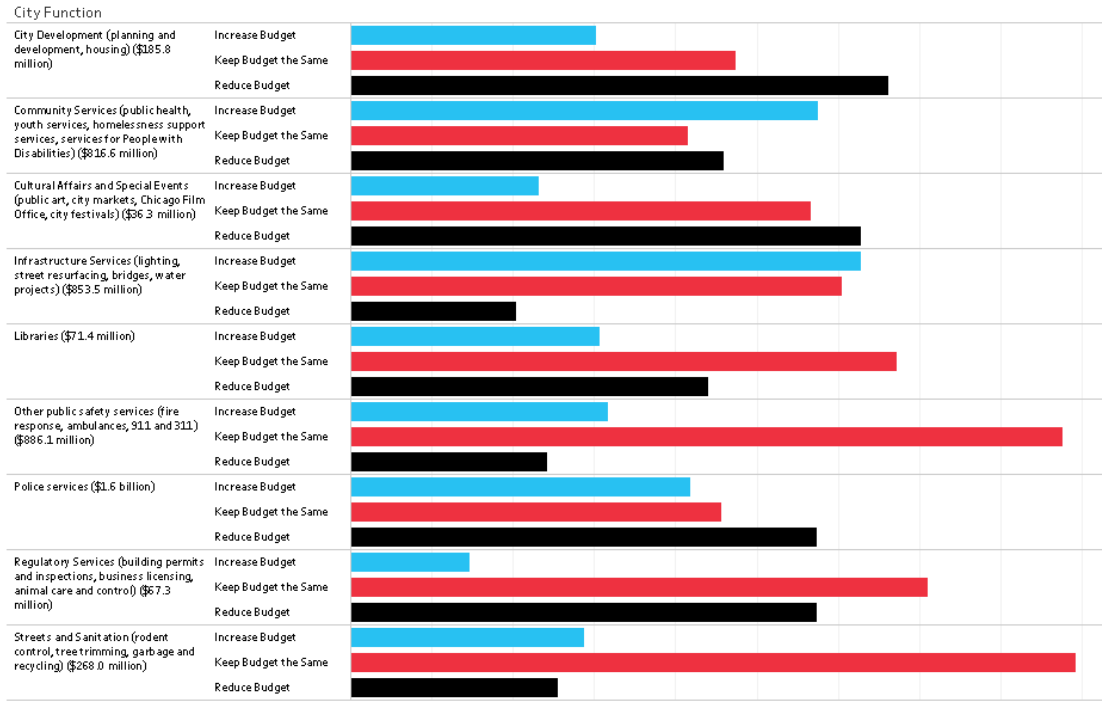
recorded, of which pension was mentioned 219 times, and the Chicago Torture Justice Center was mentioned 80 times.



When asked which areas of spending residents would consider reducing, increasing or keeping the same in order to balance the City's budget, more than 39 percent said they would decrease the police services budget, while more than 61 percent said they would keep other public safety services budget including ambulances and 911 the same. Another 62 percent indicated an interest in leaving the streets and sanitation budget the same, and 46 percent said they would reduce the City development budget for the Department of Planning and Development and the Department of Housing. Infrastructure services and community services each received 44 percent and 40 percent, respectively, of responses indicating an interest in increasing the budget for these departments.



Question 3: The City has many different expenses in regards to the budget. Which expenses would you consider decreasing or keeping the same in order to balance the City's budget?



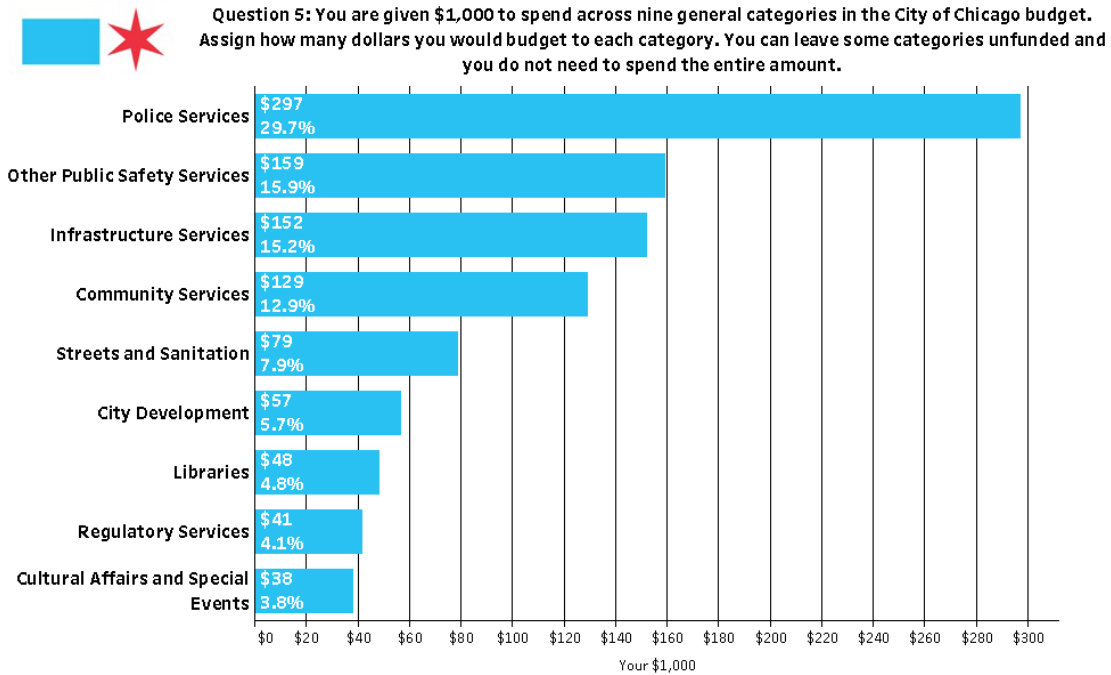
Budgeting Exercise

The survey also provided residents an opportunity to participate in a budgeting exercise by allocating \$1,000 to nine general categories in the City's budget. The \$1,000 budget did not have to be allocated to all nine categories and the entire amount did not have to be spent. For responses that totaled more than \$1,000, the City normalized those results to align with the requirements of the question by applying a percent to submissions totaling more than \$1,000. Below is a summary of the total percent allocated from survey responses compared to the category's 2019 budget allocation. The percent allocated by respondents in the survey is within three percentage points of the City's 2019 allocation for all categories, showing residents responding to the survey allocated funding similarly to how the City allocates resources.

Total Survey Budget Allocation vs 2019 City Budget Allocation

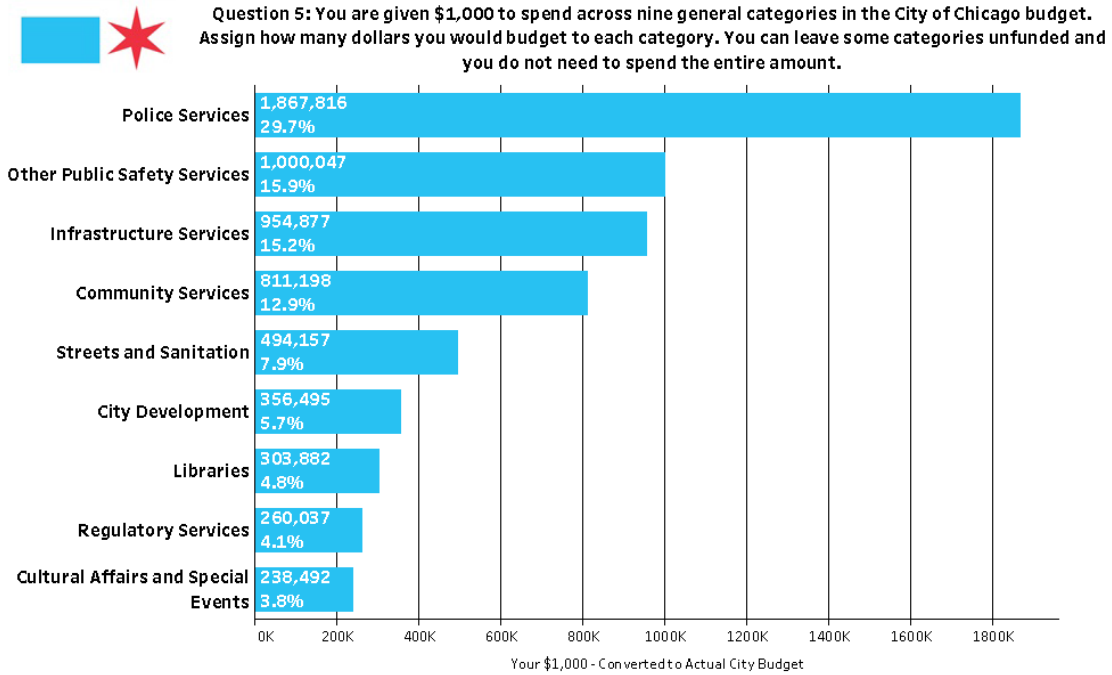
Category	Survey Allocation	2019 Budget Allocation ¹
Police Services	30%	34%
Other Public Safety Services (fire response, ambulances, 911 and 311)	16%	18%
Infrastructure Services (lighting, street resurfacing, bridges, water projects)	15%	18%
Community Services (public health, youth services, homelessness support services, services for People with Disabilities)	13%	17%
Streets and Sanitation (rodent control, tree trimming, garbage and recycling)	8%	6%
City Development (planning and development, housing)	6%	4%
Libraries	5%	1%
Regulatory Services (building permits and inspections, business licensing, animal care and control)	4%	1%
Cultural Affairs and Special Events (public art, city markets, Chicago Film Office, city festivals)	4%	<1%

Average Allocated



¹ The budgeted amounts included in the survey and presented here represent approximate 2019 budget levels across all funds for the presented program areas, and do not reflect the entirety of the City’s budget. The percent displayed is a percent of the approximate budgets for the categories included here, and are not a percent of the City overall budget.

Total Allocated²



Comments

There was also an opportunity for residents to provide comments on any concerns or submit revenue ideas related to the 2020 budget. The City received 4,235 comments. Below is a list of the ten most commonly mentioned themes and the number of times they appeared in the comments.

² This question was not required so fewer responses were received when compared to the previously required questions. 6,331 responders completed this question.

Themes	Number of Mentions
Tax (reducing existing, introducing new taxes)	1,160
Pension (reform, move to 401K)	718
Police (settlements and judgments costs, training, reduce costs)	567
Property tax (impact to middle class, concern about potential increases, assessments)	434
Spending (reduce, police)	381
Cut (personnel, spending, pensions)	302
Schools	282
Revenue (identifying new sources, focus on progressive sources)	265
Costs (reducing, elimination)	252
Housing (affordable housing, role of CHA)	232

The summary of survey results as well as responses to some of the most frequently asked questions is available on OBM’s website at [Chicago.gov/2020budget](https://data.cityofchicago.org/Administration-Finance/Budget-Survey-2020/drbg-ny73). The City has also posted individual survey responses on the City’s Data Portal at <https://data.cityofchicago.org/Administration-Finance/Budget-Survey-2020/drbg-ny73>.

Budget Town Halls

The five Budget Town Halls included:

- North - Wednesday, September 4 from 6-8 p.m.: Copernicus Center, 5216 W Lawrence Ave.
- West - Saturday, September 14 from 9-11 a.m.: Roberto Clemente High School, 1147 N Western
- Southeast - Thursday, September 19 from 6-8 p.m.: George Washington High School, 3535 E. 114th Street
- South (Youth) - Wednesday, September 25 from 6-8 p.m.: Lindblom Math and Science Academy, 6130 S Wolcott Ave
- South - Wednesday October 2nd from 6-8pm at South Shore Cultural Center, 7059 S. South Shore Drive

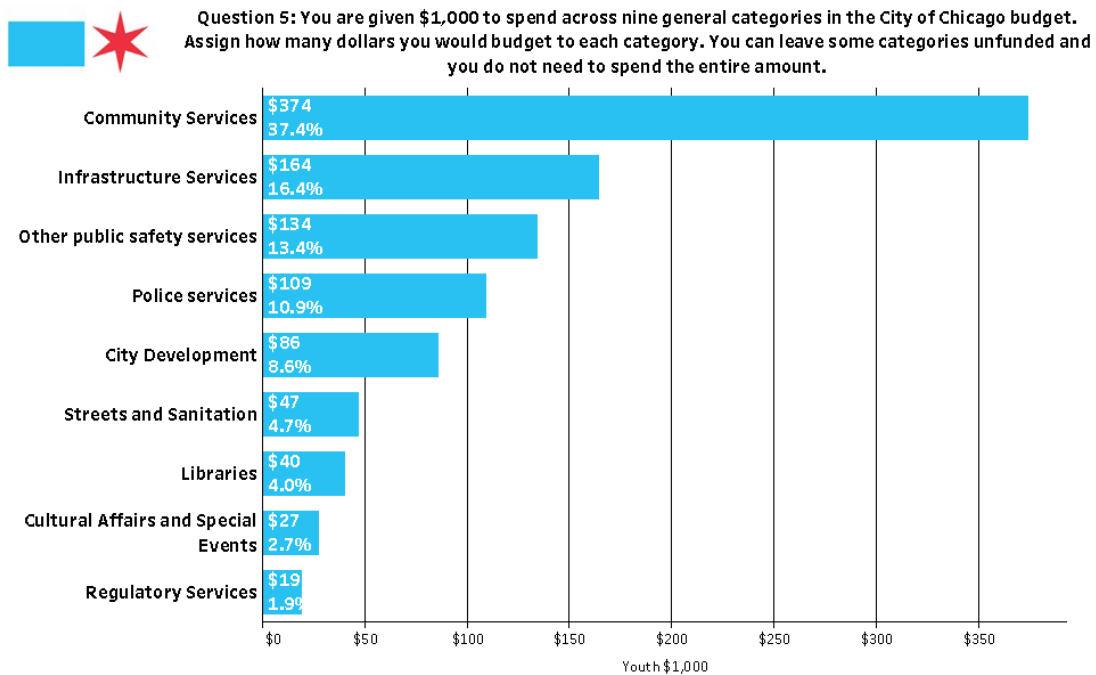
More than 2,500 residents attended the five Budget Town Halls, with at least 243 people providing public testimony, and another 251 providing written comment on the public comment cards made available at the town halls. Both the in-person and written comments were categorized by topic to capture a summary of comments at a high-level.

Topic	Comment Card	Public Comment	Grand Total	% of Total
Other	79	85	164	33%
Other Revenue	23	24	47	9%
Public Safety	18	19	37	7%
City Reforms	14	11	25	5%
Efficiencies	12	13	25	5%
Pensions	13	11	24	5%
Infrastructure	16	7	23	5%
Mental Health	12	11	23	5%
Affordable Housing	9	13	22	4%
Taxes	11	10	21	4%
TIF	7	10	17	3%
Property Tax	12	4	16	3%
Healthcare	6	7	13	3%
Gambling/Casino	4	6	10	2%
Ethics	8	1	9	2%
Small Business	3	6	9	2%
Personnel Expenditures	3	1	4	1%
TNP/Taxis	0	3	3	1%
Water Safety	1	1	2	0%
Grand Total	251	243	494	

The Budget Town Halls also included a community engagement fair, with representation from nearly 20 City departments, including the Office of Emergency Management and Communications, Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, Civilian Office of Police Accountability, and Chicago Animal Care and Control.

The City’s first ever youth Budget Town Hall took place on September 25th. During the youth town hall, the City prioritized youth public comments, allowing nearly 40 youth to provide comments to the Mayor and her senior team, including members of the Mayor’s Youth Commission. Youth were also provided the opportunity to complete the \$1,000 budget allocation question from the survey in person at the town hall. The youth responses allocated budgets much differently from the results received through the survey. While the survey results allocated budget dollars similarly to how the City budgets with the most for public safety, youth allocated the highest amount to community services such as public health, youth services, homelessness support services, and services for people with disabilities.

Youth Responses: Average Allocated³



³ 23 responses were received.

Conclusion

Based on feedback received in the survey, through public testimony and written comments, it is evident that there is general sentiment that the City should maintain services while identifying ways to decrease personnel costs and implementing efficiencies. This included comments regarding the cost of settlements and judgments and identifying an effective risk management strategy. Further, there is broad concern about the City's rising pension obligations and interest in identifying ways to reduce costs associated with pensions. There is also widespread interest in ensuring the cost of living in Chicago, particularly property tax and housing costs, do not continue to increase.

There was significant feedback received around investing in mental health and housing across the City, as well as ensuring equitable distribution of resources. Feedback also indicated interest in the City identifying ways to increase revenue through fees and taxes on visitors and higher-income individuals and businesses.

The online budget survey was part of Mayor Lightfoot's extensive community engagement process to provide residents with an opportunity to discuss our financial challenges in an open and transparent way.

Mayor Lightfoot deeply values all of the feedback she received from the City's residents and her team will be using these findings as guiding principles as the City moves forward with the development of the 2020 City of Chicago budget.