



Legislation Text

File #: 20-1418, **Version:** 1

Resolution to Conduct a 2020 Budget Priorities Citizen Survey to Inform Development of the City's FY22 Budget and FY23 Financial Plan

Whereas, An essential element of an effective local government is alignment of revenue and spending plans with the priorities of the citizens it serves;

Whereas, Active public engagement and community input are cornerstones of local government in Ann Arbor and principles highly valued by, and expected from our citizens;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor operates on a two-year budget cycle and in May 2021, the City will adopt the FY22 Budget and FY21 Financial Plan;

Whereas, City Council believes soliciting citizen input on budget and spending priorities in advance of the budget development process will provide City Staff and Council information and data that's required to ensure a FY22 Budget and FY23 Financial Plan that reflects the community's priorities;

Whereas, City Council adopted a resolution September 4, 2018 directing City Staff to conduct a Budget Priorities Citizen Survey and City Staff worked with the Center for Priority Based Budgeting (CPBB) and the National Research Center (NRC) to design, program, administer and analyze a citizen survey conducted in October and November of 2018;

Whereas, The 2018 survey was primarily focused on soliciting feedback on spending in 57 specific budget categories (for each category, respondents asked whether they would increase, decrease or keep spending about the same amount), but the survey also obtained citizen feedback on quality of life factors and considerations and on City of Ann Arbor local government performance;

Whereas, A broad-based cross-section of over 2,000 residents participated in the 2018 survey and the input/feedback obtained from the Budget Priorities Citizen Survey as well as the subsequent County Millage Proceeds Citizen Survey conducted in February 2019 were very helpful/informative and were reflected in the development of the FY20 Budget and FY21 Financial Plan;

Whereas, Conducting a second Budget Priorities Citizen Survey is appropriate because citizen priorities can change/evolve over time, and similar to the National Cities Survey that the City utilizes, the data comparisons and trends over time on the Budget Priorities Citizen Survey can also provide important insights on community priorities, values, and expectations;

Whereas, Conducting a second Budget Priorities Citizen Survey is also appropriate because financial conditions have changed dramatically for both the City and our residents since 2018 - the City (and residents) currently face significant economic and financial uncertainty due to the pandemic, the City has embarked on two major initiatives (A2Zero/Climate Neutrality and Affordable Housing), and several new property tax millages are either on the ballot already or under consideration;

Whereas, The City has adopted the Priority Based Budgeting (PBB) approach and conducting a Budget Priorities Citizen Survey is fully consistent with, and complements, the PBB approach; and

Whereas, The cost to the City of the 2018 Budget Priorities Citizen Survey was \$14,000 and City Council believes the value of the information received well exceeds that relatively small cost.

RESOLVED, That City Council directs the City Administrator to conduct a 2020 Budget Priorities Citizen Survey similar in scope and content to the 2018 survey conducted by National Research Center with the target of having results available in December or January (prior to commencing Budget Work Sessions for the FY22 Budget and FY23 Financial Plan);

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator can recommend changes to the specific elements of the 2018 Survey, but at a minimum, the 2020 survey should continue to include relative priority assessments of specific budget categories as well as ratings of local government performance; and

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator report to Council his recommendations on the survey scope, methodology, process, and timing as well as the cost projection and recommended funding source by October 5th so that Council could (if necessary) adjust elements of the plan at the October 5th Council Meeting without significantly delaying the survey timing.

Sponsored by: Councilmember Lumm