

## City Budget Community Listening Session

Thursday, October 15, 2020

6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Number of Participants: 46

Demographics		
Zip Code	#	%
55438	5	14.7%
55437	3	8.8%
55431	10	29.4%
55420	7	20.6%
55425	3	8.8%
Other	3	8.8%
Race or Ethnicity (check all that apply)		
White/Caucasian	28	82.3%
Black or African American	3	8.8%
Prefer not to answer	4	11.8%
Age Range		
30 to 39	6	17.6%
40 to 49	6	17.6%
50 to 59	11	23.4%
60 to 69	3	8.8%
70 to 79	3	8.8%
Prefer not to answer	1	2.9%
Do you rent or own your home?		
Rent	2	5.9%
Own	32	94.1%
<b>Total Number of Respondents</b>	<b>34</b>	

### Participant Feedback

- Which budget scenario do you prefer?
- From your perspective, what is it about your preferred budget scenario that makes it the best option?
- If you could change anything reflected in the budget scenarios, what would you change?

Budget Scenario	Participant	Comments
	Pamela	5% percent worries me a bit, but it worries me when I see cultural arts funding that already in that scenario it says eliminate or reduce funding. Very concerned about reduction. We all know we have to make cuts, but I'd hate to think at the 5% that you might actually eliminate cultural arts funding, so that's my 2 cents.
3%	Mary	My comment is that many of us experienced 13 to 23% increase in our taxes last year. If you add another 5%, many of them will be 20 to 25% increase over the last two years. I think it's interesting that last year when we were not in it pandemic we had a 13 to 23% increase in our property taxes and this year you're only asking for five. My concern is that that's a lot of extra tax for people who are living on a fixed income. Well, I hope that the committee will consider that maybe a 3%. And then again I am very opposed to making huge cuts in the Police Department at a time when crime is going up in this community. Thank you.

		I would just like to point out to the city that there are many little things that that could be changed in terms of expenditures. I point out to everyone the roundabout that was built on 83rd and Knox. I questioned the city about the wisdom of that. It was a \$10,000 expenditure when four stop signs would have done it. Now that's a drop in the bucket, but if we're doing those kinds of things all across the city, all those expenditures add up and that was a very foolish build and no one wanted it and everybody spoke against it. So I think the city needs to look around and say you know, what do families do when they have limited income? They pull back on their spending and they put a stop sign up instead of a roundabout in a residential area. Thank you.
5%	Eric	So my name is Eric and I want to say first of all, thank you to Steve on the budget committee and everybody involved because this is actually it's been really interesting for me to watch this process. The transparency has been great and I think you know what's amazing to me when I see all the services enumerated that are on the chopping block. It's really amazing how many services that Bloomington actually provides. So for me, the budget scenario that I prefer is the 5% increase for two reasons. Number one, I would prefer not to have cuts to the Police Department, particularly considering the new homeless shelter that's going in on Lyndale. And second of all, I think we don't know what COVID is going to do in the winter, but winters are already hard enough in Minnesota and I feel like the only reprieve from our homes may be getting outside. And if we stop plowing the sidewalks and the parks, that's going to make it much harder for people to get outside and enjoy. You know those nice days that we get in the winter, so I am for the 5%.
5%	Anne	I feel the same way Eric does. I just want to say I don't know when I've ever spent so much time just being in my neighborhood and going to City Hall to hang out in the Art Gallery. I mean, I have a ton of time on my hands right now and my kids are at home and I need them to be able to get outdoors and exercise and do things. My daughter still taking lessons at Continental Ballet which just went back into City Hall, which has been wonderful. I'm very afraid that the arts organizations, I know a grant sounds like an OK thing to cut, but that's actually a good chunk of the budget for many of these arts organizations. I would urge the council when it comes to that to reconsider a wholesale cutting of that and our kids need their parks. I need the sidewalks plowed for sure, so I'm in favor of the 5% increase in taxes. I'd pay more than that. Honestly, in order to maintain the services and quality of life.
5%	Dawn	I go with what Anne and Eric have already said I'm in favor of the 5%. I don't like seeing ice rinks closing and all the outdoor activities for our youth, and I don't want to see the sidewalks not plowed because if someone's not able to do that themselves, the cost to hire is going to be more than a dollar and a half a month to take care of. And I really don't like the idea of having to close the DMV because I have to go over and stand in line for a couple hours. It's just time I'm not getting paid. So I support the 5% increase.
0%	Steve	I'm interested in knowing the timing of these things and when we know the assessed values when we have to finalize the budget and I haven't had the chance to look into the details of that yet. But I do agree that property value assessed values are going to be increasing next year. And so a 5% increase really isn't a 5% overall increase, it's more like an 8, 9 or 10% overall increase. So we're talking about these dollars per household here, it's really a higher number when we consider those new assessed value, so I don't know that 5% increase would be necessary to reach the budget cuts that we need with those increased assessed values. The other comments that I have is we created an environment here for the hospitality sector to do very well and now when things turn ugly for them, it's pushed back on the residents as have a lot of other things been, so I'm not in favor of increasing the levy to the residents at all. I think we need to look at other ways to generate this revenue. Make up this revenue. We talked about that and we had conversations about where we can

		<p>generate revenue in other areas. Instead of let's just go to the homeowners and add to their taxes.</p> <p>I think we certainly want to hear from our Department heads on where they feel they can make cuts. We ask Chief Seal, we ask Chief Potts. Can you do more with less? I would imagine that's part of the conversation, but perhaps they have ideas on ways to cut their budget, and not have it be a decision handed down upon them. They could send something back up to council. I think that's something we should consider as well.</p>
	Carol	<p>I am not going to choose one scenario over another because I think there are good ideas of cuts in all of them. And then there are some that I'm hesitant on. I'd like to suggest two things sell the park that's on 101st St. I'm also involved in affordable housing. I think it would be great for several mini homes that people could buy because that has come up that with people who are renting, are they going to have to rent their whole life or can they move into homeownership? And these little mini houses that a lot of other communities around the country have might be a good idea. I've had several members of my family who are police officers and friends, including some in Bloomington, and I think we're scaring ourselves too much about crime. Also, I don't think we need to be involved in Homeland Security. I did a little survey and found out that there are so many of these specialized squads where they drive up practically in a tank. We have one, the airport has one, Edina has one, Richfield has one. I bet you if we did a survey there would be every community has one. How many of them do we need?</p>
	Sue	<p>We love the city. I was born and raised in the city and my husband and I have been home owners for 30 years here now. We have personally taken a cut in our salary. And I think we need to think of the whole city at large, and I know we're not the only family that has taken a cut in pay. And with all the people in service industry within our city, I think we need to be very careful about the percent of the levy that we're thinking of. I think the Police and Fire Department are a must. I've had a house fire. I love our police and I feel safe and protected. So I do not feel that Fire or Police should be on the docket to cut with any of these levies.</p>
3%	Andy	<p>I'm definitely not in favor of cutting any Police or Fire. I tend to be in the 5% bracket but again as some other person rated, you know the taxes or just keep going up and up and up. We just got a bloated government here so we were pursuing the World Expo, we spent \$100,000 at Valley View Park, and we have a thing called high performance organization that wastes city staff and time. That was brought from Brooklyn Park over to Bloomington. It got deleted when the city manager came from Brooklyn Park over to Bloomington. We lived for a long time without a diversity director and I hear we're going to add another diversity person on the payroll, possibly in the next council meeting. So I hope the city blocks that. I'm in favor of 3%. Putting the police and fire on any cuts is just a no no. But I think we can get rid of this bloated government that we got going on, so thank you.</p>
3%	Max	<p>So I think bloat is a good word for how the police are funded. Not so much the Fire Department. I was in the Army for nine years and I've seen how the government spends money on departments like the military, and they do not spend it wisely. So I would guess that there are smart cuts we can make to the police force without a loss in efficiency. And that's just from my experience in the military.</p> <p>I would also be in favor of the 3%. I forgot to mention.</p>
	Molly	<p>I don't necessarily have one scenario that I would prefer to select at this time. My biggest two items that I would be concerned about are cutting the police force for all the same reasons that everybody else has already stated and also the civil unrest and how Bloomington and the neighboring cities have all been kind of involved in that. So it's not a good time to make a cut to the Police Department. I would be in favor of not making any cuts to Police or fire at all if that's possible. And the other thing is that I'm looking at this</p>

		from a medical background I just want to remind everybody that what we're going through with this pandemic right now is also taking a significant mental health toll on everybody in the community, including the children and everybody that's held up at home right now, so the things that are helpful for everybody to make it through that are some of our outdoors activities and those kinds of things I know our family loves to do, so I would be in favor of keeping up the Parks and Rec Department and keeping open ice rinks and opening up Bush Lake Beach.
0%	Mike	<p>I'd like to speak up my name is Mike, 37 year resident of Bloomington. Children raised there went to high school there. I want to thank committee for their work. I think was very well thought out. I appreciate the devotion they had and the hours they spent. I believe a hybrid of the various levy proposals should be something to be looked at. I'm in very much in favor of the zero percent levy and I think deeper cuts should be looked at even than that. This is not a short term one year thing. We're going to be faced with a decade of the effects of this pandemic. I believe that it's going to hit harder in the second and third wave than it did in the first. I believe we're just looking at the tip of the iceberg. We should be prepared for an even worse scenario. Last comment, we have a lot of assets in Bloomington that could be for sale or on the chopping block, like the park that was proposed to sell that just sits there that we cut the grass and it does nothing for the city and he asked us if that type should be considered seriously. Thank you.</p> <p>An additional comment I'd like to offer. It's got a lot of baggage that comes with it, but the volunteer opportunity exists in this that I see is unbelievable. That volunteer opportunity is used that are unemployed retirees with time in their hands to fill the void of any staff reductions or maintenance reductions that the City requires to keep the high quality of life that we provide. A CCC kind of opportunity exists right now that it was started. Could continue for decades and I would think that something along that line could help support these staff cuts and yet still maintain our quality of life or safety. In many ways, and I would hope that that would be something that could be pursued through this process. It can be done in every single one of the departments, and every one of the budgetary areas could use volunteer help. I understand there's workman's comp issues and insurance issues, but they can be worked around. Thank you.</p>
	Paul	I would like to thank the committee as well. I know it's a lot of work and that, but I would also wonder, you know how this works with the water and sewer, because we had a surplus this last year and we had a big rate increase this year. And I'm wondering if there's possibly some excess funds there that can be tapped to reduce expenses further in those areas to reduce cost increases. We had like an \$800,000 surplus last year I think. And then we had a large rate increase this year.
	Sarah	It is concerning that we are cutting Public Works (public health) in the midst of a pandemic & given that one of the main services seniors rely on through Creekside is food support, and I know Public Health does some food support. Personally, I would like to see some cuts to the police department and have them create a ranked system regarding the types of calls they respond to and encourage citizens to solve "neighborly" concerns between themselves. This could look like ensuring citizens are working together to solve problems before responding to all situations. I have had the police come respond to a noise complaint because my dog was barking inside my fenced yard at 11:00 AM. Nobody knocked on my door to inform me they were being bothered! This is an example of calls police receive AND they respond to when there isn't a need. They can just tell people to solve it themselves. It would be interesting to know how often this happens and if there could be cuts to the police departments based on this data.
	Steve	Whichever scenario saves the police and fire.

5%	AD	Cuts to the grants means the arts programs can't continue. I'm in favor of 5%. We also have daughter in CBC and won't hate to see programs like these end.
	Stephanie	I do not want to see any cuts in police or fire as many others have indicated. As a part of the Bloomington Athletic Association I would also like to see the City consider what organizations they charge fees to in regulars to their youth sports. BAA has a 68 year history with the City and we provide Recreation Sports to ALL youth in Bloomington at a very reasonable cost. I am concerned about the affordability of the program for the youth with this additional
5%	Eric	I have to run but wanted to again thank the committee for their efforts. Steve, you did a great job presenting and it really feels like the best possible options are being considered. As I mentioned, I am in favor of the 5% levy - my main priorities are Fire, Police, and snowplowing/park maintenance. In general I think Bloomington does a great job with city services and the employees I've interacted with have been excellent. I am willing to pay more to keep the same services. Thanks everyone!

#### Additional Comments (Chat Box)

Participant	Comments
Steve	Stay away from the Police and Fire Mayor and city council don't listen to the Charter City needs to cut all Travel too
Pam	City Council also just ignored the Planning Commission and other commissions as well. :-(
Sarah	I am supportive of the Motor Vehicle closing. It was small, too busy, poor customer service, and now most of these services can be done online or more efficiently at Southdale.
Pam	It's still very hard to understand how we could have a REDUCTION based on median value. I'm looking at actual cost, not what the percent of tax is of one's median value...
AD	I'm also very concerned about elimination of support to cultural arts
Karen	I agree with Eric about not cutting the plowing of the sidewalks during winter
Pam	If the cultural arts grants are cut or eliminated, we could permanently LOSE these great organizations...our band, symphony, artistry, etc.
Pam	I rarely use the DMV and do as much online as possible. BUT if we have to go elsewhere, then those places will be A LOT more busy. And they are already bad enough. DON'T close DMV or Creekside.
Steve	I will build as many mini homes as the city would allow.
Pam	No, not scaring ourselves. Crime has greatly increased. It is an increasing problem. about 6 murders in the last year. Check out the police stats.
Sue	We have received a nearly 10% cut in salary this last year... we would prefer not to see any increase (0%) in the levy. Cuts to various departments is difficult, but please do not cut police or fire budgets.
Jasmine	Thank you, Carol! I appreciate your points and completely agree on the demilitarization of police
Max	I agree on the demilitarization of the police force.
Andy	Cut the World Expo
Stephanie	Definitely cut World Expo
Pam	And DO NOT pursue that stupid waterpark and infrastructure that the city would help with.
Sue	Please continue to plow the sidewalks! Thank you.
Pam	The MOA needs to get more self-sufficient after all these years. Southdale is being creative... Lifetime Fitness, DMV, library. MOA just demands stuff from the city ... build a waterpark, etc.
Andy	We did for all Bloomington years without a diversity director, high performance organization and so much nonsense spending. The hotels are never going to return to pre pandemic levels as many conferences that once were are now on line and will stay that way. Entertainment is always the

	first thing to go. The South Loop and hotel taxes will continue to drain resident taxes. What are the long range plans for these hotels?
Carol	Yes. I have received notice that a conference I attend every year with thousands of other people will be online --- partly because many conferences are changing how they operate. This will influence how city staff are trained and their travel costs will be greatly reduced
Sandy	Investing in diversity is nonsense? You do know that the half of the kindergartners in Bloomington are kids of color, right?
Max	A breakdown of each individual fund would be nice to see
Pam	The diversity issue has gone so far that now they are saying there aren't enough trees for the BIPOC community. Where are those people living that don't have trees? And is it the city's job to plant trees in people's yards? But as I drive around east Bloomington that is very diverse, I see a lot of big old trees.
Sandy	Pam, if you think diversity is about trees, you're missing the forest for the trees.
Pam	They were talking about how the BIPOC community didn't have enough trees.
Akua	Probably related to environmental justice.
Sue	Increasing volunteerism is a GREAT idea! Thanks Mike!
Andy	Bloomington does a great Job with Public works. Volunteering is a good thing and could help with picking up parks etc.
Pam	Speaking of volunteers, the police department was in the process of getting up a volunteer program for people who had been through the CITIZENS police academy. It has been put on hold. But definitely there is interest in providing assistance to areas like that.
Carol	I agree with Mike (volunteers).

## Questions

Participant	Question	Answers
Pam	When you have mentioned the lodging and admission taxes of \$4 million, is that the total amount collected on those, or is that 2% of the lodging tax that actually goes to the general fund?	It's the 2% that goes to the General Fund. So just to note that portion of the lodging tax goes to the General Fund, a portion of it goes to the South Loop Development Fund and a portion of it goes to the Convention and Visitors Bureau. We're just of laser focused on our particular problem here at the City, as opposed to those other places where the money goes.
	Do the citizens of Bloomington believe that your recommendations will be listened to by the City Council? We have several examples where they have not listened to the Charter Commission, the Planning Commission, and so I'm concerned that you've done all this work and the committee might not be heard.	I have the same concern. I have and the other committee members have put 50 or 60 hours into this process at this point, but we have no way of controlling that. We are trying to do our best to make this reflect the input of the community. We're going to take it to them and then it's going to be up to the City Council to make a decision.
	How does the \$86 million budget compare to spending for this year or the prior year? Because historically Bloomington has been increasing spending greater than inflation for several years, and so a lot of times we have not spent our	The Charter requires that the budget has a 2.5% reserve in it to cover for unanticipated spending, it's the contingency.

	<p>budgeted amount. In past years, there's been a significant difference between actual spending and budget.</p>	<p>We do have a contingency that we are required to have in the general fund or kind of cases like this pandemic or things that are unforeseen that will cause an issue with not getting in the revenues that we anticipate. But the direction that was given for the 2021 initial budget was to have no increases in the budget request and wherever possible, departments had to like look line item by line item and decrease wherever possible. So that's how the initial request came in, and then because of the significant loss of lodging and admission tax revenues that we are projecting, the committee is looking at having further reductions than that.</p>
	<p>With the 5% levy, it was an increase of \$3.40 per month on a median value home. What would the levy have been to have no cuts at all in services?</p>	<p>The 5% number represented about \$1,000,000 in cuts from the previous from the baseline budget. With no cuts, it would be closer to over 7% for the tax levy increase and look more like a \$6.00 monthly increase to the median value home.</p>
	<p>Do you know what the County, School District or Three Rivers Parks District are doing around tax increases? We forget that we also have other agencies we are paying taxes to.</p>	<p>Hennepin County preliminary tax levy is 0% so they are not going to increase taxes for 2021. The School Board is at a 2.8% tax levy increase. Our Assessing Department put that information together and found that for the median value home value, at a 5% increase for the City tax levy, it would be a reduction overall.</p>
	<p>Traffic Calming Program – What does that reduction mean?</p>	<p>So the City for quite a while has operated to neighborhood traffic calming program that's about measures that get taken in neighborhoods to reduce the impact of traffic. So it would be like on neighborhood streets. It wouldn't be like four to three conversions on major roads or things like that. More focused on neighborhoods, like a narrowing of a road, or if you had roundabout that was put in a neighborhood in order to slow traffic down in the neighborhood. It's really things more focused on that.</p>
	<p>Are you using what we expect to see the median value be next year or current year?</p>	<p>We don't have final data for next year because next year's assessment won't</p>

		be done until January 1st. 2021 property tax values are based on the January 2020 assessed values.
William	Have you looked at requiring 1 month per year for layoffs per person?	<i>Answered after the session</i> – Given the wide range of positions at the City, there is no “one size fits all” reduction that makes sense. The City of Bloomington has five labor unions, which require the City to follow significant rules, processes, and laws guiding employee relations and compensation, and severely limits the City’s ability to impose terms and conditions of employment without negotiation. City staff has cut 6 full-time positions and 2 part-time positions from the 2021 budget. The Community Budget Advisory Committee is analyzing additional staffing reductions that would reduce up to 28.5 full and part-time positions.
Sue	Community Development is \$9.6M/\$86.4M, or 11%...Only 5.8% has been suggested as a cut...Can't more be cut than simply a 5.8% reduction??	<i>Answered after the session</i> – All departments closely analyzed their services to determine potential budget cut reductions that were reviewed and prioritized by the committee. Community Development consists of Planning, Environmental Health, Building and Inspections, and Assessing. Unlike some of the other departments, a lot of the revenues that cover expenses are not from property taxes but are from development fees such as building permit fees. Their proposed cuts are already significant as they contain proposals to leave the Community Development Director position unfilled as well lay off an employee in the Building and Inspections division.
Andrew	Did you look at recapturing the liquor tax that goes to the south loop development fund	<i>Answered after the session</i> – The committee did discuss the 3% liquor tax and the 2% lodging tax that goes to the South Loop Development fund. A change by the State Legislature would be required to make that change. The City wouldn’t be able to make that change by itself, so the Committee will be including that as something for the

		Council to consider in the future as opposed to offering that as an option for balancing the 2021 budget.
Anne	Has Bloomington used its federal CARES funding yet? How much did we receive, and where did it go?	<i>Answered after the session</i> – The City received \$6.7 million of CARES funding from the State. \$1.3 million was designated for Small Business Loan assistance and the remainder is being used to reimburse COVID related expenditures in Public Safety, Public Health, technology, and protective equipment and supplies.
Chuck	Have you looked at the potential for departmental restructure or consolidation? Given that revenues were impacted in the near future, how can the City maintain the size of its government?	<i>Answered after the session</i> – Several of the reductions that the committee are proposing would carry forward to future years to address the slow recovery projected for the hospitality industry. A couple of years ago, the City Council directed the City to conduct service assessments of all departments and several have already been completed. Those are published on the CBAC webpage. blm.mn/cbac Those assessments have resulted in reorganization of departments and divisions and reductions in staff and equipment.
Jasmine	Can you say more about the proposed Public Health department cuts? What positions/services are looking to be cut?	<i>Answered after the session</i> – With some upcoming and recent retirements, it is a reorganization of full-time and part-time staff. The Public Health division submitted these changes believing they could offer the same level of services more efficiently with these changes.
Sue	How much money do we have currently in our “contingency fund”? Can this be used to make up some of the existing pandemic/budget shortfalls?	<i>Answered after the session</i> – The contingency line item of the General Fund budget is 2.5% of total expenditures. For the 2020 budget that is \$1.9 million. That is being used to address the 2020 budget shortfall.
Stephanie	What are you getting for selling hotels to the county?	<i>Answered after the session</i> – The City is not receiving any money for hotels that are sold. The City does not own the hotels.
Mshan	What is the value of the median home in our city?	The value of the Median Value Home in Bloomington is \$286,400.
Sarah	Food insecurity seems to be a big issue for seniors, especially through the pandemic. Do you know if there are enough "other food resources" available	<i>Answered after the session</i> – If the Creekside Community center were to close, City staff would ensure that

	to connect Bloomington seniors to, considering that this population is increasing?	programs like Loaves and Fishes would still be available in Bloomington at a new location.
Paul	How is the \$5 Million for waterpark budgeted? Can that be delayed to reduce spending or is that tied to South Loop?	<i>Answered after the session</i> – Work on the water park has been suspended. The funding for the project comes from the South Loop Development Fund, which does not use property taxes. South Loop projects are funded by Lodging Taxes and Liquor Taxes.
Stephanie	Residents have to plow sidewalks are you banking on the notion to turn this into revenue when you start assessing fines to people that don't shovel within a time frame?	<i>Answered after the session</i> – No, the budget savings would be the result of reduced hours needed to plow sidewalks.
Paul	Is there an estimate of what the average home value will be in the new budget year as this could have big impact on actual property tax change?	To clarify, 2021 property tax values are based on the January 2020 assessed values
Stephanie	Where are the cuts to these other positions that are not needed? Positions like racial equity positions are not needed and add no value to the community.	<i>Answered after the session</i> – All departments closely analyzed their services to determine potential budget cut reductions that were reviewed and prioritized by the committee. The Community Budget Advisory Committee is analyzing additional staffing reductions that would reduce up to 28.5 full and part-time positions. “Inclusion and Equity” is one of the City Council’s core strategic initiatives. The Racial Equity Coordinator is an important position that works with all departments and the community to lead the work of racial equity.
Pam	Of those 90 some items. There are about 15 items that have "NO" under the Scenario column. Does that mean the Budget committee does NOT want to cut that? I hope that is what it means. DO NOT CUT Summer Fete!!	<i>Answered after the session</i> – That is correct, “No” indicates that it is not part of one of the committee’s budget scenarios.
Sandy	I haven't heard anything about World Expo since the start of the pandemic. Is anything going on with it?	No funds have been expended on Expo since the start of the pandemic.  No general fund dollars are programmed for work on Expo. No money from the General Fund was spent on Expo previously. That effort was paid for out of the South Loop Development Fund, which is funded by Liquor and Lodging Tax

Pam	Is the waterpark still on hold as week?	Pam, appreciate the feedback on the waterpark. As you know, that effort also has not been funded with General Fund or property tax dollars. The South Loop Development Fund and Port Authority funded waterpark activity.  No work has been done on the waterpark since the pandemic shut things down.
Paul	What is the average home value for 2020 and 2021 to assist in evaluating the total cost change of 5%?	<i>Answered after the session</i> –The median value home for taxes paid in 2020 is \$283,900 and for 2021 it is \$286,400
Steve	How have the department heads been involved in the process?	The options presented to the committee included reductions prepared by the departments. The priorities from the committee were quite consistent with the priorities from department heads.
Sue	11% of our budget is dedicated to Community Development. What does this include, and can cuts be made?	Community Development includes Planning, Building & Inspections, Assessing, and Environmental Health (code inspectors). HRA and Port Authority are also part of CommDev but they have separate budgets from the City.  People who work for the HRA are actually City employees. The HRA is a statutory body. It has a contract with the City to have City employees do the work. It essentially pays the City to have employees do its work.
Pam	There was a line item about moving some planning people to HRA or something like that. Would love to know more about that.	The transition of City staff to HRA is a reflection of where staff are allocating their time. It's an accounting shift more than anything else.
Dawn	Are there any costs in the 2021 to pave or maintain the MN River Trail?	<i>Answered after the session</i> –No, the City does not have any costs for paving or maintaining the MN River trail.

## City Budget Community Listening Session

Saturday, October 17, 2020

10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Number of Participants: 15

Demographics		
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Black or African American	1	6.7%
Prefer not to answer	1	6.7%
Age Range		
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40 to 49	1	6.7%
50 to 59	5	33.3%
60 to 69	4	26.7%
70 to 79	3	20%
Do you rent or own your home?		
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<b>Total Number of Respondents</b>		<b>15</b>

### Participant Feedback

- Which budget scenario do you prefer?
- From your perspective, what is it about your preferred budget scenario that makes it the best option?
- If you could change anything reflected in the budget scenarios, what would you change?

Budget Scenario	Participant	Comments
5%	Lorry	I support the 5% levy option and commend the CBAC on their excellent work.
5%	Kathy	I support the 5% but I can see a few of the 0% and 3% reductions items that would make some sense to add such as the street weed spraying, artistry grant eliminations, reduced hours, fee increases (Dwan and youth athletics) and fee increases for ice rental and pool as well as moratorium on all additional staffing desires.
5%	Lori	Having followed this throughout the process, so far I think that either the 5% or the 3%, preferably the 5%, would be my preference. I don't think the zero percent is really a tenable position to take or a sustainable thing, particularly when you start looking at eliminating things like sidewalk plowing and that sort of thing, that's going to have a huge impact on people with disabilities and seniors. Obviously there are public safety concerns. I think that there are lot of challenges that we're going to have in the coming months or so surrounding

		issues with the police already being a little strapped and I think that taking those kind of hits like overtime hits, hurt a great deal at the moment.
Between 3% and 5%	Larry	Of my personal position and opinion on this is somewhere between the 3% and the 5% scenario. I really don't think that cutting back to the absolute bone ends up helping the community, and I think that the numbers that the committee is given on the effect on property taxes means that something in that area is affordable for most people. My understanding is for people who have low incomes, there is state assistance for offsetting property tax and property tax increase. So there is a buffer that the State provides if someone is really hammered by unemployment or something else, and the City increases property taxes by a little bit.
0%	Greg	Just some context. My wife and I moved to Bloomington in 1982 and our kids graduated one from Kennedy, one from Jefferson and we have been on more commissions and boards and volunteer organizations that I can remember at this point. So thank you to all of you for your substantial efforts. I would strongly recommend the zero percent levy increase and further recommend that the \$1,000,000 reduction in the Police not be pursued. I recognize that it feels like these are steep cuts and they are challenging, but by way of comparison, our company cut its budget by 20% in the March/April timeframe. So I think what is basic, you know the \$5,000,000 cuts in budget in Bloomington, are just necessary for all of us to be sharing. I guess the other thing I would say is that I think we're in competition also, not just for staff, but for commercial and residential development and new folks. And I think that the critical elements are maintaining a low tax base and also public safety, and I think reducing police expenditures at this time is not taking account of real concerns in the city and a bit tone deaf and with respect to everybody's hard work here. So I would strongly recommend against that.
5%	Mike	I wanted to raise the issue on the impact of people in their homes right now and then through probably a good part of next year. With these services that are being reduced, I support the 5% increase frankly, because when people are relying upon their home for isolation and protection, anything we do to reduce the impact, whether it's public safety, fire, sidewalk plowing, or whatever makes those people less secure in their homes. And that's why I support maintaining the 5% level versus the other reductions. I think they take too much away from the person that that is going to be relying upon their home as a primary source of security right now.
5%	Elise	I'm going to take some more time to dig through. I did start reading through the more detailed 300 page budget book and also talk with my husband so that we can provide some comments in some of your follow up avenues. I really, as others have said, I appreciate this opportunity. I support the 5% and I would like to see maybe some rearranging of the way things are prioritized. I feel like for our household, that level of increase to a cost this year and for the next three to five years is definitely something that we can afford and would like to support services in Bloomington. We've been fortunate to maintain our employment through this time and we can afford to contribute to these services and to also support perhaps others that are less fortunate. So thank you.
5%	Linda	I would like to speak in support of the 5% budget Levy. I am very concerned about the long term ramifications of decisions that would be impossible to unravel, one of those being the closure of Creekside in the zero percent. That is a big budget savings, and it would be permanent, but I think that would be an irreparable loss to Bloomington given the large population of people who are over 55. With a view to the future and the closing of the Motor Vehicle Department and going over to Edina, maybe you shouldn't be driving when you're 85 and standing in line in Edina with 40,000 other people is not as much fun. It's not as convenient as driving over to Bloomington, and so that would be a decision that would be very hard to reverse. So I am very much in favor of a 5% levy.

### Additional Comments (Chat Box)

Participant	Comments
Kathy	Perhaps cross training would alleviate some of the specialty employment situations going forward. Looking for the future, we need to focus on efficiency/necessity/essential and not segregate our services so much. We really need to focus on the basics first and foremost.
Mike	I want to add my thanks for all the hard work that the committee has done on this project.
Elise	I would support keeping a focus on crime analysis especially during this time to help identify root cause of crime, and looking at racial justice, racial equity. It looks like we have 117 FTEs in the Police Department so see a potential to focus on what prevents crime and allocate city services to align. How is crime changing with COVID, seasonal aspects of crime, look at white collar crime? I will study more on public safety issues in our community. Thank you.
Jan	I support the 3% option. I would like to see if some of the costs in the 0% could be reviewed to see if they could be held off a bit to make a savings. Such as the Homeland Security Coordinator and/or Police Records position waiting for 3 months to be hired.
Linda	I appreciate the work of the CBAC and staff.
Laurie	Bloomington staff is the best.
Elise	Very much appreciate the committee's volunteer time.
Kathy	Sorry, I don't have access to microphone but I agree with Greg's comments and I think we really need to include this issue of homeless costs in our budget analysis somewhere. I do appreciate the work done so far.
Greg	I would urge that as a matter of focus over the next several years, that reallocating South Loop funds become a priority to try to pursue creative ideas and go through the couch per change, because I suspect there that their material dollars to be found there.

### Questions

Participant	Question	Answers
Mike	On the 5% - that you feel with the committee feels that the biggest impact that the property owners could bear for homes that would be at that \$4.35 a month level. Or why was that kind of a magic number? Was there any reason for that?	<p>One of the recommendations that the committee considered and has already sent to the City Council was what the City Council ought to consider for its preliminary levy. And so in the state law, the way the property taxes are set is in September of each year, the City Council sets its limit for Levy and that sets a maximum cap on the amount of property tax revenue that can be generated the following year. We wanted to have a proposal that was a kind of keep the budget where it is right now in terms of services, and so we sent a levy recommendation of a 6.44% increase as the maximum to the City Council because that would have given us the ability to create a budget scenario that effectively kept services whole.</p> <p>The City Council decided not to adopt that 6.44% number and instead</p>

		adopted a 5% number. And so that's where we're capped at 5%. So that's where that number came
Elise	I just have a question on why you are only having police reductions in the 0%.	<p>We did rank prioritization of the various proposals that we ended up considering. Each of the committee members independently ranked the 90 some options that we had.</p> <p>And this set. This order is the result of that kind of independent ranking by the committee members. If you go and look at the information that we online about how the rankings work, there was strong consensus. In other words, If you look at how the committee members rank things independently, the committee members were working hard to try to keep the public safety impacts as low as possible.</p>
Mike	Concern with closure of motor vehicle office. Couldn't this be moved to city hall so fees could still be available to the city?	There are many different options that have been discussed for Motor Vehicle. Moving Motor Vehicle to City Hall would require remodeling so that it is a very separate space from other City services to comply with federal guidelines.
Mike	Are we considering delaying or eliminating the \$10 million support for the new water park in this budget?	Work on the water park has been suspended. The funding for the project comes from the South Loop Development Fund, which does not use property taxes. South Loop projects are funded by Lodging Taxes and Liquor Taxes.
Jan	Could a couple of the positions in the police department be combined? I noticed there are two positions that I wonder if they could be combined a Records Specialist and Crime Analyst.	Looking at combining responsibilities is a smart thing to do. Those two specific positions, however, do very different things and typically have different skills. Many of the recommendations come from the Department Directors who have looked at many different staffing and service options.
Mike	With the increase in the cost for apartments- do we expect this will suppress interesting low income housing?	<i>Answered after the session –</i> Despite the portion of property tax on an average apartment potentially increasing from \$1.34-\$4.35 per month, there is still a strong demand for affordable housing.
Larry	What discussions did the committee have about a downturn and historically low interest rate	We have talked about your question regarding capital projects. Many of our

	<p>environment being a good time for capital expenditures? Street maintenance, sewer and water infrastructure, trails, building maintenance, for example.</p>	<p>large capital expenses require us to save money for a number of years. Historically low interest rates may present an opportunity to reduce our taxes and pay for those projects over a number of years to better manage taxes and debt service.</p>
Greg	<p>Thinking about South Loop, I appreciate that for this next year you can't access those funds, but looking at a three to five year structural balance standpoint</p> <p>I'm intrigued by the possibility to either reduce expenditures to South Loop or charge those buckets of money fees for the services they receive.</p> <p>I feel there are other commercial districts that could use significant support. South Loop being able to support that very directly would be helpful. Particularly along Lyndale Avenue as an area in need of reinvestment.</p>	<p>The ability to move money around between districts is super complicated because not only is it subject to state law, but the state law has changed over the years and the rules on that depend a lot on when the district was set up, whether there has been special legislation modifying the district since then, etc. So that's something where historically the city hasn't had enormous amount of success on moving money around that way.</p> <p>The staff has already been pretty good about charging the kind of South Loop funds for City services that we can shift into those funds, we already do some kind of cost transfers in that direction. I see Jamie just posted in the chat [<i>see below</i>] about police services and other related operations, so I think my impression is to the extent possible, the staff have already identified the ways that we can get money out of there and get it into the general fund. But it's a good idea to go back and look and see if there are other things that we've missed.</p> <p>Chat Box From Jamie Verbrugge: South Loop is contributing to the City's General Fund. The South Loop Fund gets charged for a share of the Police services and other related operations. The way the Fund has been established by the Legislature means we have to be very careful about what we charge to it. Our attorneys review it very closely to make sure we are complying with the Legislative restrictions.</p>
Greg	<p>I'm wondering the connection with the hotels in the County and the increased use of those facilities for homeless shelters. Have we explored all</p>	<p>I know the city staff, both from the Police Department and other departments, has been actively</p>

	<p>opportunities to request additional securities or security force on site provided by them or contributions from them? As a matter of geography, it feels like Bloomington, relative to some of our nearby suburbs, is absorbing more of these costs and the County helping with that would seem appropriate if we explored all of those possibilities for additional dollars from those. I would urge our people to negotiate strongly to have them help us absorb some of those costs.</p>	<p>involved in working with the facilities that have moved into hotels temporarily in Bloomington. And I know the City Council is actively involved in conversations with the County about the hotel acquisition that the County has planned, but I don't know that we, the committee, hasn't been talking about that because it hasn't been brought forward as a budget impact, either positive or negative, for the budget. I think the county's decision to use their cares act money to go buy that hotel started happening after we got pretty far down the road of doing this process.</p>
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