



City of Cambridge

O-28.

IN CITY COUNCIL

June 10, 2002

COUNCILLOR MAHER
COUNCILLOR MURPHY

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to begin the process to conduct a statistically valid telephone survey as a follow-up to the 2000 survey on citizen satisfaction with city services; and be it further

ORDERED: That a similar survey be distributed in public facilities and neighborhood centers for citizens to fill out and return, and that the survey also be available by internet.

In City Council June 10, 2002.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of eight members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST: 

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

that nine public meetings were too many, given the high costs of staffing them and the lack of attendance. A couple of community meetings coupled with other methods of data collection should be sufficient.

Councillor Maher agreed that the phone survey should be repeated. The question, in terms of additional outreach, is community involvement; one of the goals of the survey is broad public outreach.

Mr. Rossi suggested that because the 2000 survey indicated that such a high percentage of residents had Internet access, it would be worthwhile to promote a net survey through newspaper and city newsletter ads, mailings, and displays in public places such as libraries and City Hall.

Councillor Murphy is most interested in the phone survey because it was the most statistically valid source of information, and a source of better information. At the same time, he realizes that distributing a letter survey can make more people feel included. Councillor Maher is concerned about people feeling left out of the process if there isn't a survey easily available.

Mr. Rossi noted that a second phone survey would help the City Council gauge whether the public is as satisfied with city services as it was two years ago. In addition, the council can provide other means for the public to voice its opinions.

Ms. Bonislowski cautioned that if a survey is sent out, it should not be sent with polling changes, in order to avoid voter confusion.

Councillor Maher stated that his experience as a Development Director with direct mailings points out the importance of personalizing any mailing, which will increase the chance of a response. Even with postage paid, a newsletter format may get an abysmal response. For these reasons, he thinks that the newsletter insert is not the best way to distribute the survey.

At this point, **Councillor Murphy made a motion that the Government Operations and Rules Committee recommend that the City Council request the City Manager to begin the process to conduct a follow-up phone survey to the 2000 citizen survey, and to distribute the survey in public facilities, neighborhood centers and on the internet.** He noted that the city must get proposals now in order to perform the survey in September and October and provide results by early November. The motion was adopted by voice vote.

Councillor Maher wants the committee to review the survey before it is distributed. Public meetings could be held before the deadline for the end of the survey, and then after the results are tabulated, in order to present and discuss them. Mr. Rossi pointed out that public follow-up meetings were held in the last survey.

Ms. Bonislowski suggested an additional way of reaching elderly residents, by distributing the surveys through programs such as "Meals on Wheels". Especially for those citizens who will not be able to access the internet, it's important to make a special effort to

reach them, by working through agencies like the Cambridge Housing Authority, and groups serving populations such as immigrants.

Mr. Drugan asked what will be done with the internet surveys if they do not supply statistically valid numbers. Councillor Maher responded that the Internet survey would ask the same kinds of questions as the phone survey. Even if the responses are not statistically significant, providing an additional format will give more members of the public a chance to participate. The importance of the internet survey is really this opportunity. Statistically, however, and in terms of information, the phone survey will be the most important instrument.

Mr. Drugan added that the internet can offer a chance for residents to bring up new ideas.

Councillor Maher asked how the city can collect information from the internet. One possibility is to hand over the responses to Opinion Dynamics to analyze. He also asked Mr. Rossi to take a look at what the survey should ask, including questions based on the city's current goals. Councillor Murphy also wants the survey to include any important issues in order to get public feedback. Ms. Bowdoin emphasized that the city needs to revise questions from the last survey to reflect changes, for example, the trial extension of City Hall hours and the public's response.

Councillor Maher thanked those present for their attendance and adjourned the meeting at 2:32 P.M.

For the Committee,

David P. Maher DMD

Councillor David P. Maher, Chair



City of Cambridge

Committee Report #4

IN CITY COUNCIL

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November 8, 2000

MEMORANDUM

TO: The City of Cambridge
FR: Opinion Dynamics Corporation
RE: Results of citizens surveys

This memorandum will provide an overall, preliminary summary of the top-line results of *two* surveys constructed by Opinion Dynamics Corporation for the City of Cambridge: a 400-interview telephone survey and a 2,173 mail surveys. The margin of error for the telephone survey—the more projectable of the two research vehicles—is $\pm 4.9\%$ at the midrange of the 95% confidence interval. That is, when conducting 100 such surveys, 95 of them will yield results that fall—at worst—4.9 on either side of a given percentage.

The Bottom Line

The results from these two surveys show that Cambridge citizens view housing-related issues as the predominant matters facing the city today. In terms of both overall importance and governmental priorities, housing is clearly the pre-eminent issue on the minds of Cambridge citizens. Education concerns and parking /traffic issues rank next on the list of key concerns among citizens, with a range of lesser issues trailing far behind these top three.

A majority of Cambridge citizens in the telephone survey (51%) give a positive assessment to the *overall* performance of City government, while nearly one-third (31%) assign more negative ratings. When rating Cambridge overall as a place to live, citizens give positive over negative ratings by an almost nine-to-one margin (8.9:1). By a nearly 7-to-1 margin (6.6:1), citizens give positive ratings to the “quality of life” in Cambridge, while that positive margin is nearly six to one (5.6:1) on the overall quality of their neighborhood. Positive ratings also were given to Cambridge as a place to raise a child (2.7:1); and as a safe place to live (5.1:1). Citizens are more divided on whether Cambridge is a good place to retire (1.1: 1).

Among a list of characteristics, citizens gave majority positive ratings to Cambridge on the following: offering a “sense of community” (62% positive); a place welcoming all races (77% positive); overall appearance (77% positive); opportunities to attend cultural events (88% positive); shopping opportunities (80% positive); air quality (61% positive); open space and recreation (52% positive); job opportunities (63%); economic development (66% positive); the ability to “get around” (74% positive); and the ability to participate in government (51% positive).

Majority *negative* ratings were assigned to only one area: access to affordable housing (an overwhelming 87% negative—and 63% poor). Clearly, this result ties back to our very first conclusion: that housing issues dominate the minds of citizens. The City received mixed reviews on the following characteristic: quality of schools—K-12: 40% positive, 22% negative, and a full 38% unable to rate. Also, on cable television, the City received a total positive rating of 44%, a total negative rating 31%, with 25% unable to rate the system. Finally, on the “balance between new construction and neighborhood preservation”, 44% assigned positive ratings, 49% gave negative ratings, and 8% were unable to rate the issue.

On the issues of citizen behavior, we found that Cambridge residents are most likely to say they often participate in the following: using the internet (81% more than 26

times in the last year); visiting a neighborhood or city park (39% more than 26 times in the last year), riding a bus within the city (336% more than 26 times in the last year), and using the city's recreational facilities (21% more than 26 times in the last year). The least frequent behaviors were: attending or viewing a City Council meeting, participated in an after-school activity, and visited the City of Cambridge Web Site.

Despite the low use of the City's Website, a full 60% of our telephone sample said they would be "very" or "somewhat likely" to use the internet to complete financial transactions with the City—like payment of parking tickets and tax bills.

When we asked people to rate the performance of specific aspects of City services, the *highest* total positive ratings went to: garbage collection (88% "positive"), ease of public transport (83% "positive"), and recycling (82% "positive"). The *poorest* ratings went to: parking and traffic regulation (35% "poor"), ease of private car travel (29% "poor"), sidewalk maintenance (16% "poor"), snow removal (10% "poor"), planning and zoning (10% "poor").

While the mail survey used different ratings schemes and categories, there were broad similarities between the two methodologies on this score. For example, while public safety (fire and police) was the most highly rated service in the mail survey, it was followed by trash collection and recycling, elder services, social services and health and hospitals. The lowest rating in the mail survey went to affordable housing services, parking and traffic regulation, and regulation of development and growth.

Interestingly, by a 50%-31% margin, citizens agree that they've wanted to conduct business with the City after regular business hours, but couldn't. And, most (73%) say they use the phone to get information or assistance on city-related issues, while 18% say they use the internet, and 20% simply go to City Hall.

The two surveys found similar ratings on satisfaction with interactions with the City: a mean rating of 3.36 out of 5 for the phone survey and 3.45 out of 5 for the mail

survey. Finally, when asked the issues they would recommended city government focus more attention on, housing and parking top the list, followed by education.

TELEPHONE SURVEY

TOPLINE

**OPINION DYNAMICS
ODC #5309**

**NOVEMBER 2000
CAMBRIDGE**

1. What do you think is the single most important issue facing the City of Cambridge today—the one that affects you and your family the most?

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Housing | 31% |
| Education | 13 |
| Parking/traffic/big dig | 13 |
| Crime/drugs | 4 |
| Taxes | 3 |
| Govt/election | 3 |
| Library location | 2 |
| Economy | 2 |
| Cost of living | 2 |
| Diversity/racism | 2 |
| Healthcare | 1 |
| Environment | 1 |
| Children's issues | 1 |
| Welfare/social services | 1 |
| Fuel/energy prices | -- |
| Employment | -- |
| Other | 3 |
| (DK/ref) | 18 |

Please rate the following on a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor:

SCALE: 1. Excellent 2. Good
 3. Fair 4. Poor
 5. (Don't know)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|-----|----|----|----|----|
| 2. The overall performance of City government here in Cambridge | 5% | 46 | 26 | 5 | 18 |
| 3. The overall quality of life in Cambridge | 24% | 62 | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| 4. The overall quality of your neighborhood | 36% | 49 | 13 | 2 | -- |
| 5. Cambridge as a place to raise a child | 19% | 44 | 19 | 4 | 13 |
| 6. Cambridge as a place to live | 39% | 50 | 8 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. Cambridge as a place to retire | 13% | 33 | 23 | 17 | 14 |
| 8. Cambridge as a safe place to live | 21% | 62 | 15 | 1 | 1 |

Now using the same scale of excellent, good, fair or poor, please rate the following characteristics as they relate to **Cambridge**:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|-----|----|----|----|----|
| 9. A sense of community | 10% | 52 | 31 | 5 | 2 |
| 10. A place welcoming to all races | 32% | 45 | 17 | 4 | 3 |
| 11. Overall appearance | 13% | 64 | 21 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. Quality of schools—K-12 | 10% | 30 | 16 | 6 | 38 |
| 13. Opportunities to attend cultural events | 48% | 40 | 8 | 2 | 2 |
| 14. Shopping opportunities | 26% | 54 | 15 | 5 | -- |
| 15. Air quality | 6% | 55 | 31 | 6 | 2 |
| 16. Open space/Recreation opportunities | 10% | 42 | 33 | 12 | 2 |
| 17. Job opportunities | 18% | 45 | 19 | 4 | 15 |
| 18. Access to affordable housing | 2% | 7 | 24 | 63 | 4 |
| 19. Economic development | 12% | 54 | 20 | 2 | 11 |
| 20. Cable television | 11% | 34 | 21 | 10 | 25 |
| 21. The balance between new construction and neighborhood preservation | 5% | 39 | 32 | 17 | 8 |
| 22. Ability to get around town | 28% | 46 | 19 | 6 | -- |
| 23. Ability to participate in government | 8% | 43 | 22 | 5 | 22 |

In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or another household members done the following:

- SCALE:**
- 1. (Never)
 - 2. (Once)
 - 3. (Twice)
 - 4. (3 to 12 times)
 - 5. (13-26 times)
 - 6. (More than 26 times)
 - 7. (Don't know, refused)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 24. Used the Cambridge public libraries | 34% | 6 | 7 | 25 | 10 | 17 | -- |
| 25. Used the city's recreational FACILITIES | 37% | 5 | 6 | 22 | 7 | 21 | 3 |
| 26. Participated in AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES program or activity | 75% | 2 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 10 | 2 |
| 27. Visited a neighborhood or city park | 11% | 3 | 4 | 30 | 12 | 39 | 2 |
| 28. Rode a bus within the city | 23% | 4 | 10 | 19 | 8 | 36 | 1 |
| 29. Attended a City Council meeting in person | 83% | 9 | 3 | 4 | -- | 1 | 1 |
| 30. Watched a City Council meeting on cable television | 70% | 8 | 6 | 11 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| 31. Used the Internet | 16% | -- | -- | 1 | 2 | 81 | -- |
| 32. Visited the city of Cambridge web site | 67% | 5 | 8 | 15 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 33. Called a city department for service | 39% | 12 | 12 | 32 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

34. How likely would you be to use the internet to complete financial transactions with the city of Cambridge—like paying parking tickets, paying tax bills and registering for various city programs? Would you be very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not likely at all?

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Very likely... | 38% |
| Somewhat likely | 22 |
| Not very likely | 11 |
| Not likely at all | 28 |
| (Don't know) | 2 |

Now, I'd like to read you one final list—dealing with various city services provided by Cambridge. Again using the scale of excellent, good, fair or poor, please rate each of these services:

SCALE: 1. Excellent 2. Good
 3. Fair 4. Poor
 5. (Don't know)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|-----|----|----|----|----|
| 35. Police Department services | 15% | 58 | 15 | 2 | 9 |
| 36. Fire Department services | 24% | 53 | 3 | -- | 19 |
| 37. Garbage Collection | 23% | 65 | 7 | 3 | 2 |
| 38. Recycling | 28% | 54 | 12 | 3 | 2 |
| 39. Library services | 21% | 54 | 9 | 1 | 16 |
| 40. Recreational programs and facilities | 11% | 51 | 14 | 2 | 22 |
| 41. City parks and park maintenance | 17% | 61 | 14 | 2 | 5 |
| 42. Street maintenance and cleanliness | 10% | 53 | 27 | 8 | 1 |
| 43. Snow removal | 10% | 46 | 23 | 10 | 12 |
| 44. Ease of private car travel in the city | 3% | 30 | 31 | 29 | 6 |
| 45. Ease of public transportation in the city | 30% | 53 | 13 | 2 | 2 |
| 46. Animal control | 9% | 50 | 12 | 5 | 25 |
| 47. Parking and traffic regulation | 2% | 29 | 31 | 35 | 3 |
| 48. Senior services | 8% | 27 | 10 | -- | 55 |
| 49. Planning and zoning | 3% | 37 | 26 | 10 | 23 |
| 50. Sidewalk maintenance | 6% | 47 | 30 | 16 | 1 |
| 51. Children and Youth services | 7% | 36 | 13 | -- | 44 |
| 52. Health and Hospitals | 17% | 51 | 12 | 2 | 18 |
| 53. Schools and education | 15% | 35 | 15 | 5 | 30 |
| 54. Water/sewer services | 10% | 66 | 15 | 3 | 6 |
| 55. Public information | 9% | 59 | 22 | 4 | 7 |

59. Specifically, why do you feel that way?

| | Dissatisfied | (Neither) | Satisfied |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| No problems/satisfied | 7% | 4 | 41 |
| Don't interact w/ city govt | 4% | 21 | 2 |
| Quick to resolve/ solve problems | --% | 3 | 18 |
| Slow to respond/solve problems | 4% | 9 | 5 |
| People are nice/helpful | --% | -- | 17 |
| People are not helpful/rude | 19% | 5 | 3 |
| Negative comments (gen.) | 19% | 7 | -- |
| Not accessible | 22% | 2 | 5 |
| Traffic/parking issues | 15% | 3 | 3 |
| Bad experience (gen.) | 7% | 2 | -- |
| Govt doesn't care for people | --% | 3 | 1 |
| Police issues | 4% | 1 | 2 |
| Zoning issues | --% | 2 | 1 |
| Other | 7% | 2 | 4 |
| (DK/ref) | 4% | 39 | 8 |

60. As you know, the city sprayed for the West Nile virus this summer. Did you receive notice prior to the spraying? [IF "YES"] How did you receive that notice?

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Yes, (phone call) | 10% |
| Yes, (poster) | 11 |
| Yes, (newspaper article) | 4 |
| Yes, (radio) | 5 |
| Yes, (TV) | 7 |
| Yes, (Ad in Globe) | -- |
| Yes, (Other) | 19 |
| No, did not receive notice | 28 |
| (Don't know) | 15 |

61. If you were speaking *directly* to the leaders of city government here in Cambridge, what are the two or three issues you would recommend that city government focus more attention on?

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Housing | 40% |
| Parking/traffic/big dig | 38 |
| Education | 23 |
| Govt/election | 4 |
| Diversity/racism | 4 |
| Children's issues | 4 |
| Crime/drugs | 4 |
| Cost of living | 2 |
| Senior issues/Sr. healthcare | 2 |
| Economy | 2 |
| Library location | 2 |
| Environment | 2 |
| Employment | 2 |
| Taxes | 2 |
| Healthcare | 1 |
| Social Security | -- |
| Welfare/social services | -- |
| Other | 5 |
| (DK/ref) | 13 |

TOPLINE

OPINION DYNAMICS
ODC #5309

NOVEMBER 2000
CAMBRIDGE

A. How mail survey was received:

| | |
|-------|-----|
| Mail | 87% |
| Email | 13 |

On a scale of "1" to "5", where "1" means "totally dissatisfied", and "5" means "totally satisfied", please rate each of the following types of services as performed by the City of Cambridge. The more satisfied you are about a particular type of service, the higher the number you would give.

| | Mean |
|---|------|
| 1. Trash collection and recycling | 3.99 |
| 2. Street repair and cleaning | 3.05 |
| 3. Schools and education | 3.25 |
| 4. Public safety-police and fire | 4.01 |
| 5. Open space and recreation services | 3.54 |
| 6. Public information, cable television | 3.27 |
| 7. Regulation of development and growth | 2.78 |
| 8. Affordable housing services | 2.58 |
| 9. Parking and traffic regulation | 2.76 |
| 10. Social services | 3.57 |
| 11. Elder services | 3.68 |
| 12. Health and hospitals | 3.75 |

13. If you were speaking directly to the leaders of city government here in Cambridge, what are the two or three issues you would recommend that city government focus more attention on?

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| | |
| To Be Coded | |

14. When you need information or assistance with city-related issues or services, how do you go about seeking it?

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| | |
| To Be Coded | |

15. On a scale of "1" to "5", where "1" means "totally dissatisfied", and "5" means "totally satisfied", please rate your overall experience when contacting city government:

| | |
|------|------|
| Mean | 3.45 |
|------|------|

16. Finally, please **CIRCLE THE NUMBER** next to the area that best describes the neighborhood of Cambridge you live in:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| North Cambridge | 12% |
| Porter Square | 7 |
| Agassiz | 5 |
| West Cambridge | 15 |
| Area 4 | 4 |
| Riverside | 3 |
| Central Square | 8 |
| Cambridgeport | 10 |
| Kendall Square | 2 |
| East Cambridge | 11 |
| Mid-Cambridge | 10 |
| Wellington/Harrington | 2 |
| Other | 7 |
| No Response | 4 |

17. If you would like to be contacted to discuss City services more fully, please write your name:

| | |
|------------|-----|
| Wrote Name | 14% |
| No Name | 86 |

City of Cambridge Mail Survey (ODC# 5309)
 Table Q13

Issues you would recommend that city government focus more attention on
 (mult. resp.)

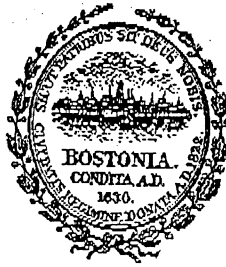
| | TOT. ANS ----- |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| TOTAL ANSWER | 2173 |
| | 100% |
| Parking & traffic regulation | 31% |
| Affordable housing services | 29% |
| Schools & education | 20% |
| Street repair & cleaning | 19% |
| Regulation of development & growth | 12% |
| Open space & recreation services | 10% |
| Public safety-police & fire | 7% |
| Trash collection & recycling | 5% |
| Public info, cable TV | 3% |
| Elder services | 2% |
| Health & hospitals | 2% |
| Satisfaction | 1% |
| Social services | 1% |
| Other | 12% |
| (DK/ref) | - |
| (No response) | 10% |

OPEN END data

Q14 When you need information or assistance with city-related issues or services, how do you go about seeking it?

City of Cambridge Mail Survey (ODC# 5309)
Table Q14

| | TOT. ANS |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| | ----- |
| TOTAL ANSWER | 1665 |
| | 100% |
| Call city hall | 70% |
| Web/Internet | 20% |
| Mention a Govt. officials name | 12% |
| Word of mouth | 5% |
| Newspaper | 3% |
| Visit city hall/in- person | 3% |
| TV/Cable | 1% |
| E-mail | 1% |
| Library | 1% |
| Write to city hall/ letter | 1% |
| Newsletter | 1% |
| Other | 4% |
| (DK/ref) | 3% |



*claim + 10 copies
for 5/29 mtg.*

**MICHAEL P. ROSS
BOSTON CITY COUNCIL**

Fax

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| To: Margaret Drury | From: Stuart Rosenberg |
| Fax: 617 349-4269 | Pages: 5 |
| Phone: | Date: May 17, 2002 |
| Re: Survey and Results | CC: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent <input type="checkbox"/> For Review <input type="checkbox"/> Please Comment <input type="checkbox"/> Please Reply <input type="checkbox"/> Please Recycle | |

DISTRICT 8
BOSTON CITY HALL, ONE CITY HALL PLAZA, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02201
(617) 635-4223 FAX: (617) 635-4203 MICHAEL.ROSS@CI.BOSTON.MA.US

Memo

Not for release without permission

To: Mike Ross
 Chair, Ways and Means Committee, Boston City Council

Fr: Barry Bluestone
 Co-Director, Northeastern University Ways & Means Project

Re: PRELIMINARY RESULTS - Boston City Budget Survey

Date: May 14, 2002

During the last two weeks of April, 2002, Northeastern University undergraduate students distributed approximately 1,500 postcard surveys at various T-stops throughout the City of Boston. The purpose of the survey was to obtain information regarding citizen preferences in city budgeting and preferences regarding solutions for balancing the city's budget.

A total of 220 of these surveys have been returned (approximately a 15 percent response rate.)

Of these, 178 were received from individuals who reported they were Boston residents. The neighborhood breakdown was as follows:

| | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| Allston Brighton | 17.4% | Dorchester | 22.5% |
| Chinatown | 0.6 | Roslindale | 2.2 |
| East Boston | 2.8 | Roxbury | 15.2 |
| Fenway/Kenmore | 0.6 | South Boston | 0.6 |
| Hyde Park | 2.2 | South End | 2.2 |
| Jamaica Plain | 9.0 | West Roxbury | 1.1 |
| Mattapan | 7.9 | | |
| North End | 1.7 | Not identified | 14.0 |

Respondents were asked to rank their top budget priorities for the City of Boston from a list of nine choices using a "1" to denote their highest rank followed by "2", "3", etc.

Respondents were then asked to rank four solutions for dealing with the current shortfall in the City budget.

These results were tabulated and analyzed. In a significant number of cases, respondents used a check rather than a ranking. In this case, we assigned a "1" to any item checked. In some cases, individuals checked more than one item as a "1" and all of these were coded as "1"s.¹

The Results

Ranking Budget Priorities for City Services

The following table displays the percentage of City of Boston respondents who ranked a city service budget priority as their number "1" choice (or checked the box for this item) and the percentage who ranked a city service budget priority as one of their top three choices.

| <u>City Service</u> | <u>% Ranked #1 (or checked)</u> | <u>% Ranked #1, #2, or #3 (or checked)</u> |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Affordable Housing & Neighborhood Development | 54.5% | 76.4% |
| Public Schools | 33.7 | 63.4 |
| Public Safety (fire and police departments) | 15.7 | 43.8 |
| Public Health (immunizations) | 15.2 | 34.3 |
| Transportation (ex. traffic enforcement) | 14.0 | 33.7 |
| Human Services (community centers) | 11.2 | 28.6 |
| Public Libraries | 8.4 | 21.4 |
| Public Works (sanitation, trash collection, streets) | 7.3 | 30.9 ² |
| Parks & Recreation | 7.3 | 17.4 |

From this ranking, it is clear that the top two city budget priorities for Boston citizens are (1) Affordable Housing & Neighborhood Development and (2) Public Education. Public safety (fire and police protection) and public health come in third and fourth place in terms of #1 rankings, but well behind these top two priorities.

More than half of the survey respondents checked off Affordable Housing and Neighborhood Development as their #1 priority in the City. More than three-fourths ranked this service among their top three priorities.

¹ Because a significant number of respondents used checks rather than a numerical ranking and others ranked more than one service with the same numerical ranking, the sum total of #1 rankings across city service categories adds up to more than 100 percent.

² Public Works was ranked 8th out of nine in the #1 rankings, but 6th out of nine in the #1-#3 rankings because it garnered a significant number of #2 and #3 choices in the survey.

More than a third of the survey respondents checked off Public Schools as their #1 priority in the City. More than three-fifths ranked schools among their top three priorities.

Ranking Solutions for Balancing the City's Budget

The following table displays the percentage of total Boston respondents who ranked a budget solution as "1" or checked the box for this item.

| <u>Budget Solution</u> | <u>Percent Ranked #1 (or checked)</u> |
|---|---|
| Reduce city expenditures | 51.7% |
| Increase fees & fines (e.g. parking, permits) | 23.6 |
| Impose new taxes (e.g. restaurant meals tax) | 12.9 |
| Increase existing taxes (e.g. property tax) | 11.2 |

From this ranking, it is clear that the top two budget shortfall solutions for Boston citizens are (1) Reduce city expenditures and (2) increase fees and fines.

More than half of the survey respondents checked off reduce city expenditures as their #1 priority for balancing the city's budget.

Nearly a quarter of survey respondents checked off increase fees & fines as their #1 priority for balancing the city's budget.

Only 11-13 percent favored imposing new taxes or increasing existing ones.

Northeastern University's Center for Urban and Regional Policy is conducting a survey of citizen preferences in city budgeting. Please take a few moments to answer the following questions and drop this prepaid postcard in the mail. Your participation is appreciated. These results will be shared with the Boston City Council.

1. Are you a Boston resident? Yes No
If yes, in what neighborhood? _____

2. What are your top budget priorities for the City of Boston?
(Rank the following with "1" as highest rank [1,2,3,etc..])

- Transportation (ex. traffic enforcement)
- Affordable Housing & Neighborhood Development
- Public Works (sanitation, trash collection, streets)
- Public Safety (fire and police departments)
- Public Libraries
- Parks & Recreation
- Public Schools
- Public Health (immunizations)
- Human Services (community centers)
- Other (specify: _____)

3. With the City of Boston facing a budget shortfall, rank the following solutions for balancing the city's budget.

(Rank the following with "1" as the highest rank [1,2,3,4])

- Increase fees and fines (e.g. parking, permits)
- Increase existing taxes (e.g. property taxes)
- Impose new taxes (e.g. restaurant meals taxes)
- Reduce city expenditures

4. Do you have any ideas for cost savings or revenue raising in the City of Boston

4

City of Cambridge

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND RULES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Councillor David P. Maher, Chair
Councillor Anthony D. Galluccio
Councillor Brian Murphy
Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves
Councillor Timothy J. Toomey

In City Council June 10, 2002

The Government Operations and Rules Committee held a public hearing on May 29, 2002, beginning at 2:15 p.m. in the Ackermann Room for the purpose of discussing the coordination of a citizen satisfaction survey for goal-setting purposes with the upcoming primary election on September 17, 2002.

Present at the hearing were Councillor David P. Maher, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Brian Murphy, Sandra Albano, Assistant to the City Council, and Elaine McGrath, Cambridge City Clerk's Office. Also present were Richard Rossi, Deputy City Manager, Julia Bowdoin, City Manager's Office, Darleen Bonislowski, Election Commissioner, Teresa Neighbor, Executive Director, Election Commission, and Rusty Drugan, Election Commission.

Councillor Maher convened the hearing and asked Mr. Rossi to summarize the information he had gathered about the last citizen satisfaction survey. Mr. Maher noted that the City's FY 2002 Goals had briefly described the survey. Ms. Bowdoin distributed copies of documents from the 2000 survey conducted by Opinion Dynamics Corporation: (1) a November 8, 2000 4-page memorandum to the city which summarized the results of the surveys; (2) a 6-page summary of the telephone survey questions and results; and (3) a 4-page summary of the mail survey questions and responses. Ms. McGrath also distributed a summary report of an April 2002 Boston survey of citizens forwarded by Cambridge City Clerk, D. Margaret Drury. (Reports attached).

Mr. Rossi explained that the 2000 phone survey was statistically reliable, with a 4.9 percent margin of error on responses. Four hundred telephone interviews were conducted, and 2,173 surveys (of approximately 40,000 mailed out in the city's newsletter) were returned. The phone interviews took 15 minutes, and asked detailed questions about residents' satisfaction with city services, at a cost of about \$17,000. The city's plan was to ask the same questions in the next survey, two years later, in order to track citizen issues. The results from the 2000 survey identified housing-related issues as the primary concern for residents, followed by education and parking and traffic issues, with all other issues trailing far behind these three. Mr. Rossi noted that responses indicated that 81 percent of residents had access to and/or used the internet, which suggested another method to survey the public. According to Mr. Rossi, City Manager Healy's recommendation to the committee was two-fold: (1) repeat the targeted phone survey used in 2000, and (2) promote and use the City's website to encourage additional responses. Mr. Healy discouraged the use of the city newsletter given the limited response last time.

Mr. Rossi also addressed the costs and benefits of conducting neighborhood meetings in the last survey. A total of nine meetings were held, six in neighborhoods throughout the city, plus one each targeted to the elderly, high school students and small businesses. Although Mr. Rossi did not have specific cost data, he stated that the costs were high. Councillor Maher stated

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Committee Report #4

Committee Report from Councillor David Maher, Chair of the Government Operations and Rules Committee, for a meeting held on May 29, 2002 for the purpose of discussing the coordination of a citizen satisfaction survey for goal-setting purposes with the upcoming primary election on September 17, 2002.

In City Council June 10, 2002

**REPORT ACCEPTED.
PLACED ON FILE.
ORDER ADOPTED.**