The Government Transition Advisory Committee's

Engagement Report

August 2024

This report summarizes the internal and external input on the Government Transition Advisory Committee's draft recommendations for the City of Portland's future leaders.

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1. Introduction

This report summarizes internal and external input gathered on the Government Transition Advisory Committee's (GTAC) Draft recommendations to our future City leaders. From June 14 to August 12, 2024, GTAC and the City's Transition Team hosted an online survey, two community listening sessions, five policy discussions with organizations representing communities historically left out of City Hall decision-making, and 16 internal City feedback briefings (seen in Table 1).

2. Who we heard from

Table 1. Method and engagement numbers.

Method	Engagement
Survey Responses	**403 respondents**
Listening Sessions • Listening Session #1 (June 25) • Listening Session #2 (August 1)	**70 attendees**
Policy Discussions • Multnomah Youth Commission (July 10) • Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization (July 11) • Latino Network (July 12) • Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (July 25) • Imagine Black (August 2)	**5 policy discussions**
Internal City Feedback • Transition Team (June 4 and July 16) • City consultant on the new City budget process roles and responsibilities (June 5) • Council Operations Team: Council Clerk, Mayor's City Council & Process Policy Advisor, Transition Team members (June 10) • Future budget process project input open house (June 12) • 311 (June 13) • Commissioner Ryan's Office (June 25) • Central Communications Team (June 25) • Mayor's Office and Interim City Administrator (June 28) • Office of Community & Civic Life (July 1) • Commissioner Gonzalez's Office (July 2) • Commissioner Rubio's Office (July 9) • City Budget Office (July 10) • Commissioner Mapps' Office (August 6) • Office of Equity & Human Rights Disability Equity Division (August 8) • Council Operations Manager (August 12)	**16 internal feedback opportunities**

Demographic data was collected from the online survey and the participants of the listening sessions that completed a closing survey. Additionally, people who participate in government engagement processes are traditionally a specific subsection of the larger Portland community. Therefore, additional feedback was gathered from community-based organizations representing communities historically left out of City Hall decision-making.

Table 2. Demographic information from survey responders and listening session attendees in comparison to Portland. *Note: Percentages were calculated after missing responses were discarded. Totals for each prompt question also reflect the remaining sample size after missing responses were discarded. This methodology differs from the July engagement report, which did not account for missing responses.*

	Portland Population	Survey Responses (#)	Survey Responses (%)	Listening Sessions (#)	Listening Sessions (%)
Total		**N=259**		**N= 40**	
District 1	24.4%[1]	42	16.2%	14	35.0%
District 2	24.6%	85	32.8%	7	17.5%
District 3	25.7%	52	20.1%	6	15%
District 4	25.2%	80	30.9%	13	32.5%
Total		**N=276**			
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.60%[2]	2	0.7%	0	0.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.7%[3]	6	2.2%	2	5.0%
Asian	8.0%[4]	14	5.1%	4	10.0%
Latine/x or Hispanic	11.1%[5]	8	2.9%	2	5.0%
Black or African American	5.7%[6]	8	2.9%	1	2.5%
White	66.40%[7]	209	75.7%	32	80.0%
Middle Eastern/ North African	1.02%[8]	7	2.6%	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	-	30	10.9%	3	7.5%

[1] All District data sourced from: U.S. Census Bureau. 2020 Census Block Enumerations—Total Population. Accessed from the Independent District Commission's District R online mapping tool.
[2] 2Census Bureau. 2020 Census Block Enumerations—Total Population by Race/Ethnicity. Accessed from the Independent District Commission's District R online mapping tool.
[3] Census Bureau. 2020 Census Block Enumerations.
[4] Census Bureau. 2020 Census Block Enumerations.
[5] Census Bureau. 2020 Census Block Enumerations.
[6] Census Bureau. 2020 Census Block Enumerations.
[7] Census Bureau. 2020 Census Block Enumerations
[8] Portland Insights Survey: Report of Findings. 2022.

Total		**N=264**			
People with disabilities	23.5%[9]	67	25.4%	8	20.0%
Immigrants and refugees	13.5%[10]	18	6.8%	3	7.5%
Non-English speaking	8.1%[11]	6	2.3%	0	0.0%
People under age 25	23.92%[12]	5	1.9%	0	0.0%
Houseless Portlanders	1%[13]	7	2.7%	4	10.0%
People who live east of 82nd Avenue	27%[14]	32	12.1%	8	20.0%
LGBTQIA+	6%[15]	74	28%	2	5.0%
None	-	88	33.3%	18	45.0%
Prefer not to say	-	39	14.5%	2	5.0%
Total		N=**280**			
People who served on a City advisory body	-	51	18.2%	6	15.0%
Total		**N=280**			
People who have interacted with Portland's City Council	-	184	65.7%	35	87.5%
Total		**N=281**			
City Employees	-	28	10%	18	45.0%
Total		**N=279**			
Candidates for City office	-	3	1.1%	2	5.0%

[9] Oregon Disability & Health Data and Statistics. Oregon Office on Disability and Health, Oregon Health & Science University. Available at: https://www.ohsu.edu/oregon-office-on-disability-and-health/oregon-disability-healthdata-and-statistics

[10] Portland Insights Survey. Report of Findings. 2022.

[11] Language Pay Differential. Portland Bureau of Human Resources, City of Portland. Last accessed 4.15.2024.

[12] U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table ACSST1Y2022.S0101 - Age and Sex for Portland, Oregon. Retrieved from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S0101?q=age%20population%20portland%20oregon

[13] 3 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2023). 2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress - Part 1. Available at: https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2023-AHAR-Part-1.pdf

[14] U.S. Census Bureau. 2020 Census Block Enumerations—Total Population. Accessed from the Independent District Commission's District R online mapping tool.

[15] Portland Office of Equity. (2024). LGBTQIA2S Strategic Plan. Available at: https://www.portland.gov/officeofequity/documents/lgbtqia2s-strategic-plan/download

3. Findings

Findings are organized by the five categories of GTAC's draft recommendations:

- Accessing City Council and City Services,
- Accessing City Councilors,
- Participating in City Council Decision-Making,
- Participating in the City Budget Process, and
- Setting up Council Committees in the New Government Structure.

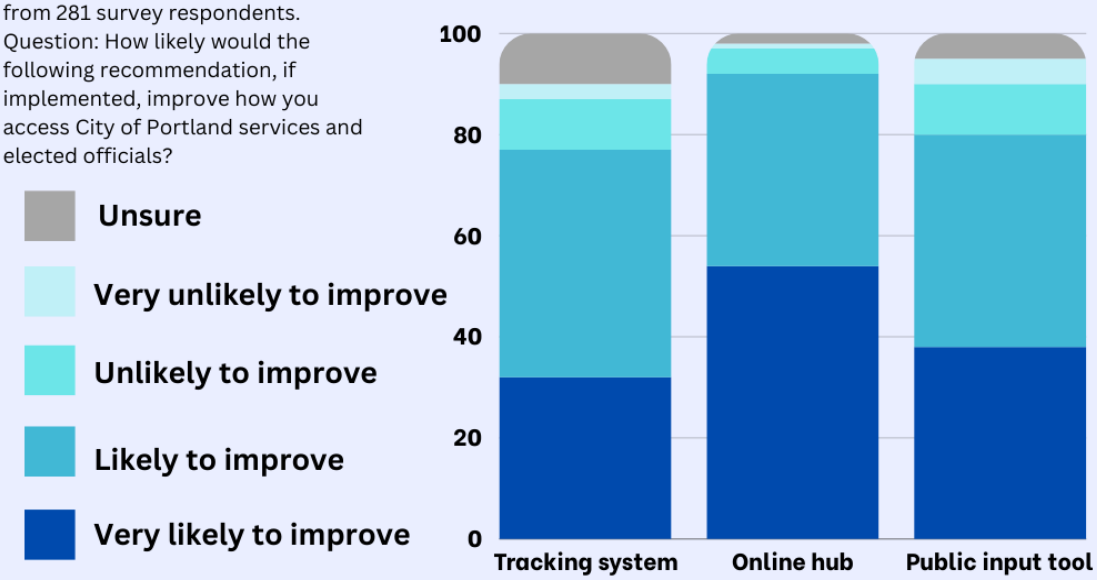
This section summarizes general themes and suggestions shared in the engagement period.

3.1. Accessing City Council and City Services

As demonstrated in Figure 1 (below), 32% of survey responses (90 people) indicated that a tracking system for all city requests is very likely to improve access to City of Portland services and elected officials. 45% of responses (126 people) indicated that this system would likely improve access. The recommendation for a tracking system is associated with the highest level of uncertainty, with 10% of responses (27 people) unsure if this system would improve access. The recommendation for an online hub for City Council and Council Committee activities received the highest level of support, with 54% of responses (152 people) indicating that this recommendation is very likely to improve access, and 38% of responses (105 people) indicating that it is likely to improve access. 38% of responses (107 people) indicated that a citywide public input tool is very likely to improve access, and 42% of responses (117 people) indicated that it would likely improve access. The recommendation for a citywide public input tool received the highest level of skepticism among the three suggested systems, with 5% of responses (13 people) indicating that it is very unlikely to improve access to City of Portland services and elected officials.

FIGURE 1

Figure 1: Online Survey Responses from 281 survey respondents. Question: How likely would the following recommendation, if implemented, improve how you access City of Portland services and elected officials?



3.1.1. Tracking System for all city questions or requests

Feedback from the online survey, Multnomah Youth Commission, and Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) expressed a desire to see the tracking system incorporate updates on where that inquiry or request was in the process to add a level of accountability and improve the sense of responsiveness. Alternatively, Latino Network suggested the tracking system could be internally facing, tracking these inquires within existing channels. Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) proposed that utilizing existing resources like 311 could track submissions. The tracking system should be accessible in a variety of different languages. Imagine Black suggested that demographic information be collected from those who utilize this service to measure any gaps that may exist in the community. This group also suggested that the public should not be able to view others' submissions to ensure privacy.

Survey respondents and listening session participants had generally positive reactions to the recommendation for a tracking system for all city questions or requests. Comments from both sources suggested the tracking system should ensure it allows feedback on all aspects of city operations and ensure appropriate citywide protocols are in place to be responsive to the many types of input received, e.g. policy, public safety requests, service disruptions, etc.

Listening session participants expressed concern about whether constituent feedback would translate into decision-making on the part of city council. Further, there was confusion about if the intent of this system is to inform decision-making at all, or if it is to simply request City services, for which current systems like 311 are known. Some concerns among survey respondents regarding the tracking system included poor quality feedback. Given the kinds of remarks anecdotally observed on City social media accounts, the system could be overwhelmed with spam, inappropriate or threatening comments. Staff monitoring these accounts would also need to know how to respond accordingly. There was also a question regarding the level of anonymity that this system would entail, with support for and against providing the constituent's information. Additionally, more information regarding how requests would be triaged and prioritized was requested. For example, one respondent wanted to know whether an issue reported by several constituents would be given more priority than a one-off comment. Survey feedback also indicated that a tracking system should not replace direct contact between councilors and constituents, such as phone calls or face-to-face meetings. Overall, while respondents wanted clarification on these topics, they still felt favorably regarding a tracking system and its potential.

Feedback from internal city groups shared that a tracking system could improve the current system where an email is often acknowledged when it is received but not followed up on. At the same time, internal City groups questioned the capacity and obligation of staff to respond to every inquiry. These conversations also flagged the need to integrate the tracking system with the existing 311 software Zendesk. There is some concern about the cost and scope of implementation to accomplish this. Internal City groups suggested that the recommendation for a tracking system also incorporate a process to stay aligned on constituent issues with District Coalition Offices and the Office of Civic Life. Some suggested the Office of Civic Life have a direct channel to the city administrator that funnels all non-city related service requests to the city council.

3.1.2. Online Hub for City Council and Council Committee Activities

The recommendation for an online hub for city council and council committee activities had the greatest support in the online survey for the Accessing City Council and City Services portion of the recommendations. As seen in Figure 1. 55% of survey responses (152 people) indicated the recommendation would very likely improve access due to greater transparency, accountability, and accessibility of information. Many surveyors expressed a hope that the proposed hub would be simple, up-to-date, robust, and easy to navigate. Finally, those who were not optimistic about the recommendation were satisfied with the current system and questioned the need for improvements to the website.

IRCO appreciated that the online hub would make their existing efforts tracking advisory committees, boards, and commissions online easier. IRCO and Latino Network appreciated

that the online hub might make it easier to skim the agenda, meeting summaries, and packet materials. Latino Network, along with survey respondents, suggested the online hub have easy search functions for old resolutions, agenda, and other documents (similar to Multnomah County) and the ability to download the full packet for meetings (similar to Metro). APANO also suggested that Portland follow the lead of other cities when it comes to how they disseminate this information. This group also emphasized catering to the average busy Portlander by providing straightforward information on an interactive platform. Internal City groups identified that Central Communications is already working on a Portland.gov/CityCouncil section of the website. This will have information on how council works, how to engage, and a specific page for city councilors nested within. Internal City groups gave additional feedback regarding web accessibility, asking for consideration of document accessibility (ADA Title II and WCAG 2.1 guidelines). Accessibility should mean easy to navigate, simple, plain language in compliance with ADA title II.

3.1.3. Citywide Public Input Tool

38% of survey respondents (107 people) indicated the citywide public input tool would very likely improve access, demonstrated in Figure 1. 42% of respondents (117 people) indicated that the citywide tool would likely improve access. The survey responses expressed some concern about the cost of implementation and maintenance as well as the staff capacity needed for this recommendation. An additional concern is that this system might become overwhelmed with requests, leading to backlogs and unresponsiveness. Like with the tracking system, respondents are concerned with backlogs due to poor quality feedback (spam, angry comments, etc.). Without an official system of tracking, a public input tool may create low levels of accountability for responding to comments, or unpopular feedback may be disregarded.

Latino Network expressed similar concerns about balancing the goal of consolidation with overloading information. The group suggested implementing the ability to subscribe to certain calendars like in Google to streamline different events to different audiences. Latino Network also suggested the City should publish what was collected through an engagement opportunity. The Multnomah Youth Commission suggested the public input tool should allow others to see the comments so people could know what others are saying and how many people are invested in certain ideas.

In the listening sessions, some of the participants thought these recommendations would help transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. Some participants highlighted the need for a public input tool before a tracking system for all questions and requests. There was also interest in how such a system would work within multi-member districts. In other words, participants wanted to know if they should direct their concerns to one specific councilor, all the councilors in their district, or the council at large. More insight into the scope of feedback that can be conveyed to a councilor is desired.

Listening session participants also highlighted that the public input tool doesn't address the root of the issues limiting access to city councilors, like fluency in English and pre-existing engagement in government. The public input tool also relies on people having connectivity at home with digital devices, making it challenging for seniors or people with limited access to technology. It was suggested that a special system be put in place for seniors who may have trouble accessing the internet or adequately hearing on the telephone. Some participants expressed frustration with existing systems, such as existing government websites and 311, and suggested that these systems be overhauled if they are to be utilized by the new government structure. Providing a how-to video on accessing public input tools may increase ease of access. Overall, more information on what these tools may entail was requested. Conducting surveys after these tools are implemented may help participants provide additional feedback.

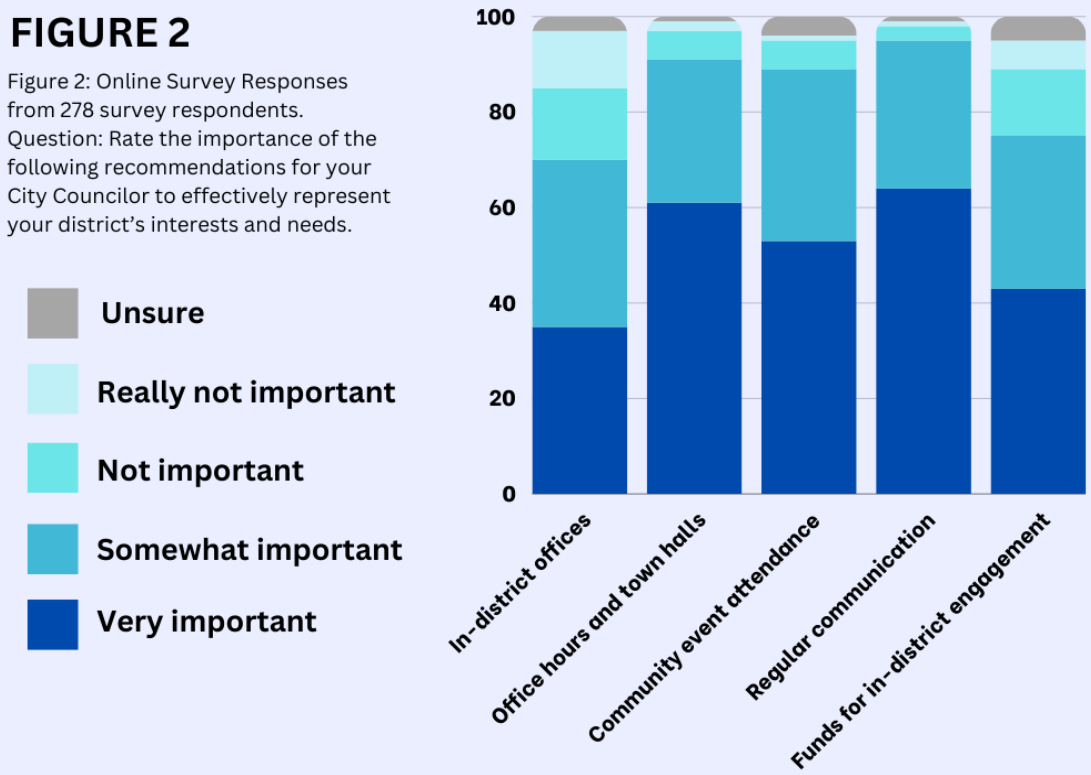
The internal City groups suggested the Community Engagement Officer should oversee a public input tool like this. Some groups suggested this tool could look like a central website page under Portland.gov/engage for all open survey options, funding opportunities, and the feedback collected from those opportunities. In addition, this data would be easier to track if the Bureau of Technology Services would standardize the survey software the City can use. Internal city groups suggested the recommendations should elaborate on the differences between the public input tool and tracking system for city council, and further distinguish the legislator's role in responding to constituent relations versus a City bureaucrat’s role in responding to service area inquiries for these recommended tools. Groups also noted that the government transition is an opportunity to de-silo and go away from the bureau-by-bureau approach on many points. Accessibility to council and information, as well as meetings and input opportunities would be very helpful outcomes of transition-related preparation.

3.2. Accessing City Councilors

As demonstrated in Figure 2 (below), councilors providing regular, predictable communication received the most robust support in the online survey, with 64% of responses (178 people) indicating that this recommendation is very important. The recommendation for councilors to hold regular office hours and town halls received the second highest level of support, with 61% of responses (170 people) indicating that it is very important. 53% of responses (147 people) indicated very strong support for councilors attending community events, and 43% (118 people) indicated very strong support for setting aside funds for in-district engagement. 36% of responses (58 people) indicated very strong support for in-district offices, which had the highest rate of non-importance among all recommendations for effective representation. 15% of responses (43 people) indicated that in-district offices are not important, and 12% (33 people) indicated that they are really not important.

FIGURE 2

Figure 2: Online Survey Responses from 278 survey respondents. Question: Rate the importance of the following recommendations for your City Councilor to effectively represent your district's interests and needs.



3.2.1. District Offices

Survey comments noted that district offices would improve accessibility, but many encouraged the recommendation to focus on specific assessments of what each district needs rather than a uniform approach across all districts. For example, it may be appropriate for District 1 to have an in-district office given its distance from downtown, as oppose to District 4, which already is in close proximity to existing government buildings. Listening session participants agreed and proposed a Westside and Eastside office in lieu of three separate offices for districts 1-3. Overall, the recommendation for district offices did not receive as high of support as others, as many of the comments noted their concerns about cost. Survey respondents expressed a desire to utilize existing community spaces, like libraries, and virtual technology tools to be more cost-effective. Others suggested that keeping all councilors within the proximity of a single building may facilitate greater collaboration. Listening session participants suggested that there be both in-person and remote opportunities to meet with councilors.

Attendees of the listening session and Latino Network noted the barrier of cost, but expressed their belief that district offices are important, and the other recommendations don't replace the need for them. Multnomah Youth Commission and IRCO groups suggested rotating council meetings between districts, while utilizing intergovernmental spaces like high school gymnasiums and auditoriums. Acknowledging that rotating satellite City Hall may be infeasible, IRCO also recommended the City establish places where community members can go to in East Portland to watch the council meetings. Internal City Groups stressed the importance of office accessibility, noting that anyone who wants to be able to meet in person should be able to.

3.2.2. City Councilors holding regular office hours and town halls

61% of online survey respondents (170 people) agreed that it is very important that city councilors hold regular office hours and town halls, demonstrated in Figure 2. Responders suggest these can be held in places where community members already gather, such as community centers and public spaces, instead of centralized or permanent district offices. Survey respondents also suggested GTAC have concrete numbers for regular office hours and town halls or suggestions built-in, so there are clear expectations Having appointment times available outside of regular business hours to accommodate constituents' work responsibilities was also suggested. Finally, some of the survey respondents were concerned that these events will always be inaccessible and might open city councilors up to hearing predominantly from special interests. Listening session participants agreed, stating that the same people tend to take up these spaces, and even when community feedback is given, business interests take precedent.

3.2.3. City Councilors attending community events in districts

53% of survey respondents (147 people) indicated it is very important for city councilors to attend community events, demonstrated in Figure 2. APANO suggested making it best practice for city councilors to attend at least one community per quarter. Participants at the listening sessions and many online survey responses indicated that attending events is an important place to start introductions and understand community needs, even if it's not the best way for community members to express formal requests. Survey responders added some concern that simply attending events could become a check the box activity or turn into ongoing campaigning versus effective engagement opportunities. To increase the accountability of effective engagement, IRCO suggested the online hub include the community events councilors attend, and communities effectively engaged through city councilors' outreach. Imagine Black was interested to know if councilors will attend events throughout the City, or just events in their districts. The Community Engagement Officer may be able to assist with the former. Some survey respondents also note that attendance at community events should not supersede governing responsibilities or councilor work-life balance.

3.2.4. Provide regular, predictable communications through newsletters, social media, and website

64% of survey responses (178 people) indicated strong support for regular and predictable communications from their councilors, demonstrated in Figure 2. Many commenters prefer timely versus regular updates. Preferred methods of communication were newsletters and social media updates. Online survey respondents and internal City groups expressed a desire for single, combined communications rather than multiple parallel setups from each councilor. A single council newsletter could include district specific issues, therefore encouraging councilors to be familiar with issues citywide and requiring less staff capacity. Internal City groups stressed the importance of coordinating a council newsletter with the ongoing newsletter from the Office of Community and Civic Life.

3.2.5. Set aside funds for in-district engagement opportunities such as town halls

The need for in-district engagement has strong support, however, some survey responses question if there should be set-aside funds for this. Some believe this effort should be included in existing engagement budgets. Other surveyors supported set-aside funds to ensure engagement happened in multiple languages and has ASL interpreters at the meetings. Others noted that equity in engagement meant that all districts might not require the same amount of funding for engagement. Latino Network expressed their support for additional community engagement about district offices. The group

encouraged the engagement to envision the offices as community assets, that the council happens to work out of sometimes.

Some of the internal City groups thought the future council should make this decision with a realistic cost estimate in front of them. Internal groups recommended GTAC provide more information on how this engagement would be funded. These groups suggested a few paths for funding, like the city council identifying a project manager who scopes the project and needed funding, and then council directs funding and sets a timeline. Others recommended funding from the mayor's proposed budget. The groups recommended GTAC prioritize these recommendations due to the fiscally constrained environment.

3.2.6. Other Recommendations

Listening session participants suggested city councilors would need additional staff capacity to achieve all the engagement recommendations GTAC has outlined. Survey respondents expressed similar sentiment, citing a need for more support staff and robust support for councilors. Survey respondents also stressed that regular, transparent, and timely communication is crucial year-round and not just at election time. Using newsletters, emails, and surveys can help keep constituents informed and gather feedback. Ensure communication is not just promotional but addresses real issues and provides solutions. Keep constituents looped in on relevant topics and issues that are up for vote. Another suggestion was to combine the recommendations regarding councilors' presence in their districts, suggesting district offices can host town halls, office hours, and community events. Information about these events can be disseminated through newsletters. Finally, feedback from the online survey, listening session, and IRCO suggested the recommendations provide guidance on how the three district councilors should coordinate between themselves on in-district efforts.

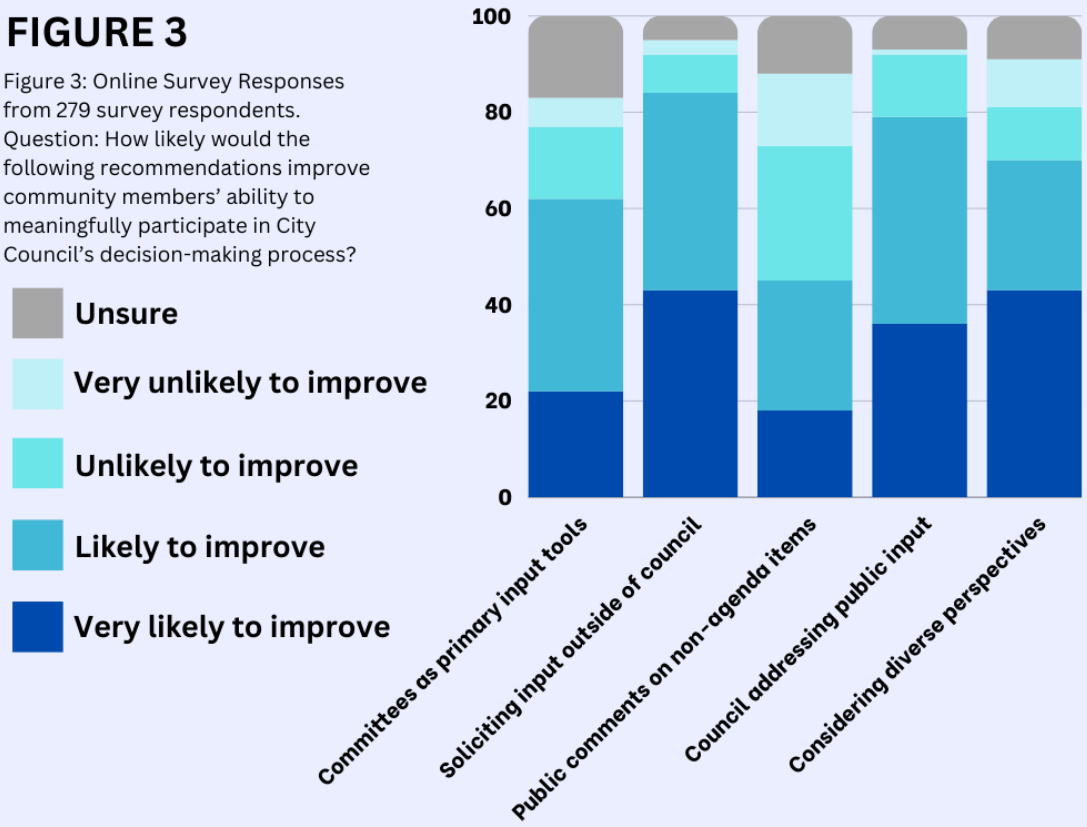
3.3. Participating in City Council Decision-Making

As demonstrated in Figure 3 (below), soliciting input outside of council through neighborhood meetings, townhalls, office hours, surveys, and social media platforms received the most robust support among survey respondents. 43% of responses (122 people) indicated that this recommendation is very likely to improve community members' ability to meaningfully participate in city council's decision-making process, and 41% of responses (115 people) indicated that it is likely to improve the ability to participate. 43% of responses (119 people) indicated that ensuring diverse perspectives are heard is very likely to improve the ability to participate, and 27% (74 people) indicated that it is likely to improve participation. 35% of responses (98 people) indicated that reporting on and addressing public input during decision-making is very likely to improve participation, and 43% (119 people) found it to be likely. Council using committees as the primary venue for public input and expert involvement instead of full council meetings received the highest level of uncertainty of all recommendations pertaining to meaningful participation in

decision-making, with 17% of responses (47) people indicating that they are unsure if this recommendation would improve the ability to participate. 22% of responses (62 people) indicated that this recommendation is very likely to improve participation. Allowing an opportunity for public comment on items not on city council's agenda during full city council meetings received the highest degree of skepticism, with 15% of responses (43 people) indicating that this recommendation is very unlikely to improve the ability to participate. 18% of responses (51 people) indicated that this recommendation is very likely to improve participation.

FIGURE 3

Figure 3: Online Survey Responses from 279 survey respondents. Question: How likely would the following recommendations improve community members' ability to meaningfully participate in City Council's decision-making process?



3.3.1 Council using committees as the primary venue for public input and expert involvement instead of full council meetings

Some survey respondents expressed concern over council committees as the primary venue for public input, fearing the complication of committees could become barriers rather than facilitators for public input. Others expressed concern that committees may serve special interests rather than the community. There was mixed feedback regarding meeting exclusivity, with some support for making them public forums while others advocating for private spaces. Private meetings may lead to a lack of transparency;

however, they may be more productive if time is not usurped by heated members of the public. Having limits on how long outside attendees can speak may mitigate this potential issue. One respondent requested that if these meetings are to be recorded, they could be uploaded to YouTube with open comments for viewer feedback.

Some participants at listening sessions expressed similar sentiments in their concern that tracking the council process with so many city councilors would be challenging for people. Others think that public input should be given primarily in committees so folks will have more time to speak to more specific policies. Listening session and internal City group participants suggested clarifying how all councilors would stay informed on public input shared in committee meetings. APANO requested more information on the functions of committees and suggested that they focus on specific topics, leaving general matters to regular council meetings. The internal City groups suggested the recommendations include a tabulated summary of public comments to be presented to the full council to ensure all city councilors are aware of comments.

IRCO suggested city council should allow more time for public comments for those that need to account for interpretation time. Additionally, allowing public testimonies to be submitted via videos like at the state legislature, would make it more accessible for those who cannot make the meeting, and writing testimonies is a barrier.

3.3.2. Solicit input outside of council through neighborhood meetings, town halls, office hours, surveys, and social media platforms

Soliciting input outside of council had the highest two rankings of importance in the Participating in City Council Decision-Making recommendations. Survey respondents noted favorable feelings for soliciting input through social media and surveys. Some notes regarding accessibility included only attracting activists or folks already engaged in local politics. It was also recommended that there is follow-up to this feedback so constituents know that it is being acted upon.

Some listening session participants supported this recommendation for soliciting input as it would reduce the amount of time community needs to spend in council meetings, which can be a barrier to participation. For example, many working Portlanders may not be able to attend council meetings due to time conflicts. Imagine Black also considered time conflicts among the most impacted community members to be a serious concern. Listening session participants also noted this recommendation still does not address all accessibility issues or provide recommendations on how much time councilors should give to inform community on items before the decision-making process. There was also concern among participants that there would be backroom meetings with people who hold more power and influence.

Internal City groups noted that soliciting input on agenda items falls into public meeting law, which requires it to be accessible to everyone. However, if the council wants to solicit input on general, non-agenda topics this could be done without all the other requirements, except not having a quorum in attendance. Internal City groups suggested GTAC provide greater clarity and examples of intent of this recommendation.

3.3.3. Allowing an opportunity for public comment on items not on City Council's agenda during full City Council meetings

Allowing an opportunity for public comment on non-agenda related items was the lowest ranked recommendation in the Participating in City Council Decision-Making recommendations in the online survey and listening session poll. However, additional comments from both groups recognized that non-agenda-related items are an opportunity to organize people and bring up issues not on the council's radar or reluctant to address. Listening session participants noted that speaking in front of a government body is especially impactful. Many internal City groups expressed the importance of non-agenda item public comments in full council meetings. These groups suggested increasing the time allocated to 30-minutes in the new city council meeting structure as there will be fewer overall council meetings. Survey respondents also supported considerations for time and suggested preparedness for handling combative or self-serving feedback. Listening session participants also considered time to be a relevant factor, suggesting that the period for public comment on non-agenda items be expanded, and more equitable approaches to signing up for time blocks be developed to prevent the oversaturation of certain interests. Overall, more information on what this process would look like was requested.

3.3.4. Ensuring diverse perspectives and lived experiences are considered in decision-making processes and that communities historically left out of City Hall decision-making are meaningfully included

Online survey respondents expressed some support for the recommendation to ensure diverse and lived experiences are considered in decision-making processes. Some responses indicated their preference for council committees to include non-elected residents as non-voting members to ensure diverse input and representation. Other survey respondents, listening session participants, and internal City groups noted that committees should reflect most voters in each district to avoid skewed outcomes or special interest groups. Internal City groups also expressed concern that adding additional representation might create greater access for special interest groups. Listening session participants are concerned that there is a lack of faith in utilizing City Hall to achieve progress. According to some participants, there should be a greater effort to attract folks who do not usually engage in local politics. There is optimism that having three councilors in each district will improve representation.

3.3.5. Other Recommendations

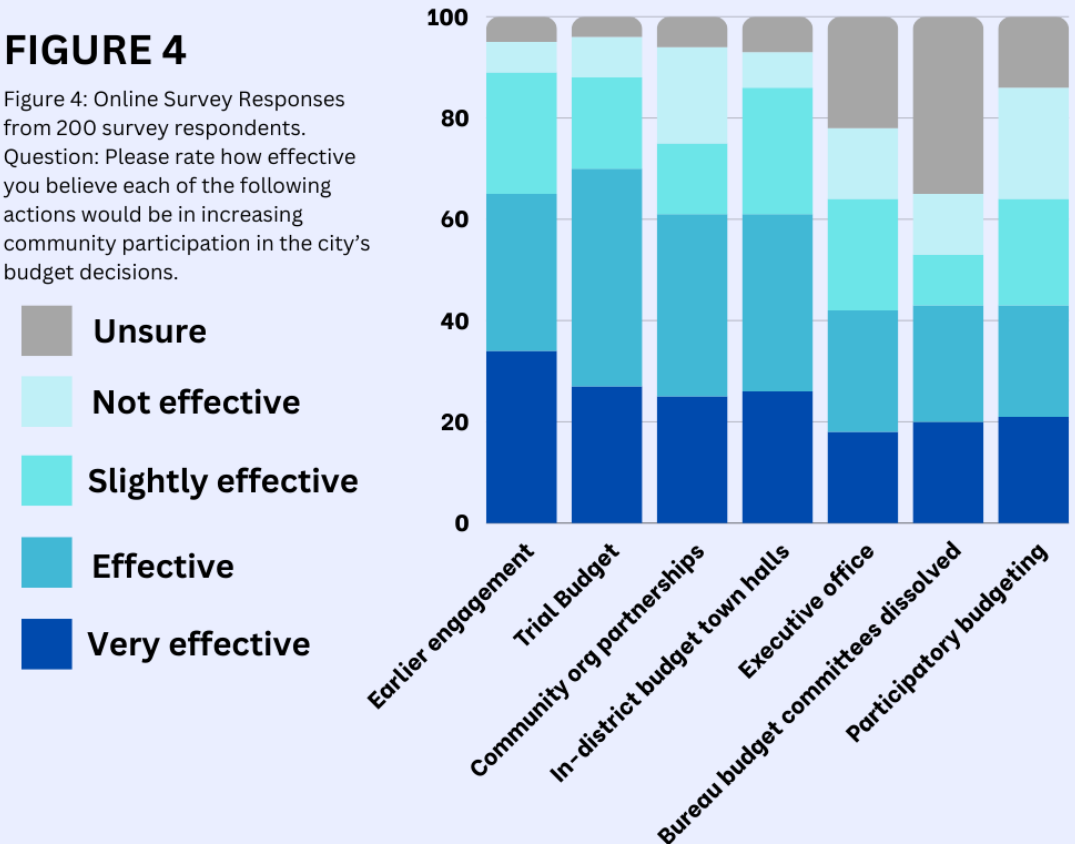
Internal City groups noted that State law and city code already require city council meetings to be hybrid and that does not need to be part of the recommendation. Internal City groups and the Multnomah Youth Commission expressed their support for council meetings rotating between districts and between the daytime and evenings. However, internal City groups flagged that this recommendation might cause labor issues due to the staffing needs involved. Internal City groups also had concerns regarding accessibility. Councilors should get in the habit of automatically having ASL during meetings as it can be hard to request accommodation beforehand. Adequate resources need to be available as people request accommodations. For those that want to join the day of and do not have enough time to request accommodations, a shorter window should be stated. These efforts will communicate to people that their participation is welcomed. Internal City groups would also like to see clear standards and expectations for all city staff on notice of meetings. Notice should be sent well in advance and documents should be accessible. Standards and expectations should be clearly written for city staff to follow. It is felt that this consistency is currently lacking.

3.4. Participating in the City's Budget Process

As demonstrated in Figure 4 (below), starting engagement earlier in the budget process with multiple ways of providing input received the most robust support among all recommendations for increasing community participation in the budget process. 34% of responses (69 people) indicated that this recommendation would be very effective, and 31% (63 people) indicated that it would be effective. 27% of responses (55 people) indicated that releasing an early "trial budget" as a baseline for early public engagement would be very effective, and 43% (86 people) indicated that it would be effective. 26% of responses (53 people) and 35% (70 people) indicated that hosting in-district budget town halls would be very effective or effective, respectively. 25% of responses (51 people) indicated that partnering with community organizations would be very effective, and 36% of responses (72 people) indicated that it would be effective. 21% of responses (42 people) indicated that exploring engagement through participatory budgeting would be very effective. Having an executive-level office, like the City Administrator's office, oversee community engagement in the budget process received the highest rate of skepticism among all recommendations regarding increasing community participation in the city's budget process, with 14% of responses (29 people) indicating that it would not be effective. 19% of responses (36 people) indicated that it would be very effective. Dissolving bureau-specific budget advisory committees, exploring service area advisory committees, and assessing and revisiting the citywide community budget advisory board received the highest rate of uncertainty among these recommendations, with 36% of responses (71 people) indicating that they are unsure of it would be effective. 20% of responses (40 people) indicated that this recommendation would be very effective.

FIGURE 4

Figure 4: Online Survey Responses from 200 survey respondents. Question: Please rate how effective you believe each of the following actions would be in increasing community participation in the city's budget decisions.



3.4.1. Start engagement earlier in the budget process with multiple ways of providing input

Demonstrated in Figure 4, online survey respondents indicated earlier engagement through multiple avenues and releasing an early trial budget were the two most effective recommendations for increasing community participation in the budget process. Listening session participants expressed the importance of participatory budgeting and promoting budget education to ensure meaningful and informed community feedback. More education on basic budget information is needed to understand if a program is being funded or if that funding is enough for the program to succeed. The listening sessions and online survey also emphasized the importance of communicating the tradeoffs early in the budget development process. Listening session participants recommended a briefing on the budget process where council can communicate how much money is available and what the council is grappling with.

APANO agreed that releasing the budget earlier is ideal. The implications for the budget as the role of the city council changes was a point of concern. The Multnomah Youth Commission suggested outreach be done through high schools and to ensure the time of these budget education efforts be inclusive of those in school. The group suggested an advisory body oversee the suggested community readers guide to the budget to ensure

accessible expectations were clear from the onset. The group also suggested the budget readers guide follow a similar style as the Transition Team's voter education comic, which engaged a lot of youth. Imagine Black suggested that notes be taken at budget-related meetings and shared with the public.

Internal City groups suggested public input to city council be intentionally tied to the budget milestones. These groups also suggested the GTAC recommendation clarify the different types of engagement needed throughout the budget process. For example, the City Budget Office has traditionally used tools like the Insight Survey and focus groups to understand general priorities from average Portlanders that inform the early stages of the budget process. Additionally, internal City groups suggested a two-year budget cycle would allow for earlier engagement than the current annual cycle.

3.4.2. Partner with community-based organizations and, if appropriate, City advisory bodies to increase community engagement in the budget process

25% of responses (51 people) indicated that partnering with community organizations would be very effective, and 36% of responses (72 people) indicated that it would be effective. 47% of listening session attendees (7 people) indicated their interest in exploring alternative community budget advisory board options, demonstrated in Figure 4. IRCO expressed the challenges in engaging hard-to-reach community in outreach with significant legal and policy-heavy language and suggested community-based organizations could be helpful partners. Imagine Black suggested that demographic information be collected at budget-related meetings to measure if certain populations are being neglected and need further outreach. This group also proposed that plans be articulated first, and then funding should be procured. External partnerships could be beneficial for capacity reasons, as internal City groups noted the limitations of the City Budget Office's staff capacity to start engagement before late September or early October. Additional capacity is needed for the City Budget Office to hold bureaus accountable for greater early engagement.

3.4.3. Host budget town halls in district

26% of responses (53 people) indicated that hosting in-district budget town halls would be very effective. Listening session participants suggested that this concept be included in the recommendations on communication tools for budget process as well. Communicating how much of the budget is locked-in—salaries, pension payments, long-term obligations—will aid in meaningful participation in town halls, as will the sharing of a budget timeline. That way, town hall attendees can share the most relevant testimonies possible rather than elaborate on matters that may be moot. Internal City groups support the recommendation and suggest the town halls have consistent expectations for reporting community feedback and bringing it back into decision-making processes.

3.4.4. Have an executive-level office, like the City Administrator's office, oversee community engagement in the budget process

19% of survey responses (36 people) indicated that having an executive-level office, like the City Administrator's office, oversee community engagement in the budget process would be very effective. This recommendation received the highest rate of doubt in its effectiveness, with 14% of responses (29 people) indicating that it would not be effective. 53% of listening session attendees (8 people) indicated their preference to have the City Administrator's Office oversee community engagement in the budget process, demonstrated in in Figure 4. This mixed feedback is also reflected in participants' qualitative responses: if the goal is to engage the community broadly and early, then this recommendation is positive, but if the goal is agency budget development, then it could be negative. The city administrator must commit to engagement and not just a commitment to efficient administration of public agencies. Internal City groups suggested mapping out how this consolidated engagement process would be coordinated with the new Community Engagement Officer, the Office of Community and Civic Life, We Are Better Together, Community Organizations Active in Disaster, and bureaus that have existing engagement teams. These groups questioned whether engagement in the budget process should be overseen by the City Administrator's Office with access to coordinate across these areas and access to Central Communications staff, or the Budget and Finance Service Area that has the relationships and subject matter expertise needed.

3.4.5. Dissolve bureau-specific budget advisory committees, explore service are advisory committees, and assess and revisit the citywide community budget advisory board

36% of survey responses (71 people) indicated they were unsure that dissolving bureau-specific budget advisory groups would increase participation in the budget process, as seen in Figure 4. Internal City groups noted the uneven effectiveness of the existing budget advisory committees. These groups suggested the City clarify the role and authority of an advisory body, acknowledging they are like a consultant rather than a decision-makers. Service area advisory bodies could provide community engagement, engage in strategic planning efforts, and provide oversight throughout the engagement process. Additionally, internal groups noted that advisory bodies that serve year-round have reported greater participation satisfaction. Finally, these groups suggested a citywide assessment of advisory bodies in general before further actions.

3.4.6. Budget Process Communication Tools

The most popular budget process communication tool among survey respondents was enhancing the budget website by sharing data in a public-friendly way, highlighting key information, and summarizing areas for public input. 44% of responses (88 people) indicated that this tool would be very effective. Survey respondents also highly valued

providing information in other languages than English, with 44% (88 people) indicating that this recommendation would be very effective. Interactive, game-like activities or tools received the lowest level of support, with 13% of responses (25 people) indicating that this recommendation would be very effective, and 27% (54 people) indicating this it would not be effective.

Listening session attendees noted that effective budget engagement will require communication tools that break down the budget and explain it in terms that an average person can understand. Attendees provided concrete examples for explaining the budget, like how many potholes, how much longer their commute will be, what percent of our budget is spent on public safety. Some also recommended using standard budget communication tools that businesses use to help standardize financial information.

Listening session participants noted a disconnect between the council and the budget process. They suggested councilors should prioritize communication on the key issues and important budget decisions. Participants also noted a disconnect between the community and the budget process. They advocated for education that demystifies the budget, as well as for community conversations in which funding needs can be evaluated. Internal City groups noted the City Budget Office is already planning on doing more robust communication on budget 101 and emphasizing budget education early on. These groups suggested GTAC prioritize the set of recommended communication tools. Internal City groups also had a question regarding the role of the Deputy City Administrators in budget engagement. It was noted that direct engagement with the Deputy City Administrators is needed because they do a lot of the groundwork on the budget and have a lot of operational control. There was also concern that established union representation on various bureau budget advisory committees may be diluted. It was also stressed that representation is ensured. For example, for matters involving public works, including disabled individuals would provide important perspectives.

3.5. Setting up Council Committees in the New Government Structure

Feedback on setting up city council committees was largely grouped into topics around committee structure and focus, operating rules and procedures, and community engagement.

Listening session participants noted the legislative focus of the current committee topics was unclear. Participants suggested defining the legislative responsibilities versus the administrative role for each committee topic. For example, some participants questioned the extent of legislative action items for the Climate and Sustainability committee versus the executive government's role in this topic. Other participants recommended Community Development and Community Engagement should be combined into one committee.

Listening session attendees and internal City groups expressed a desire to see committee topics align with a strategic plan's action items. Internal City groups suggested the recommendation on clear and measurable goals should be broadened to council developing a strategic plan and each committee should have responsibility for a piece of that overall plan. These groups expressed that committees are reactive to work brought forward by staff in many ways and creating measurable goals might be challenging, especially without a city-wide strategic plan that both council and staff can work toward. Internal City groups expressed differing opinions on the suggested number of committees, though many noted the current budget only allows for four committees. Internal city groups questioned whether the recommendation that each councilor to be a committee chair and vice chair was the best use of varied skills. These groups instead suggested these roles be based on experience, skills and interest.

Some internal City groups and Latino Network suggested that council committees be aligned with service areas. This would reduce confusion for the community and streamline the support from administrative staff providing council with information. Budget and Finance with City Operations. However, some internal groups noted this might be problematic if the future mayor could change service areas. Internal groups also questioned where land use policies fall into the current recommended committees and how the scope of the committee on public health intersects with the County's authority in the sphere. Latino Network suggested temporary, or ad-hoc committees be used to address the additional topics important to Portlanders. Subcommittees should be created to address issues that stretch across multiple service areas or committees. While not as prescriptive, listening session attendees also recommended greater clarity on how cross-committee topics should be handled. Internal City groups also recommended suggested that the new council should draft their own rules possibly through a rules committee.

Listening session participants also brought up topics regarding committee structure that need consideration. For example, how would the community contribute to the committee? Some participants suggested that committees have unelected community members, while others advocated for public involvement and testimony, but ultimately leaving councilors accountable for meaningful participation. If the public is involved, then committee meetings may need options to attend remotely or in the evenings. Consideration for councilors' schedules was also discussed. Committees should be structured and consolidated in such a way that councilors are not spending all their time in meetings or the bureaucratic structures that they would entail. Participants also wanted consideration given to the role of committee chairs and how much authority they will have to prioritize or block different projects or agenda items.

Finally, there were two recommendations relating to community engagement. IRCO suggested advisory bodies correspond to city council committees to facilitate public input and provide additional channels for public comment. Internal city groups questioned the duplication of work between the new Officer roles (engagement, equity, communications)

and the proposed community engagement, communications, and equity committee. These groups instead suggested the Officers be liaisons to council committees for the disciplines.