

Survey Results: Budget Process

Survey Info - This survey was sent on behalf of the City of College Station to the FlashVote community for College Station, TX.

These FlashVote results are shared with local officials

234

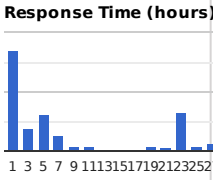
Total Participants

233 of 523 initially invited (45%)
1 other
Margin of error: ± 6%

Applied Filter:
Locals only

Participants for filter:
194

Response Time (hours)



Started:
Jun 29, 2023 11:06am CDT

Ended:
Jul 1, 2023 11:03am CDT

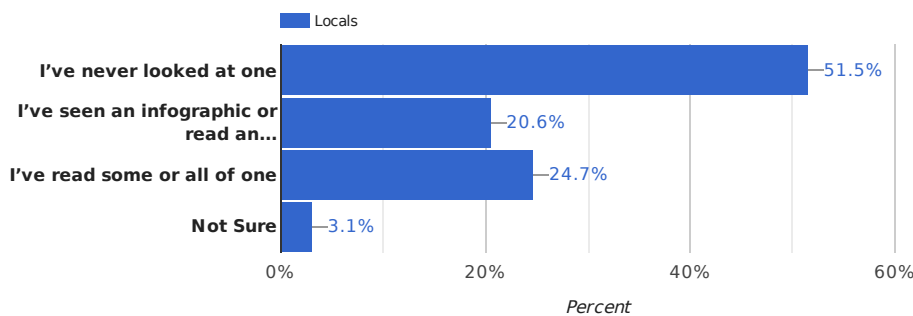
Target Participants:
All College Station

Q1 Every year, the City of College Station goes through the process of creating an annual budget, then provides the final approved document online (as a PDF) and as a printed book.

In the last five years, which best describes your experience with the city's annual budget documents?

(194 responses by)

Options	Locals (194)
I've never looked at one	51.5% (100)
I've seen an infographic or read an executive summary	20.6% (40)
I've read some or all of one	24.7% (48)
Not Sure	3.1% (6)

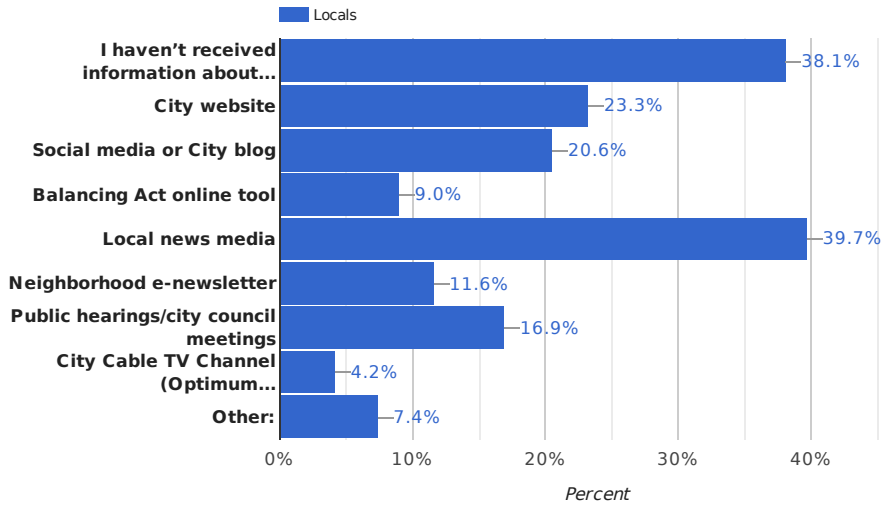


Q2 In the last five years, how have you received information about the City budget? (Choose all that apply)

(189 responses by)

Options	Locals (189)
I haven't received information about the city budget.	38.1% (72)
City website	23.3% (44)
Social media or City blog	20.6% (39)
Balancing Act online tool	9.0% (17)
Local news media	39.7% (75)

Options	Locals (189)
Neighborhood e-newsletter	11.6% (22)
Public hearings/city council meetings	16.9% (32)
City Cable TV Channel (Optimum Channel 19)	4.2% (8)
Other:	7.4% (14)



Bond Board

Citizen's University

College Station Association of Neighborhoods

Email newsletter

Get rid of the medians! They are dangerous!

I can't recall how I have known about the budget in the past.

Internal communications (I'm a city employee)

Mail?

Neighborprovided from one of previous options

Talking to people who have read at least part of the budget

WTAW Infomaniacs

We moved here in Oct of 2022

By speaking with city employees

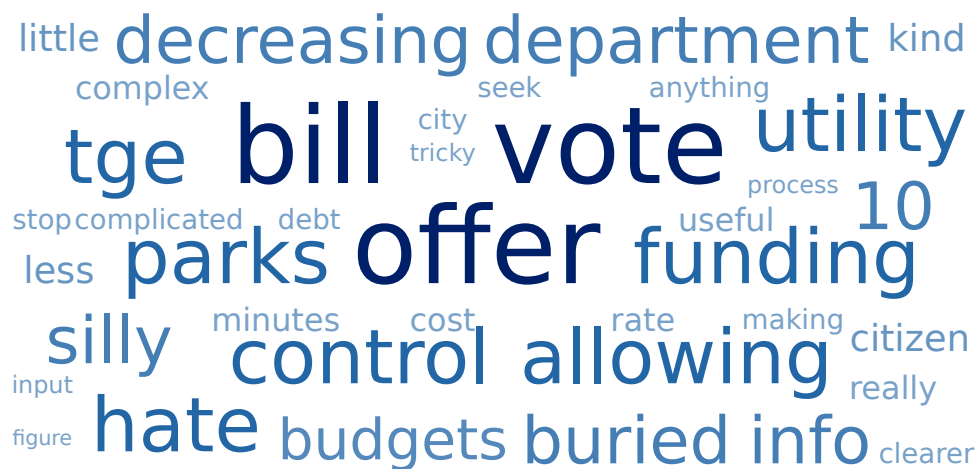
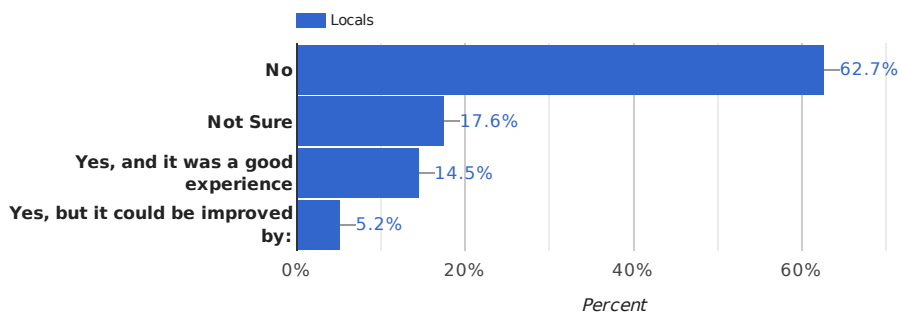
Not sure; method(s) used were not memorable

Q3 The city has an interactive budget tool called Balancing Act that allows citizens to rank their budget priorities and offer detailed feedback to city leaders.

Have you provided feedback online through Balancing Act before?

(193 responses by)

Options	Locals (193)
No	62.7% (121)
Not Sure	17.6% (34)
Yes, and it was a good experience	14.5% (28)
Yes, but it could be improved by:	5.2% (10)



Allowing more control such as decreasing funding for Parks department

Hate that tge utility info is buried

It's silly. Budgets are complex. A citizen with 10 minutes can't really offer anything useful

Less complicated.

Making the voting process a little clearer. It was kind of tricky to figure out how it worked

Offer more cost saving options. Picking between progressively worse options is not sustainable

The city has an unsustainable rate of growth in debt. Seek input on what NOT to spend on.

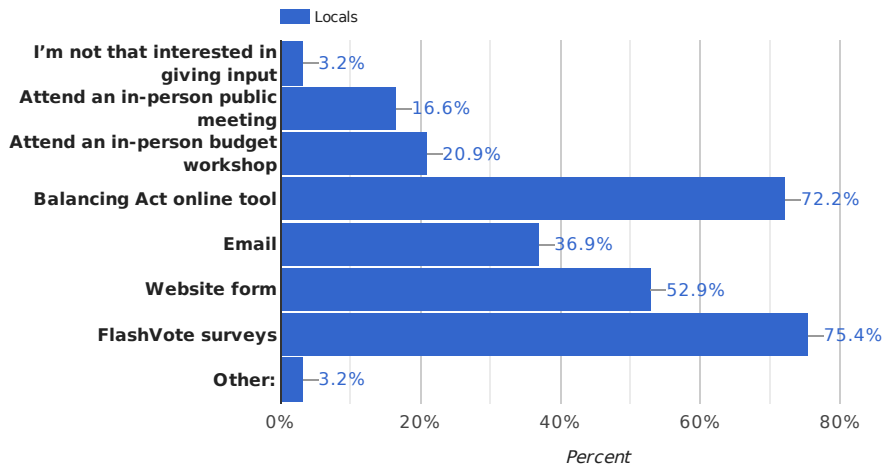
Vote against, stop bills before taxpayers pay for a useless bill to be drafted

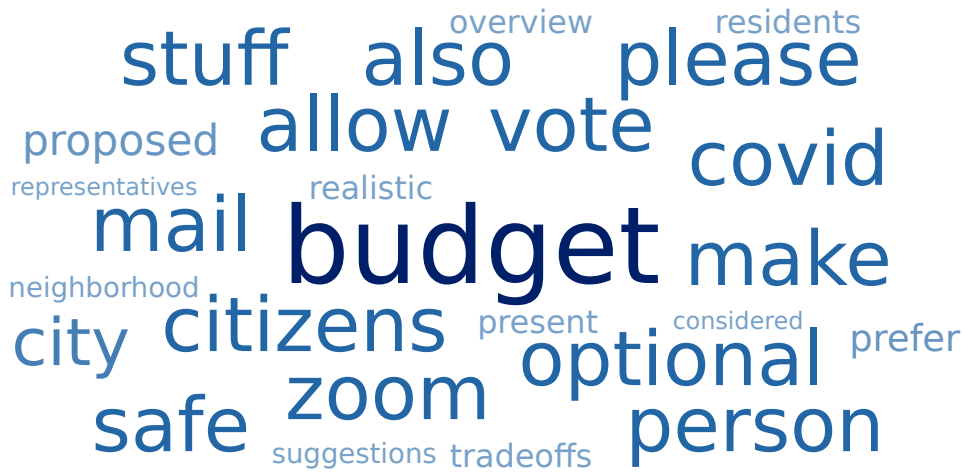
being more detailed

Q4 How would you prefer to give your input on the city budget? (You can choose up to FOUR, if any)

(187 responses by)

Options	Locals (187)
I'm not that interested in giving input	3.2% (6)
Attend an in-person public meeting	16.6% (31)
Attend an in-person budget workshop	20.9% (39)
Balancing Act online tool	72.2% (135)
Email	36.9% (69)
Website form	52.9% (99)
FlashVote surveys	75.4% (141)
Other:	3.2% (6)





Allow citizens to vote on optional budgets

Also zoom. Please make in person stuff covid safe.

Mail out a proposed budget overview to residents.

Present realistic tradeoffs. E.g., the city can do A or B but not both. Which would you prefer

Neighborhood representatives

Q5 Any other comments or suggestions about how the city provides budget information, collects input, or otherwise runs its budget process?

(44 responses by)



A copy of the city Budget should be added to all our mortgage Bills

A lot of these resources for city policy aren't available to those who aren't looking. I recommend finding a way to inform your citizens. Whether it be some form of advertisement or even a mail out with greatly assist.

Are the results of the surveys and discussions on the budget made public?

Based on my personal experience with the city's annual budget process, I believe there are opportunities to enhance the transparency and accessibility of the budget information for the residents of College Station. Firstly, I have noticed a lack of widespread awareness about the city's budget. To tackle this, I suggest the city engages in dedicated campaigns to enlighten residents about the importance of the budget and how it directly impacts our lives. Utilizing social media, local TV and radio stations, or periodic newsletters could serve this purpose effectively. Secondly, considering the modern digital age, I feel the budget could be presented in a more engaging and interactive format. Supplementing the PDF and printed document with infographics or short videos might help to convey the key aspects of the budget in a way that's easily digestible. Regarding the 'Balancing Act' online tool, it's a fantastic initiative, but I think more could be done to familiarize residents with it

Better notifications about road closures, repairs or the addition of road medians.

Disregard this survey. I made a mistake and the system won't let me revise the answers on rating the categories

Even though I have been lax about accessing it I do think the availability has been good and it should continue.

Explanation of compounding debt needs to be addressed.

Finding the info on the budget, planning and approval processes, etc is not always easy to find. Would appreciate more visibility and easy access to the information.

I am interested in how the city sets pricing for its services. I strongly suspect that the city does not charge enough for basic services like water, sewer, electricity and roads. I also believe that the city spends too much on parks and not enough recruiting tax paying industry.

I didn't know about Balancing Act, so increasing awareness of that tool would be helpful.

I don't really know that community input changes or influences the process.

I have only lived here for 2 years

I may look into this further. I know for the ISD they float a lot of bonds for sports and it seems excessive.

I might need to pay more attention!

I was not aware of the Balancing Act, and when I searched for the budget online, the Act was not mentioned in any obvious way. The city wastes huge amounts of money, and many portions of the budget are fiscally irresponsible. I'd love the opportunity to attend a review meeting that allows some interaction with citizens.

I wish that The Eagle did a better job of covering local issues like this. There seems to be no in-depth media coverage of local government.

I would really like to see more transparency on how the money is used, from the money collected from utility bills and drainage, fees, and the street, maintenance fees, especially the drainage fees, because a lot of the drainage, canals look very bad, and are filled up with runoff sediment and I don't see the city doing a great job of cleaning it out, and telling us how much money they raise every year from this and how are they spending it or are they saving it to later do it a big drainage problems that require significant funds. This is my biggest great with the city.

If people are NOT AWARE that a balancing tool exists for their use, of course they won't use it. Send a post card, print the URL on a utility bill in a location it will be seen, mass email to all residents with an email with clear instructions sent from a trustworthy email address unlikely to be trashed by a spam filter...

Is it possible that this process can be shared on the college station city council tv channel?

It is a shame that local news media no longer does any kind of in depth coverage of issues like this. Budgets are complex and social media just provides sound bites or worse, misinformation. Possibly Facebook posts with a link to articles on your website with a deeper look at factors entering into the decision making?

I'm not sure how many people use the budget tool but it is interesting. Does Council/staff take that feedback into consideration when adopting the budget?

Let us know how money is really being spent without shifting funds and obscuring information with accounting manipulation

Need a suggestion box

Need the city to fix drainage at FM2818 and Southwood. Water stands here after the new ramp type sidewalk improvement. Mosquito breeding ground and eyesore.

Need to prioritize needs (enough police for city our size example) over niceties (more parks for example)!

No thanks!

None

Offer incentives for community input.

Please focus on core services. We desperately need more money for police, Fire, EMS employees to retain them instead of relying on grant money for new positions. We are shooting ourselves in the foot funding pickle ball courts when we can't keep good people in the positions. Up the pay to keep good employees from leaving or having to take additional jobs.

Publicize the public parts of the process more. I don't support having citizens get involved in budget minutia. That is why we have elected representatives. Let public provide input for major components of budget plus major capital projects as we now have.

Some funds are spent on incomprehensible projects; examples are replacing curbs that don't need to be replaced in several neighborhoods where the new roads cracked soon after the projects complete (eg: Woodcreek area) and the current project to make Lincoln Avenue NARROWER, restricting emergency relief routes for University Drive & the nearby Fire Station... I can't understand why taxpayer dollars are viewed this superfluously. It undermines any arguments made that our public servants are concerned about lowering property taxes.

This was the first I'd ever heard of Balancing Act and I'm active in city politics. I just looked on cstx.gov, but you have to do a search. There are also no pull-down options specific to the budget that I can find.

Unless there are major changes in budget being considered, the budget process is not of great interest to the average resident.

We have only been in CS fro a little over a year, so this process is new to us.

Would like to see the city do a better job of maintaining easements near residential properties.

could citizens use zoom to listen to department discussions of budget information?

make it more awareness for public by email or newsletter

send an email summary to all citizens city has email addresses for

I attended a Citizens Academy years ago, and was on a panel that "listened" to department \$\$\$ requests, then decided how to allot our available \$\$\$\$. It was an eye opener and VERY informative.

I have not seen information about this before. I will watch for opportunities to participate. The newsletters are good.

N/A

Pay the fire department more

Spend less

[Additional survey reports](#)