April 12th, 2022
Report on the Public Input Survey for
American Rescue Plan Act Funding

Introduction

City of Fairmont ran a public survey via Google Forms about the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding from December 6th through January 10th. This survey data is intended to inform City staff and council members as to the preferences of the public for spending the ARPA funds.

This report is a review of the data collected. This is intended to highlight the results of the survey and to help understand the response. Summary data charts are included in the latter part of this report.

Summary

The following is how the project categories were rated, from highest to lowest, based on the averages calculated with all participants accounted for:

1. Water, Sewer, and Storm Water Infrastructure
2. Mental Health Services
3. Broadband Infrastructure
4. Small Business Assistance
5. Education Assistance
6. Substance Abuse Services
7. Homeless Services
8. Essential Workers Premium Pay
9. Public Outdoor Space, Recreational Facilities, and Parks
10. Affordable Housing Programs / Projects
11. Non-Profit Assistance
12. Public Building Improvements for Pandemic Resiliency

Across the data, some difference can be seen based on participant information. The following is a short list of findings:

- People who were younger or identify as female found Mental Health Services and Homelessness to be more important than people who identified as male.
- The Edgemont residents found investment into parks and outdoor recreational spaces more important than any other neighborhood. This neighborhood is physically isolated from all other neighborhoods within the city and does not have a city park. The only way in or out of Edgemont is by car.
- Nearly all participant categories rated Water, Sewer, and Storm Water Infrastructure is the *most important*.
- Nearly all participant categories rated Public Building Improvements for Pandemic Resiliency is the *least important*.

The end of the survey featured a question that asked for the City should prioritize project based on their relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. The percentage of participants that chose each answer are as follows:

- 49.2% - There should be a balance between those projects that are related to the impacts of COVID-19 and those that are critical investment for the city's future.

- 42.7% - Focus on projects that are a critical investment for the city's future, regardless of their connection to COVID-19.
- 8.1% - Focus on those projects that directly relate to an issue or challenge that was created or exaggerated by COVID-19.

Methodology

The survey collected data anonymously, without the use of any identifying information, such as address, name, phone number, or email. This leaves the survey vulnerable to manipulation from individuals by taking the survey multiple times. It was important to make citizens feel that they could express their opinion of the use of the ARPA funding regardless of their past or present relationship to the city, their personal identity, or any other aspect which could be viewed as a deterrent to participating.

After review of the raw data, staff believes the data to be genuine and honest from the public. Custom responses at the end of the survey varied significantly in phrasing, content, and grammar. The survey also collected time stamps to compare if there were any unusual patterns in the responses. None were identified by staff.

The survey was primarily promoted through social media although access was made to anyone who got a link to the survey. Residents were encouraged to share with friends or neighbors.

This survey used a scaling system to rate various categories of potential project spending. The choices were: Most important, Fairly important, Important, Slightly important, and Not important. In order to place the data into a format that is quicker to review by the public, staff, and council, these choices were then changed to a number value between 0 and 4, with 0 being not important and 4 being most important. These values were then averaged based on both the spending category and some of the limited resident information collected. Resident information included neighborhood, age, and gender identity.

Symbols were then added for further quick identification within the charts of averages. These symbols are as follows:

Comparing Lowest Value to Highest Value				
Value is within 100% to 80%	Value is within 79% to 60%	Value is within 59% to 40%	Value is within 39% to 20%	Value is below 20%
⬆ 80	⬈ 60	➡ 40	⬊ 20	⬇ 0

The expenditure categories were based on the authorized spending / project categories defined within the semi-final ruling from the US Treasury Department. During the public survey, the final ruling from the US Treasury Department had not yet been issued. Some rule changes, additional limitations, exemptions, and other language within the final ruling

was not accounted for within this public survey due to the timing for input. However, the staff of the Planning and Development Department believes this data to still serve as a valuable guide for understanding the desires of the public on how the City of Fairmont may utilize funding in the future.

The project categories are: Affordable Housing Programs / Projects; Homeless Services; Non-Profit Assistance; Small Business Assistance; Public Building Improvements for Pandemic Resiliency; Public Outdoor Space, Recreational Facilities, and Parks; Water, Sewer, and Storm Water Infrastructure; Broadband Infrastructure; Essential Workers Premium Pay; Education Assistance; Mental Health Services; Substance Abuse Services.

Overview

A total of 555 people participated in the survey. 466 (84%) participants identified as residents of the City of Fairmont and 89 (16%) identified as living outside of the city limits. Participants were primarily between the ages of 25 and 44, which matches up well to the median age of the City, 34. The participants mostly identified as female (62%).

The summary charts used for this report can be found below.

Survey Participant Data

Neighborhood	Watson Addition	Edgemont	Beltline	West Side - Other	Downtown / Jackson Addition	Bellview	Norwood	East Side / Palatine	Non-residents			
Totals	42	18	11	131	40	55	14	155	89			

Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and older						
Totals	37	140	154	113	64	47						

Gender Identity	Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not to say								
Totals	344	192	6	13								

Average Scores by Age

Age	Affordable Housing Programs / Projects	Homeless Services	Non-Profit Assistance	Small Business Assistance	Public Building Improvements for Pandemic Resiliency	Public Outdoor Space, Recreational Facilities, and Parks	Water, Sewer, and Storm Water Infrastructure	Broadband Infrastructure	Essential Workers Premium Pay	Education Assistance	Mental Health Services	Substance Abuse Services
18-24	2.62	2.76	2.11	2.41	1.84	2.19	2.73	2.51	2.49	2.92	2.81	2.95
25-34	2.34	2.58	2.29	2.65	1.91	2.49	2.81	2.56	2.57	2.60	2.91	2.59
35-44	2.05	2.37	2.05	2.61	1.55	2.33	2.81	2.78	2.31	2.44	2.66	2.32
45-54	2.18	2.31	1.96	2.51	1.58	2.27	2.79	2.62	2.26	2.36	2.54	2.27
55-64	2.28	2.55	2.14	2.38	1.84	2.39	2.63	2.36	2.61	2.44	2.70	2.50
65 and older	2.23	2.26	2.11	2.72	2.06	2.66	3.19	3.09	2.36	2.28	2.68	2.51

Average Scores by Gender Identity

Scores by Gender	Affordable Housing Programs / Projects	Homeless Services	Non-Profit Assistance	Small Business Assistance	Public Building Improvements for Pandemic Resiliency	Public Outdoor Space, Recreational Facilities, and Parks	Water, Sewer, and Storm Water Infrastructure	Broadband Infrastructure	Essential Workers Premium Pay	Education Assistance	Mental Health Services	Substance Abuse Services
Female	2.44	2.72	2.30	2.60	1.82	2.45	2.83	2.66	2.49	2.67	3.00	2.68
Male	1.92	2.01	1.83	2.57	1.67	2.32	2.81	2.65	2.28	2.19	2.27	2.10
Non-binary	1.67	2.33	1.50	1.33	1.17	1.17	2.67	3.17	2.67	1.83	2.17	2.00
Prefer not to say	1.54	1.77	1.62	2.38	1.23	2.15	2.31	2.38	2.31	2.00	2.15	2.00

Average Scores by Neighborhood

	Affordable Housing Programs / Projects	Homeless Services	Non-Profit Assistance	Small Business Assistance	Public Building Improvements for Pandemic Resiliency	Public Outdoor Space, Recreational Facilities, and Parks	Water, Sewer, and Storm Water Infrastructure	Broadband Infrastructure	Essential Workers Premium Pay	Education Assistance	Mental Health Services	Substance Abuse Services
Watson Addition	2.07	2.21	1.95	2.60	1.76	2.50	2.62	2.74	2.55	2.67	2.60	2.07
Edgemont	2.22	2.50	2.17	2.78	2.06	3.11	3.33	3.00	2.61	2.89	2.61	2.28
Beltline	2.18	2.09	2.27	3.09	2.18	2.55	2.73	2.82	2.36	2.91	2.91	2.45
West Side - Other	2.18	2.47	2.21	2.54	1.74	2.46	2.95	2.74	2.44	2.48	2.76	2.53
Downtown / Jackson Addition	2.88	2.95	2.58	2.75	2.33	2.20	2.80	2.65	2.23	2.85	3.23	2.75
Bellview	2.42	2.53	2.27	2.76	1.87	2.65	2.93	2.47	2.20	2.36	2.71	2.62
Norwood	2.00	2.36	2.00	2.93	1.64	2.57	2.86	3.29	2.43	2.21	2.21	2.36
East Side / Palatine	2.11	2.37	1.93	2.35	1.57	2.10	2.67	2.48	2.36	2.26	2.59	2.36
Residents	**2.23**	**2.45**	**2.13**	**2.56**	**1.77**	**2.38**	**2.82**	**2.64**	**2.38**	**2.46**	**2.70**	**2.44**
Non-city Residents	2.24	2.43	2.03	2.62	1.62	2.44	2.76	2.70	2.60	2.58	2.79	2.53
Overall Averages	2.23	2.45	2.11	2.57	1.75	2.39	2.81	2.65	2.41	2.48	2.72	2.46