STATE OF KANSAS)
WYANDOTTE COUNTY)) SS **SPECIAL SESSION, THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2023**
CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KS)

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Session, Thursday, June 22, 2023, with ten members present: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Townsend, Commissioner First District; McKiernan, Commissioner Second District; Johnson, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Markley, Commissioner Sixth District; Stites, Commissioner Seventh District; Davis, Commissioner Eighth District; Garner, Mayor/CEO, presiding. Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; was absent. The following officials were also in attendance: Alan Howze and Bridgette Cobbins, Assistant County Administrators; Angela Lawson, Deputy Chief Counsel; Brett Deichler, Unified Government Clerk; Monica Sparks, Deputy Unified Government Clerk; Debbie Jonscher, Interim Chief Financial Officer; Jeff Fisher, Executive Director of Public Works; LaVert Murray, Economic Development Advisor in Mayor's Office; Reginald Lindsey, Budget Director; Mike Peterson, Assistant Budget Director; Mike Grimm, Research Manager; and Adrian Alemifar, Senior Analyst in Budget Department.

Mayor Garner said before I call the meeting to order I want to announce that we do have individuals attending remotely as well as on-site. If you're participating by phone, we ask that you mute your phones when not speaking to avoid background noise. During the meeting, make sure you announce yourself by name and title when you speak so the public knows who is speaking. This is critical given the number of remote participants and is also current guidance from our Kansas Attorney General. Make sure you are speaking into your microphone to ensure your comments are heard and that we have an accurate record of the meeting.

Mayor Garner called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL: Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, McKiernan, Garner.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL SESSION of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be held conducted in a hybrid format on Thursday, June 22, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in the fifth floor conference room of the Municipal Office Building for a budget workshop.

CONSENT TO MEETING of the governing body of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, accepting service of the foregoing notice, waiving all and any irregularities in such service and in such notice, and consent and agree that we, the governing body, shall meet at the time and place therein specified and for the purpose therein stated.

Mayor Garner said this Special Session tonight is an ongoing process and conversation and presentation to your full Commission as a Budget Workshop. I'll now recognize our Assistant County Administrator Alan Howze who will take the conversation from here.

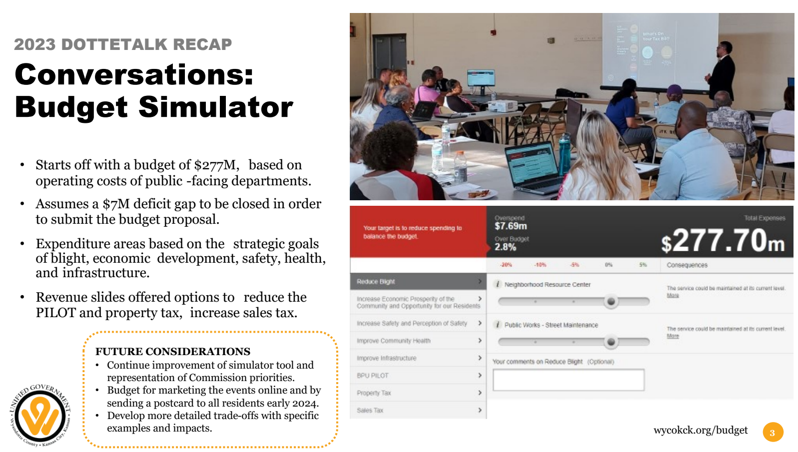
Alan Howze, Assistant County Administrator, said this is our last Budget Workshop prior to the introduction of the budget in August and for this evening I'll turn it over to Reginald Lindsey, our Budget Director, to take us through the conversation.

Reginald Lindsey, Budget Director, said this evening our Assistant Budget Director Michael Peterson and Senior Analyst Adrian Alemifar are going to discuss what we learned from our community during four Budget Dotte Workshops that we had across the community. Adrian and Michael will also review what we learned from our community that used our budget simulator. Adrian and Michael will also do a presentation based on what we learned from our community and how they tie back to organizational benchmarks and also our 2022 Community Survey and then also how they tied to the Budget DotteTalks and our budget simulator.

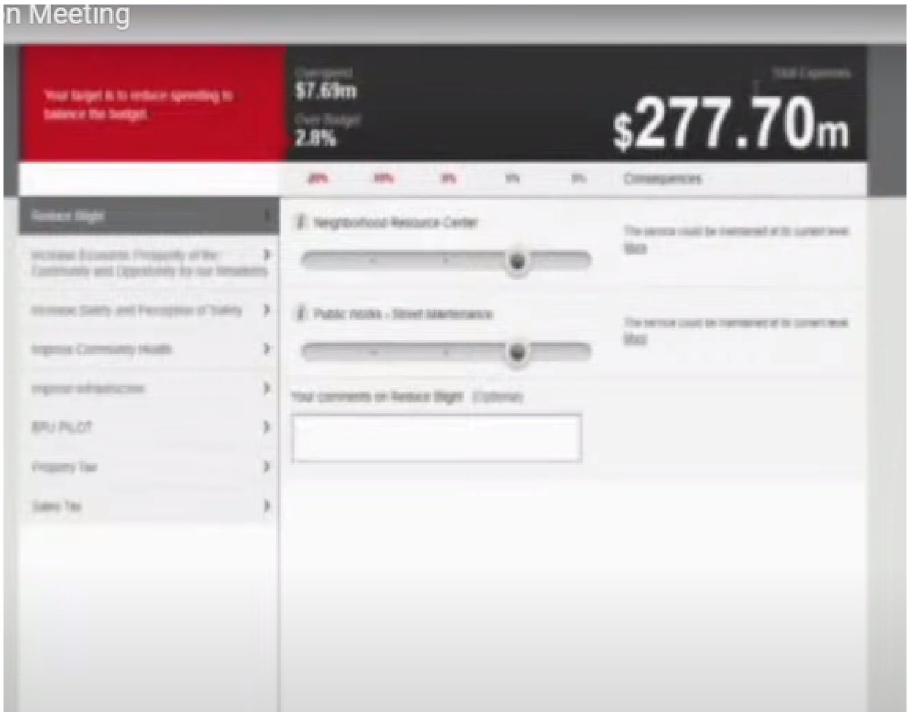
Now, I'll turn it over to Adrian Alemifar, our Senior Analyst to take it from here.

Adrian Alemifar, Senior Analyst, said I am going to start tonight's presentation by giving a brief overview of our DotteTalks. Our DotteTalks was an idea that Strategic Communications and the Budget Office came up with last year as a way to revamp our public hearing process, so rather than having people come to us and speak at a podium in a formal manner, we wanted to bring the conversation to them.

This year we hosted four DotteTalks, which was one more than we had last year. We had them at different locations around the community so we did one in south, central, west and east. In total we had 28 community members join us and four UG elected officials as well as elected officials from other parts of the state and also leadership from Edwardsville and Bonner Springs joined us.

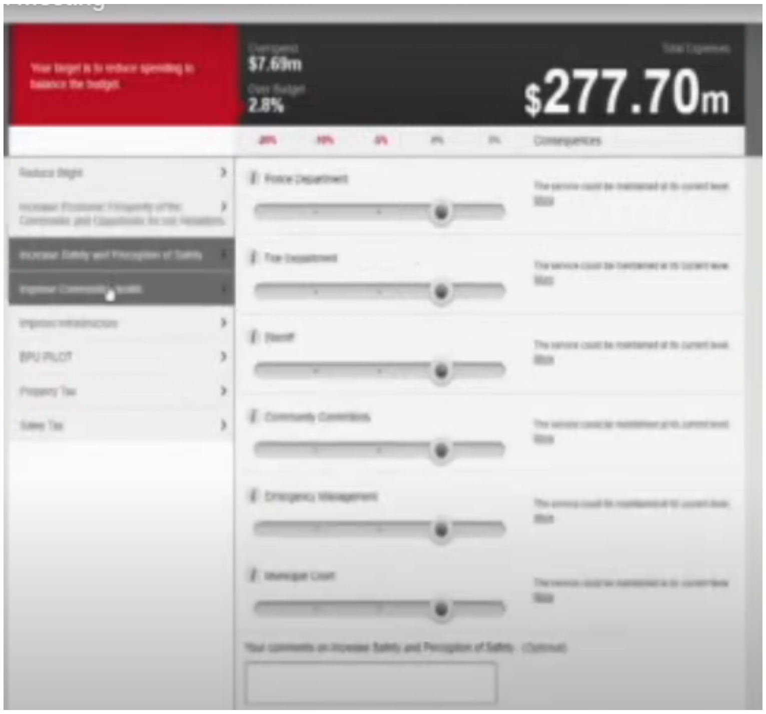


We framed the DotteTalks around our budget simulator tool, which is a tool that allows the user to get the experience of what it's like to balance a budget and so I'm actually going to open this tool now to show you what that looks like.

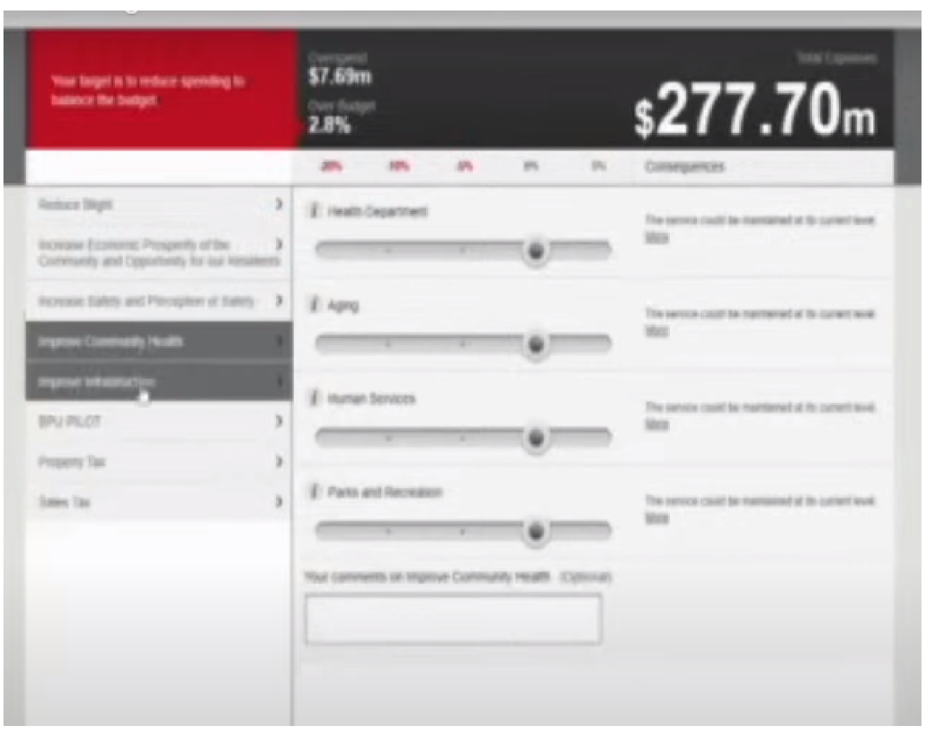


This is our budget simulator. It starts off with a budget of about $270M, so that's not meant to be representative of our overall budget as an organization, but it is a simulation and it is meant to be representative of our operational costs for our public facing departments.

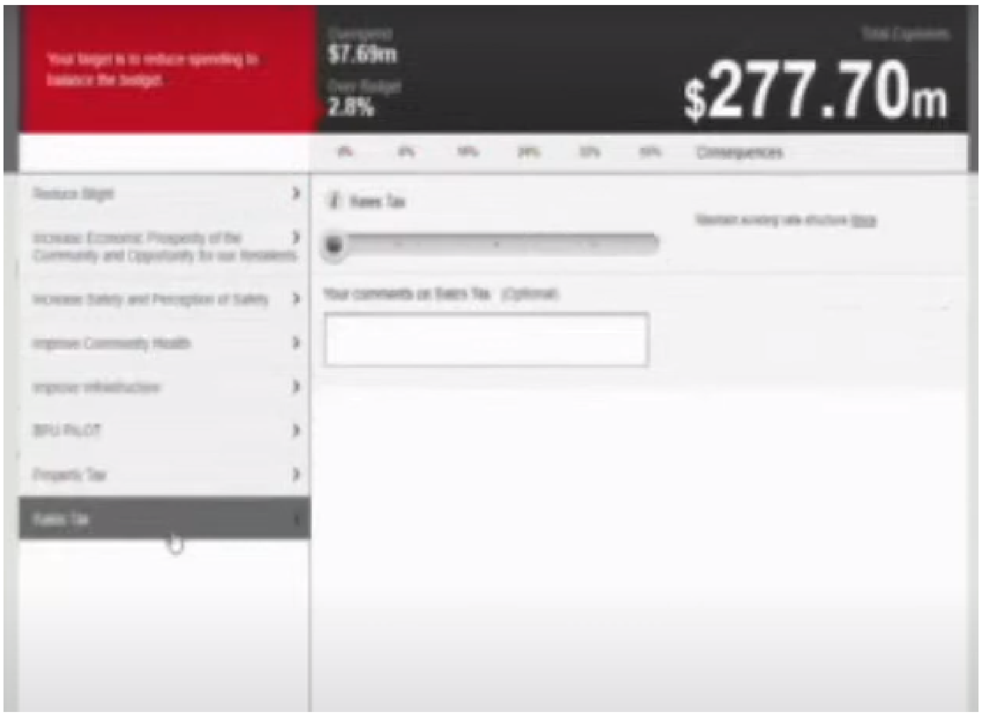
Another thing to notice right off the bat with the simulator is that it starts off with a deficit of just over $7M, so we wanted the simulation to be representative of our experience of having to close a hole in our budget this season. So, the users had to close that deficit before they were able to actually submit the simulator. Our simulator is built off of expenditure areas that are based on our community priorities.



So our expenditures—we have departments represented in the areas of reduced blight, increase economic prosperity, increase safety and perception of safety…

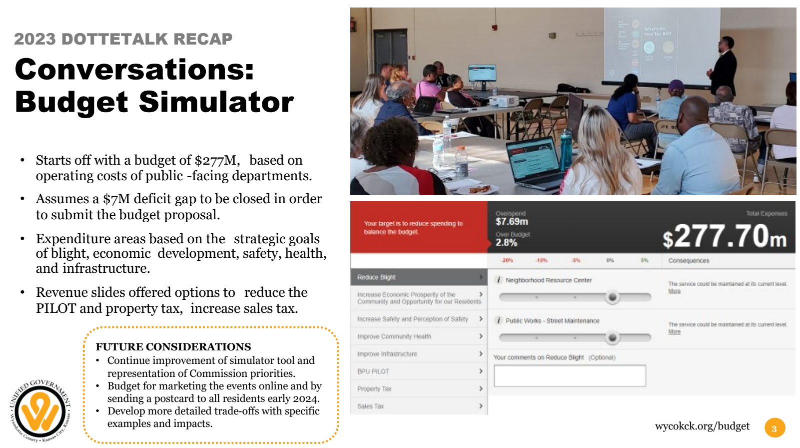


improve community health and improve infrastructure and within each of these strategic goal areas there are departments that the user can either increase by 5% or decrease by up to 20% and the idea of giving those options was kind of that we do have a deficit to close, so that is why we offer more options to decrease rather than increase.

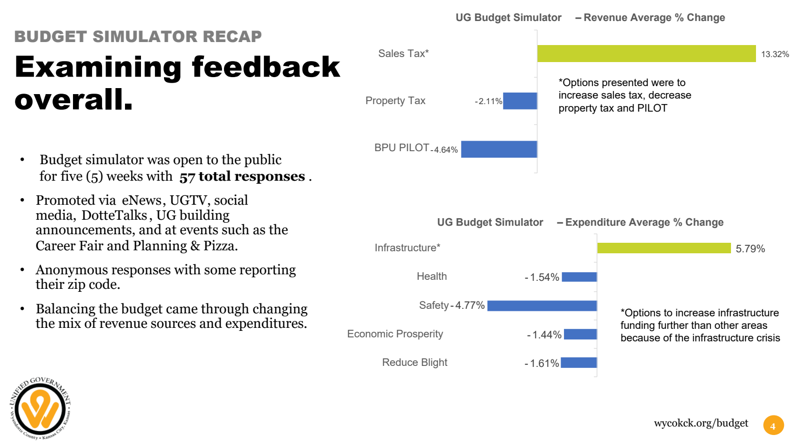


The second part of our simulator is based on revenues, so here we have the BPU PILOT, property tax and sales tax. On the BPU PILOT we have the option to decrease by up to 16.8% and on the property tax, we have the option to decrease by up to 13%. On the sales tax, we actually did not offer the option to decrease, but to increase sales tax as this is something we've kind of heard talked about, so that is our budget simulator. You can notice that as you make changes to these sliders, it reflects how that affects our overall balance and the budget simulator turns green once the user has balanced the budget and then they can submit it.

With that in mind, let's return back to the presentation.



Given that a lot of our sliders had the option to reduce more than to increase funding, that is going to affect the results that you see from the simulator, so just keep that in mind as we go through these.



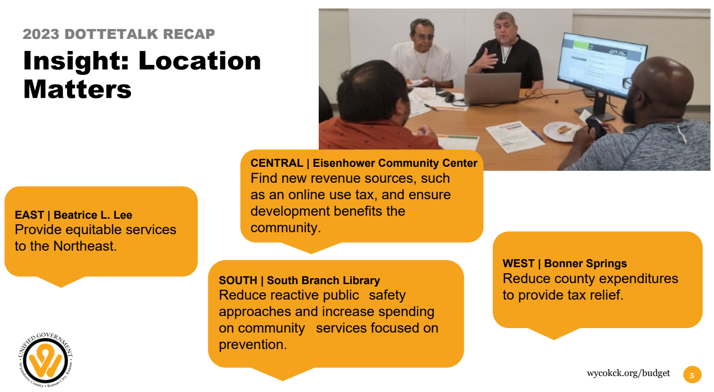
This slide gives us the average percent changes to our different slider areas on the budget simulator and this is reflective of all of our responses on the simulator, so we had a total of 57 responses. Some of those would have been submitted at the DotteTalks and some of those would have been submitted by people on their own time. We did promote it in several different ways and so it's definitely possible that some people were submitting it totally outside of the DotteTalks.

If we start by looking at the top graph on the right, this shows the average percent changes that were made to our revenue areas and so on sales tax, we see an average percent change of 13%. We did see that a lot of users wanted to increase the sales tax as a way to balance the budget.

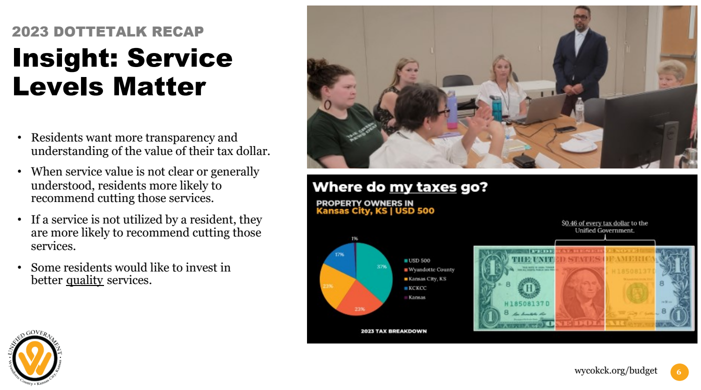
On property tax, we saw an average percent change of negative 2.11% and on the PILOT we saw an average percent change of negative 4.64%

Moving on to our expenditures at the bottom, on infrastructure we did offer the option to increase infrastructure by as much up to 50% because of our infrastructure crisis and so we do see on average this was increased by 5.79% and that is even with the requirement to balance the budget. So, this would have been accomplished by either decreasing spending in other areas or increasing revenues.

On our other expenditure areas, the options on the sliders were slightly different so you could increase by as much as 5% and decrease by as much as 20%, so the results on those look a little bit different. On average the strategic goal area that was reduced the most was our Public Safety and then in the other areas, those were reduced by about 1.5%.

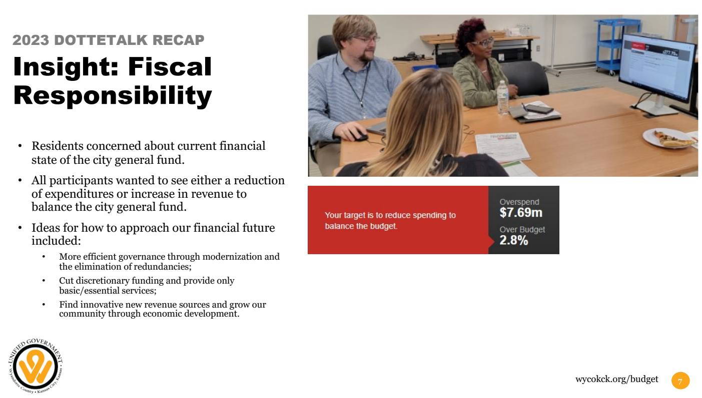


Moving back to our DotteTalks, we just want to cover a few insights that we had from these. The first is that location matters. We heard unique feedback at each location that were relevant to the place that people were living in. For example, at our east location, Beatrice Lee Community Center, we heard that people would like us to provide equitable services to the northeast. In the west location at the Bonner Springs Library, we heard that people would like us to reduce county expenditures and to provide tax relief on the county side of the budget.

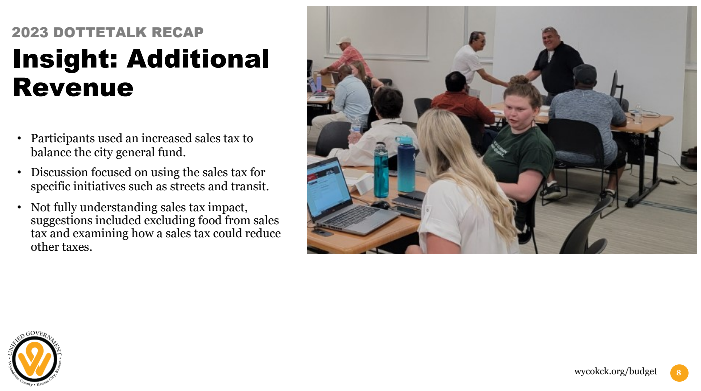


Our next insight is that Service Levels Matter and so results were a little mixed in terms of exactly what people want to see in terms of service levels. Some people wanted to see services improved and they wanted to see more services and they were interested in making the investment to do so and some wanted to decrease the number of services that we have and, hopefully, find tax relief via doing so.

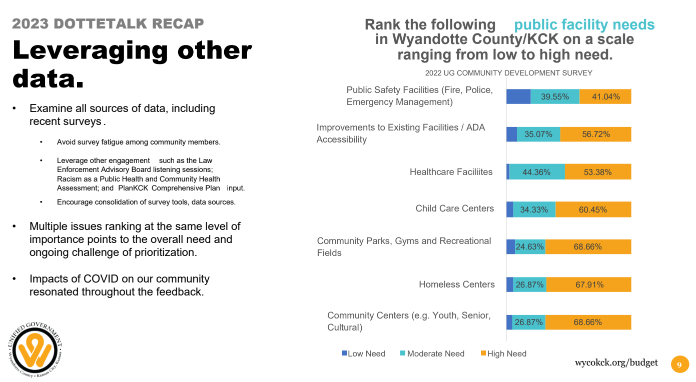
We did present the tax dollar breakdown according to each taxing district in Wyandotte County at every single DotteTalk, so we are still trying to spread that information that although the Unified Government collects all the property taxes, we don't spend all of those, so we do distribute those out to the different taxing districts.



Our next insight is fiscal responsibility, so as we started the simulator out with a deficit, a question on everyone's mind was how did we get here, what can we do to get out of this budgetary hole and with that, you know, people want to see us come out of this. We heard a few solutions that were pretty popular across the board and those included that people would like to see more efficient government through modernization and the elimination of redundancies. They would like to see us cut discretionary funding and provide only the basic essential services and find innovative new revenue sources to grow our community through economic development.



Finally, our last insight is related to that last one because at the DotteTalks we heard a lot of people talk about how they want us to find innovative ways to bring in additional revenue. On the simulator itself, there was an option to increase sales tax and on average people did increase sales tax by 13%. We heard a varied amount of responses about exactly what this would look like in practice, so some people recommended specific special uses for sales taxes. Some people recommended looking outside of sales tax to different other ways of coming up with revenues, but people were very interested in finding additional revenue to help us balance the budget.



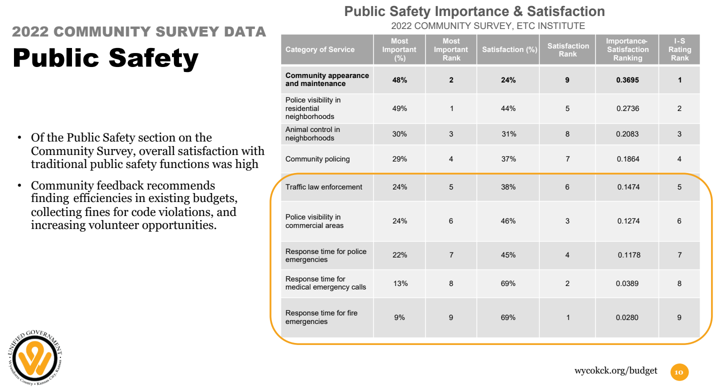
Michael Peterson, Assistant Budget Director, said I'm going to go into the first data point as well as kind of talk about how we laid out the presentation as a whole. We do understand the importance of leveraging multiple sources of data. We didn't want to base all of our decisions off of one data point. We've heard before the importance of statistically relevant sampling, so the one source that we have of that definitively for the Unified Government is the community survey, so we wanted to tie all of the information that we obtained and gathered back to the community survey. We've broken out—we've tried to associate each segment of the budget simulator and the DotteTalks back to the community survey.

The DotteTalks and the budget simulator are an important data point to us because it's more of a in-depth engagement with the community, so as opposed to—like Adrian said, as opposed to somebody coming to a public hearing and getting a chance to talk for three minutes with no response from staff. The DotteTalks give us an opportunity to interface for over an hour with the public and kind of talk more about the details of the budget, help them understand the budget process as well as kind of get some deeper understanding of what their comments actually are on how we provide services as well as to gather trade-off information.

So, one of the things that's very important for us on the budget simulator is it actually requires you to balance the budget so you can't just increase everything. You actually have to have trade-offs for what's more important than other things to you when you're submitting that survey.

The third thing that we included was some benchmarking that we had been working on the previous year, so benchmarking. We know benchmarking is not perfect. Even though we might have the same name for a department, we could provide very different services from another community, but we looked at other regional areas that are similar size to us as well as the Kansas first-class cities and then some other cities that had similar demographics and counties as us across the United States.

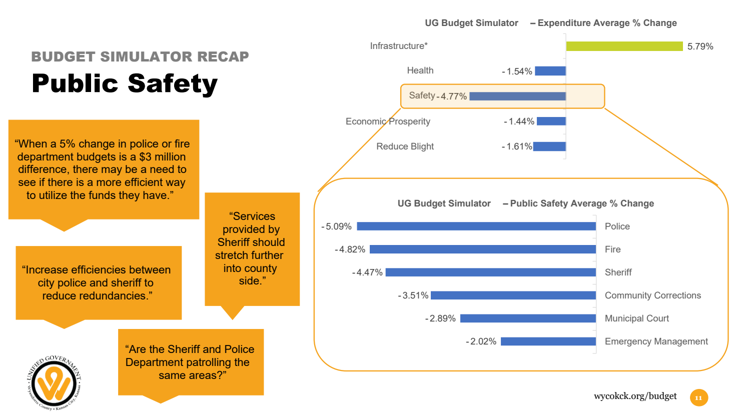
So, those three points we consolidated together to the presentation that we have for you tonight.



Category of Service	Most Important (%)	Most Important Rank	Satisfaction (%)	Satisfaction Rank	Importance-Satisfaction Ranking	I-S Rating Rank
Community appearance and maintenance	**48%**	**2**	**24%**	**9**	**0.3695**	**1**
Police visibility in residential neighborhoods	49%	1	44%	5	0.2736	2
Animal control in neighborhoods	30%	3	31%	8	0.2083	3
Community policing	29%	4	37%	7	0.1864	4
Traffic law enforcement	24%	5	38%	6	0.1474	5
Police visibility in commercial areas	24%	6	46%	3	0.1274	6
Response time for police emergencies	22%	7	45%	4	0.1178	7
Response time for medical emergency calls	13%	8	69%	2	0.0389	8
Response time for fire emergencies	9%	9	69%	1	0.0280	9

The first area that we're going to go into is just to talk about Public Safety. Public Safety, one of the things that we saw and noticed on the community survey was that, in general, the community was fairly satisfied with our level of public safety, traditional public safety services. One of the key standouts that was presented when the community survey results came out was that the top ranked item for importance and satisfaction in the Public Safety section of the community survey was actually for us to improve the community appearance and maintenance of the community, so that's separate from what you would traditionally think of in terms of policing, fire responses, other traditional types of public safety.

In the DotteTalks and community feedback we did hear about the importance of finding efficiencies in Public Safety area as well as making sure that we're collecting appropriate fines to make up for our services. Then, increasing volunteer opportunities to help preventative public safety measures.



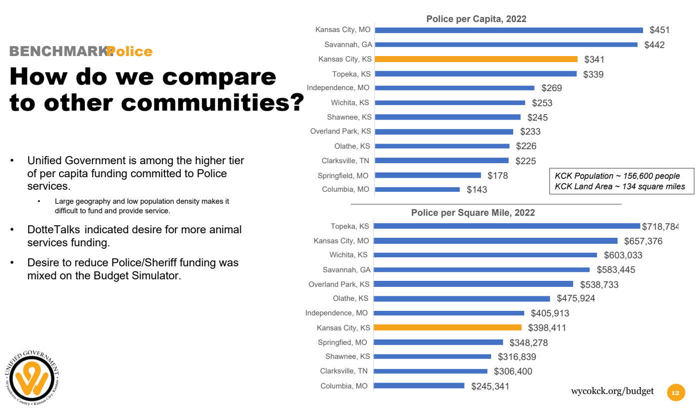
On the budget simulator and when we went to gather community feedback, Public Safety was the area that had the strongest level of decrease at about roughly 4.8% decrease, and again, this is—

individuals were required to either increase revenue or decrease expenditures to balance a budget deficit in the simulator before they could submit. So, it's really kind of more of a relative decrease than anything else.

Some of the key feedback that we got, individuals were very interested in seeing us look at efficiencies between the city police and county sheriff operations. Since we're a Unified Government making sure that we are providing services and not duplicating services between those two operations.

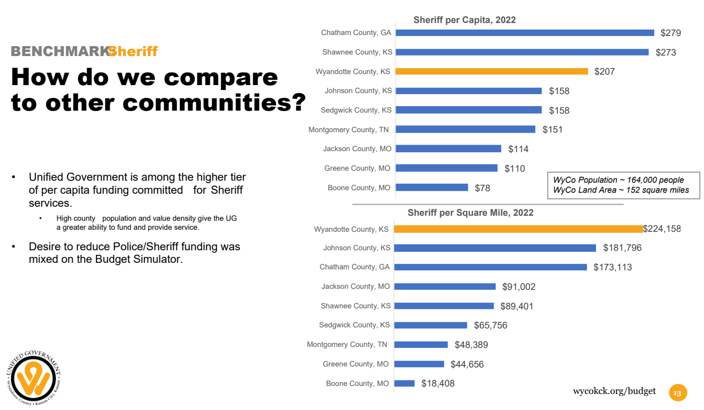
On the County side we heard feedback that they would like to see additional sheriff services provided outside of traditional KCKPD boundaries. Then, there was just comment and question if the sheriff and police are patrolling the same areas. Another key point that we found was that individuals noticed how much more of a difference was made on the budget with just the small reduction in Public Safety and then larger reductions in other areas when they were looking to balance the simulator just because the relative size of the Public Safety Departments.

So, just keeping in mind that the range of options was minus 20% to positive 5%. On average it was about a 5% decrease, highest areas were Police, Fire and Sheriff followed by Community Corrections, Municipal Court and Emergency Management.



How do we compare on our spending that we're budgeting to other communities. We're going to look at Police, Sheriff and Fire. On the Police spending, similar to what we did with property taxes, we went and looked at budget documents. We tried to identify how Police budgets compare across different first-class cities as well as other communities that have similar demographics to the Unified Government, so you can see the words towards the top on our per capita spending and then we’re kind of towards the lower end of the amount that we’re spending and budgeting per our land area.

So, this again, if we go back and remember the revenue presentation where we talked about how we’re mid-tier on our revenue collections per capita, but towards the bottom on our revenue collections per square mile for the Kansas City, Kansas side of the budget we can see that this again illustrates the difficulty of providing police visibility and public safety services across our geography just because of how spread out we are. But, also, we’re providing a higher level than—like the greater amount that we’re providing in this area might result in lesser funding amounts in other areas just because of the limited amount of funding that we have on the City side.



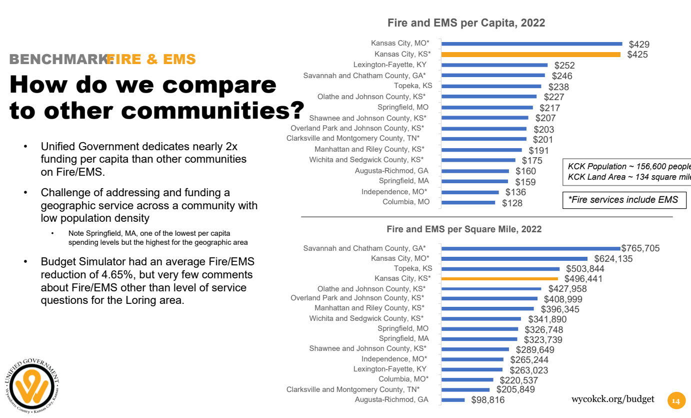
On the Sheriff budget, you can see how we compare to other communities. Again we’re towards the top on the per capita and we are the top on the square mile comparison when we look at how we’re funding the Sheriff amongst different communities. I just want to say this was 2022 numbers, so this doesn’t reflect our current 2023 Budget. We would have to go back and update the benchmarking if we’re going to increase that—or look at that for any of these different charts. Again, this correlates to our revenue collections because we are a more dense county and we have a higher population density and value density than other communities. It allows us to provide that higher level of funding for both the square mile and per capita.

Mayor Garner said Commissioner Burroughs has a question.

Commissioner Burroughs said the question I have on the Wyandotte County at the top of the Sheriff per square mile, was this compared to—our Sheriff’s Department also patrols our parks.

Do we know if other communities that you're comparing us to have their Sheriff's Department in charge of their parks and not just the jail? I'm just trying to get an understanding because our Sheriff's Department did take over the parks if I remember correctly, made them Sheriff's. I'm just curious if we're being compared apples to apples or apples to tangerines. **Mr. Peterson** said yeah again, that's one of the dangerous things about benchmarking is we don't always know the answer to that question. I honestly am not sure. We would have to go back and do some additional looking to see if we could identify that.

Commissioner Burroughs said the reason why I bring that up is because if we're looking at road miles that our Sheriff Department is utilizing touring our parks and spending the resources to patrol our parks can be quite demanding with the amount of parks that we have and the large geographic area we have. I really don't want to be unfair to the Sheriff's Department by looking at this chart and see them at the top because I truly believe that you know they do a good job. It's important to keep our parks safe, but thank you. I was just curious. **Mr. Peterson** said we would have to do some additional research, so a lot of budget documents, unfortunately, similar to ours are very basic. They're very broad on just how they're laid out, so it would take probably somewhat substantial amount of research to try to answer that question.

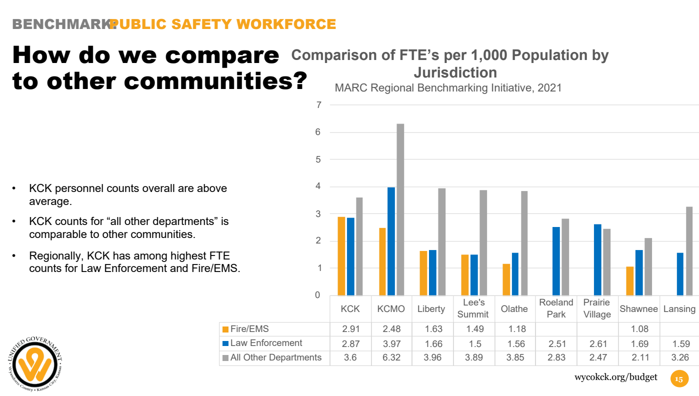


We're going to move on to Fire and EMS. One of the things to notice on this chart some of the organizations have both the city and county listed, others do not. So, what we tried to do was we tried to look at different organizations and tried to identify who was providing EMS services, who was providing fire services and in the case of, for instance, Johnson County and you'll see Johnson County listed here quite a bit, Johnson County provides the EMS services for the entire county of Johnson County; however, each city has their own distinct Fire Department and then some of the smaller cities have fire districts. It's harder to compare, but what we did in this comparison is we took the Johnson County numbers, we compared it to the Johnson County population, the Johnson County land area, and we took the city numbers and compared those to the city population and land area and added them together to try to get a more, I guess, streamlined number that we could compare apples to apples with.

What you can see on this chart is that comparatively speaking we spend a substantially larger amount than other communities per capita on our Fire and EMS services. It's about roughly $175 per person greater than the next largest number on the list. On the land area we again spend towards the upper end of the investment amount for Fire and EMS per square mile for the city of Kansas City, Kansas.

We have chatted with the Fire Department on these numbers and one of the things that they wanted us to make sure that we communicate to is the difference in some of the ages and the factors that are in these communities.

Again, not all of these have EMS by the way. If they do include EMS, they have an asterisk by them, but just thinking about the age of the buildings, some building don't maintain—or don't follow codes and so if a building doesn't follow codes, then there might be a higher risk of fire, things like that. Then, our health factors as being one of the lower ranked health counties in the community for medical services. Just comparatively speaking, this is how we compare on Fire and EMS services.



	KCK	KCMO	Liberty	Lee's Summit	Olathe	Roeland Park	Prairie Village	Shawnee	Lansing
Fire/EMS	2.91	2.48	1.63	1.49	1.18			1.08	
Law Enforcement	2.87	3.97	1.66	1.5	1.56	2.51	2.61	1.69	1.59
All Other Departments	3.6	6.32	3.96	3.89	3.85	2.83	2.47	2.11	3.26

This is a different source of information than the other sources of benchmarking that we did on budget documents. This comparison was on FTEs so we were limited by the different organizations that participated in the MARC Regional benchmarking initiative. This is information that was collected as of 2021, so this just shows how different communities in the Kansas City, Kansas region—or the Kansas City metropolitan region have funded their different types of personnel investments. On this chart you can see how the different communities compare on their Fire and EMS. FTEs per 100,000—or a thousand population, their law enforcement FTEs per thousand population in all of their departments.

One of the things that you can notice here is that KCK personnel overall is about average. Our Fire is significantly above what the other communities are that submitted information by about a half of an FTE per thousand population. Then, our Police is more in line with other departments being about average.

One thing we did definitely notice when we looked at this information is Kansas City, Missouri has a lot of similar like societal, like demographic concerns than we do in the Unified Government compared to some of the Johnson County communities and we see how many more non-public safety FTEs they have committed to kind of addressing those issues than we do on the Kansas side.

I'm going to turn it over to Adrian.

2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY

Overall Importance and Satisfaction

- Maintenance of streets and code enforcement ranked most important with the greatest potential to improve satisfaction.

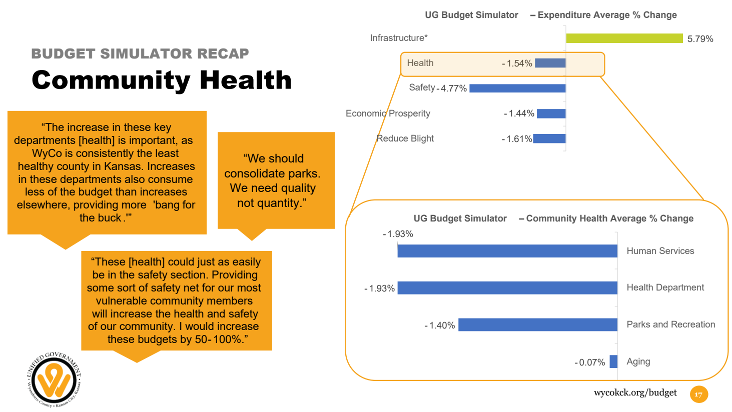
Community Services Importance & Satisfaction

2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY, ETC INSTITUTE

Category of Service	Most Important (%)	Most Important Rank	Satisfaction (%)	Satisfaction Rank	Importance - Satisfaction Ranking	I-S Rating Rank
Maintenance of City Streets	72%	1	25%	13	0.5392	1
Code Enforcement	**35%**	**3**	**28%**	**11**	**0.2491**	**2**
Police Services	41%	2	61%	4	0.1623	3
Parks & Rec Facilities	**29%**	**4**	**46%**	**5**	**0.1567**	**4**
Planning and Zoning	**21%**	**7**	**26%**	**12**	**0.1559**	**5**
Stormwater Management Systems	21%	6	37%	7	0.1333	6
Public Transportation	**21%**	**8**	**36%**	**9**	**0.1327**	**7**
Parks & Rec Programs	**19%**	**10**	**33%**	**10**	**0.1272**	**8**
Sewer and Wastewater System	20%	9	42%	6	0.1133	9
Trash Collection and Recycling	27%	5	62%	3	0.1000	10
Municipal Court	9%	13	36%	8	0.0579	11
Fire Services	16%	11	81%	1	0.0298	12
Ambulance Services	11%	12	75%	2	0.0274	13

Ms. Alemifar said now we're going to jump into our data relating to community services. Starting off with community survey results, because once again, this is our representative sample of our community and this gives an overarching view of how our community feels about community services.

These are results for some of our Community Service Departments on the community survey. What we see here is that many of our community services rank pretty high on the Importance to Satisfaction rating. We have Code Enforcement as number 2 on that rating, Parks and Recreation as number 4, Planning & Zoning is 5, Public Transportation is 7, and Parks & Recreation Programs fell at number 8 on that Importance of Satisfaction rating.



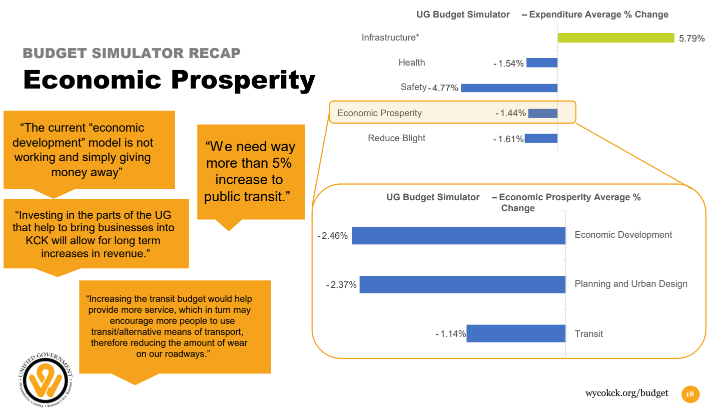
Now we're going to jump into the budget simulator results for our community service areas that were represented on the simulator and so first starting off with Community Health. Just remember that these results are based on the constraints of the simulator, so once again, there was the option to increase infrastructure by as much as 50% and for the other areas on the survey you could increase by as much as 5% or decrease by as much as 20%. Given that and the fact that we were trying to close a deficit, these are negative but that doesn't necessarily mean that everyone would slash our budget. It just means that given the constraints of the simulator, these are the results that we have.

We really want to look at health results as compared to the other results on the survey. On average the health area was decreased by 1.5% and if we open that up and look at all of the departments that fell in the health category, we have Human Services, the Health Department, Parks & Recreation, and Aging. We see that Human Services and the Health Department were decreased on average by about 1.93%, Parks & Recreation by 1.4%, and Aging by .07%.

Some of the comments on the left came from our budget simulator and people said that they would like to see an increased investment in health in these departments in this strategic area because it can be kind of a preventative safety measure to increase investment here.

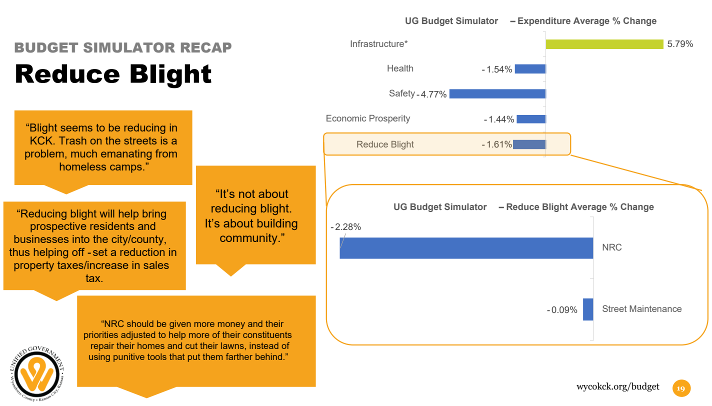
We also heard the comment that people would like to see us consolidate some parks, maybe reduce our number of parks and increase our investment in a smaller number there.

On the left you could see some people saying that we should increase investment in some of these departments even though on average the simulator does have the negative results.



Next on the simulator we had Economic Prosperity. On average Economic Prosperity was decreased by 1.44% and our departments within that strategic area were Economic Development, Planning & Urban Design, and Transit. On average Economic Development and Planning were decreased by about 2% and Transit was decreased by about 1%.

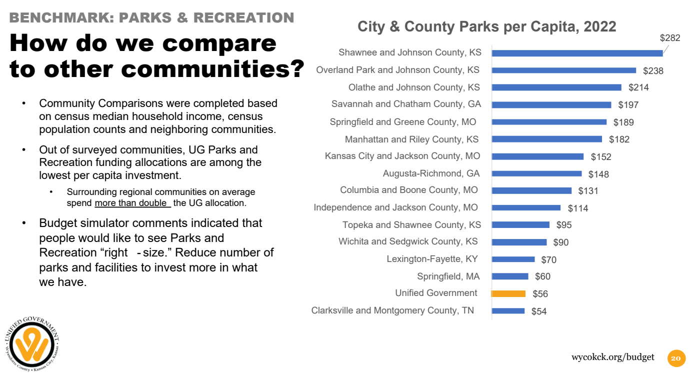
On the left, some of our comments highlight that some people would like to see an increase investment in some of these departments, so we see that for Transit and we also see that for, you know, investing in economic development and bringing businesses into KCK. We also heard some criticisms about how we currently do economic development just interest in investing more in our smaller businesses.



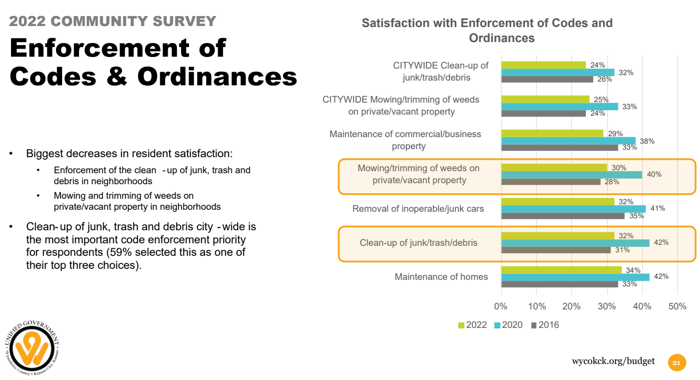
Next on the simulator we have the strategic priority of reducing blight in our community and so on average this area was decreased by 1.61% and the departments included here were NRC and Street Maintenance. On average the NRC was decreased—and the NRC is the Neighborhood

Resource Center, was decreased by 2.28% and Street Maintenance notably was decreased probably the least on average of any of our departments on the simulator.

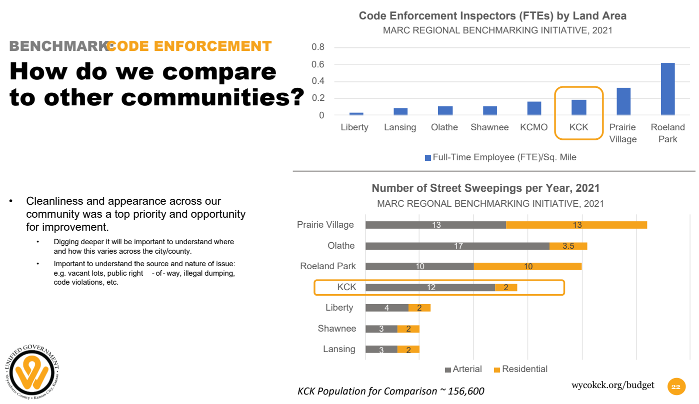
On the left, we can see some comments that people would really like to see us increase investment in our streets and we also had the comment that it's not about reducing blight, it's about building community, so kind of thinking about the wording of that strategic priority there.



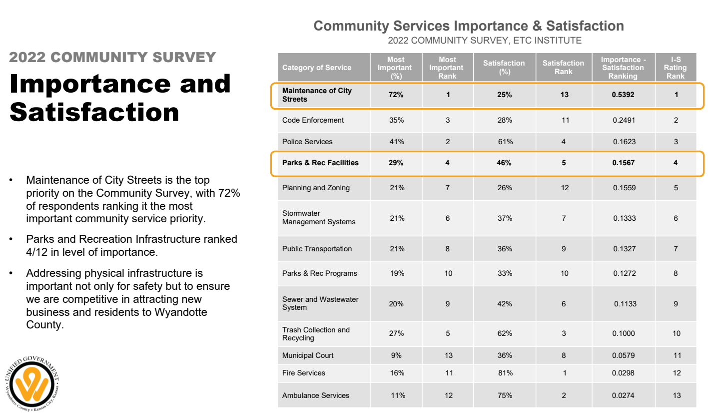
Next, we have our benchmarking that we did last year comparing our expenditures per capita on Parks & Recreation to those of the other places that we looked at and this data would be reflective of budget documents from last year, so it's not going to include any increased investments that we made in Parks & Recreation in last years budget. One of the things that we found was that based on this comparison we were ranked very, very low in terms of how much we spend per capita on Parks & Recreation.



This data comes from our community survey in the section where we asked about satisfaction with enforcement of codes and ordinances. The biggest decreases in resident satisfaction on the community survey came with the enforcement of cleanup of junk, trash and debris in the neighborhoods and the mowing and trimming of weeds on private or vacant property in neighborhoods.

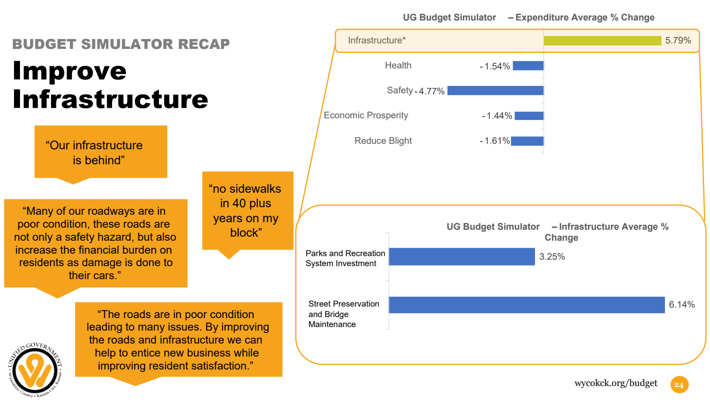


Here we have some MARC Regional benchmarking data. This data came from 2021 and the places included were places that volunteer to participate in the initiative. At the top we have the Code Enforcement Inspectors per square mile for the different communities and we see that we're third highest on the list and then on the bottom we have the number of Street Sweepings per year and that includes arterial in the gray and also residential in the yellow and we see that we're kind of mid-tier there.



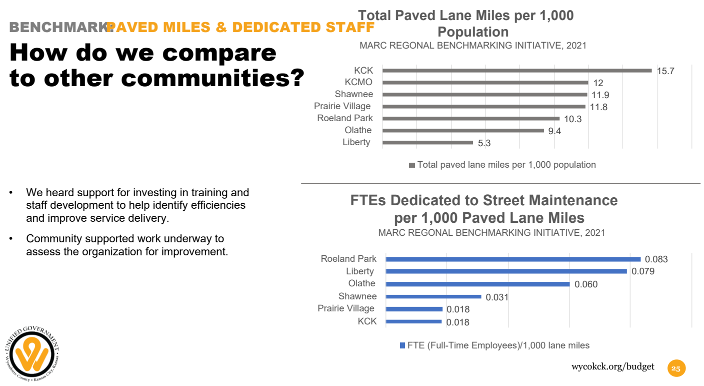
Mr. Peterson said I'm going to take over for infrastructure. Our next strategic area that we are going to report on is Infrastructure, so improving infrastructure. What we can see, if you recall, on the 2022 community survey, is that by far the highest item that was ranked as most important as well as highest on the important satisfaction ranking is improving the maintenance of city streets with Parks & Rec facilities close behind, fourth on the list.

Commissioner Kane said the satisfaction survey on trash collection or recycling is 62%. In District 5 it would be less than 40% and I'm amazed that it is 62% because they miss blocks every single week. So, I would have to disagree with that number.



Mr. Peterson said going forward, I just want to note that infrastructure is the only area that we actually saw increased investment in the budget simulator. This is in the context of having to balance almost an $8M deficit, so the only way that this could have been accomplished was either by increasing revenues or decreasing expenditures in other areas.

We received significant comments from the community about people not seeing infrastructure investment in their immediate area, about no sidewalk improvements on their blocks, about the overall poor conditions of roads. You can see there was a slight positive increase of about 3% in Parks & Rec and then a higher 6% increase on Street Preservation and Bridge Maintenance. We'll say this is in the context of being able to increase this level of investment by about 50% down to minus 20, so it's not a substantial change, but it is the only positive increase that we saw on the budget simulator.



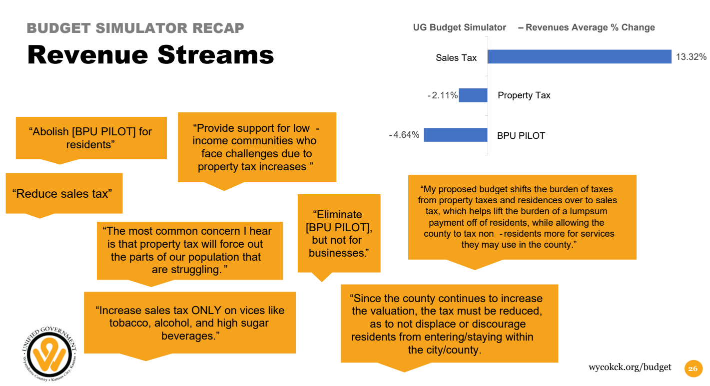
To put this in context, we looked at the MARC Regional benchmarking initiative where organizations provided the amount of paved lane miles per thousand population, so what we can see from this information is that Kansas City, Kansas substantially has a higher number of lane miles to maintain for our population than the next closest organizations of KCMO, Shawnee and Prairie Village at about three additional lane miles per every thousand people to maintain. Then, comparatively speaking, the number of FTEs dedicated to street maintenance per thousand paved lane miles, we're at the bottom of the list at about .018 people per thousand lane miles maintaining the streets.

Commissioner Markley said I would be interested to see, not that I think we should just get rid of a bunch of streets, but I would be interested to see if we were to try to get ourselves to a more comparable lane mile number, what streets would we suggest getting rid of and how would we do that. How many houses are along those streets, how many—because ultimately the long-term solution to this problem is to have fewer lane miles and to do that, and I know there are some of these areas in my district, we have some streets where we're maintaining the whole street for one house. Over the years it would probably cost us less to buy up that one house and not have that street.

So, I don't want that for this budget. I know that's probably a whole lot of work and that's somewhere far down the list of priorities, but if we're going to solve this problem long-term, I would be curious to know what that looks like. How do we get our number down closer to Kansas City, Missouri. I mean that's a big gap between even our next closest competitor as it were. What will we be looking at getting rid of how many houses we would have to buy, and how do we get there?

Commissioner Kane said I don't know where this should be at, the sidewalks to schools. In Piper there's only two housing additions that you can walk on a sidewalk to get to the school, which is the new school. None of the other schools have a sidewalk until you actually get on the school property. When they were annexed, they were told they were going to get sidewalks, fire stations, all kinds of stuff, which they have never got and it's disappointing to look around and—I think Turner, and you know, all the schools have got some sort of trouble with the kids getting to school, but Piper has more trouble than most.

Mr. Peterson said just looking at this, it kind of closes out our different expenditure areas, so I just again want to point out that it was very interesting to us when we looked at the overall data. We can see even though the budget simulator is not a statistically representative sample, we can kind of see just based on comparing the benchmarking information, the responses that we get from the community and the simulator, the feedback as well as the community survey that all of the different data points that we're looking at are kind of communicating similar results. So there isn't really much that, you know, where we are making more substantial investment, we have a higher satisfaction rating, we have less comments. We have more people willing to reduce those areas where we are getting a lower level of satisfaction. We can see that we're also investing less or have more challenges and then we're getting more comments or feedback saying to either increase investment or that we have work to do in those areas.



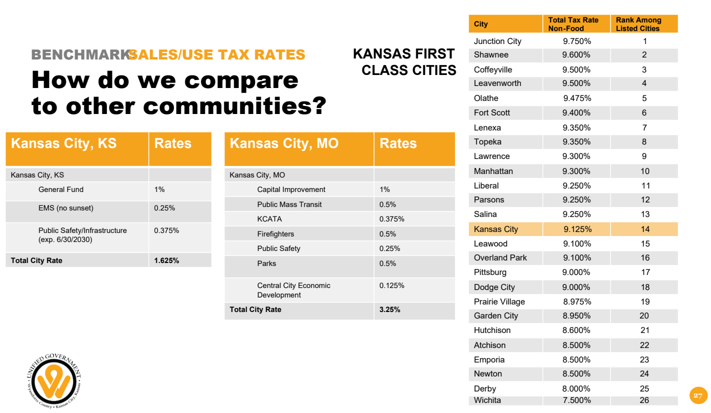
One of the things that's unique that we did this year on the budget simulator was provide the opportunity to increase sales tax. We think possibly that might be something that we might change a little bit in the future just because we realized that it seems like—I guess one interesting thing to note on that, it seems that there was a much greater desire to increase revenue than there was to cut services and cut expenditures. So, where people were given the option, people made the choice to increase our revenue stream as opposed to cutting departments and cutting city services.

What we can see on this chart, again, we did not give the opportunity to decrease sales tax because that's not something that's extremely easy to do, so the opportunity was given to increase it up to, I want to say a 1% increase, so in general, this equates to about a quarter cent sales tax, 13%.

Property taxes, the zero—the baseline would be full valuation. We allowed people to drop it all the way down to 13% reduction, which would be revenue neutral. What we can see there is that property tax was minimally reduced just because of the strong impact that it had on balancing the budget simulator.

Then, the BPU PILOT had the more substantial decrease. The option was given to reduce it by as much as 16% and that would be about a 2% reduction to the current rate, so that would be going from 11.9 down to 9.9% for the PILOT and we saw a decrease of about 4.6%.

We did get comments on reducing taxes, the tax burden. We also had comments on coming up with creative new revenue streams as well as looking at BPU doing some analysis making sure that it's benefiting us as a public utility. Also, providing support for lower income communities that are facing challenges due to tax increases.


BENCHMARKSALES/USE TAX RATES

How do we compare to other communities?

KANSAS FIRST CLASS CITIES

Kansas City, KS	Rates
Kansas City, KS	
General Fund	1%
EMS (no sunset)	0.25%
Public Safety/Infrastructure (exp. 6/30/2030)	0.375%
Total City Rate	**1.625%**

Kansas City, MO	Rates
Kansas City, MO	
Capital Improvement	1%
Public Mass Transit	0.5%
KCATA	0.375%
Firefighters	0.5%
Public Safety	0.25%
Parks	0.5%
Central City Economic Development	0.125%
Total City Rate	**3.25%**

City	Total Tax Rate Non-Food	Rank Among Listed Cities
Junction City	9.750%	1
Shawnee	9.600%	2
Coffeyville	9.500%	3
Leavenworth	9.500%	4
Olathe	9.475%	5
Fort Scott	9.400%	6
Lenexa	9.350%	7
Topeka	9.350%	8
Lawrence	9.300%	9
Manhattan	9.300%	10
Liberal	9.250%	11
Parsons	9.250%	12
Salina	9.250%	13
Kansas City	9.125%	14
Leawood	9.100%	15
Overland Park	9.100%	16
Pittsburg	9.000%	17
Dodge City	9.000%	18
Prairie Village	8.975%	19
Garden City	8.950%	20
Hutchison	8.600%	21
Atchison	8.500%	22
Emporia	8.500%	23
Newton	8.500%	24
Derby	8.000%	25
Wichita	7.500%	26

27

Just a reminder, just pulling a slide for benchmarking from our previous presentation, this is how we ranked on sales taxes compared to other first-class cities, so we're somewhere towards the middle of the list at about 9.1%.

Commissioner Burroughs asked, could we go back to the previous page. I want to make sure I heard correctly the numbers. Did you say the property tax—reduce property tax 2%, how much would that be if we were to do that 2%? **Mr. Peterson** said zero percent is the 15% increase, the minus 13% is revenue neutral. It's probably—you can open it and just show—**Commissioner Burroughs** said you could come back with that answer. I would just like to know in numbers—**Mr. Peterson** said and again, it's just average based on all the responses, so it's not necessarily a true, exact number. **Commissioner Burroughs** said and we're talking city and county budget there. We're not talking about the city's budget or the county's budget, we're talking about a consolidated budget when we present this number, correct? **Mr. Peterson** said it's about $4.2M. **Commissioner Burroughs** asked how much, I'm sorry? **Mr. Peterson** said maybe—actually it's closer to like $3M. **Commissioner Burroughs** said $3M? Yeah, 2% reduction, that you know, something percent would be—and you said from 11.5 to 9.9 on the PILOT is the numbers you gave or did I miss that. I was trying to write it down when you were talking. **Mr. Peterson** said our current rate is—it's a 2% reduction on our current rate is the max that we let people reduce by. **Commissioner Burroughs** said okay, but I would take it down 2.9.

The question I have, again, back to property tax, I'm assuming that is the Unified total, that's city and county. **Mr. Peterson** said it is both city and county and that's another thing that we thought about doing in the future. If we're going to continue to focus on our Kansas City, Kansas budget and our Wyandotte County budget, potentially if we continue using the budget simulator and doing the DotteTalks, kind of having two separate simulators. One simulator for just city functions, city funds and one simulator for county functions and county funds to get a different perspective. **Commissioner Burroughs** said great. I assumed that it was cumulative. I just wanted to make sure.

Mr. Peterson said that's it, so if you guys have any questions or feedback for us.

Commissioner Johnson said thank you all for all of this hard work that you have provided to us to help us make better decisions as a community. My comments are not really directed towards anybody. They've been provided to you—because you all are just providing data. My comments are to this Commission and to the community. This is my opinion, a strong opinion, is that we need to focus our attention on finding innovative revenue sources through economic development.

That's one of the comments that was made, but we need to address manning our Economic Development Department and that to me has to be a priority, not only manning them, but we need some qualified candidates to come in and to lead our economic development portion of our community. That's the only way we're going to grow this community and I'm just going to say this, this kind of goes against what was recommended tonight. We might have to pay a premium to get the person that we need, or the persons that we need, to do a good job of really pushing this community forward.

I'm finding myself held in tension tonight because I keep hearing discussions about making further cuts. You cannot cut Economic Development, you cannot cut Planning and expect to grow the community and we need to do this right now. We cannot afford to wait another two, three, five, ten years; we are already behind the ball.

I do recognize that we do need to make cuts, but when I see information in here and it's talking about cutting Economic Development and cutting Planning & Zoning, I'm very, very much perturbed by that. If we're going to talk about—the one thing I would jump on board with is what Commissioner Bynum's task force has been discussing with us with regard to lowering the PILOT, the BPU PILOT. I would rather have that over a longer period of time as opposed to a shorter period of time, but as it relates to the growth of this community and we know we need to make some cuts, there's no doubt, but you can't make a cut to the area that's actually going to grow your community.

Again, I don't know how—I'm not—I could get preachy, but I'm not going to get preachy tonight, we need to do this, make this a priority tonight or today, next week. We need to be making this a priority about filling those positions because as long as they're not filled, we're going to continue to fall further and further behind our counterparts in the various communities that are around us.

Commissioner Kane said Harold says it a lot better than the way I say it, but I appreciate his comments and I agree with them. If we had no one there answering the phone, and it can't be one person. They need to be people that are good at it, people who has experience at it. Then, we need to go—when we're with the Planning folks, we need those that listen instead of being an obstacle to get something done.

Commissioner Stites said yeah, I totally agree. We do not need to—Economic Development is definitely a key to us moving forward and if we go with an unstaffed department and we have obstacles that are constantly put up in making it difficult for developers to get answers back, to get permitted, to move development—I'm going to tell you right now that gets—that word gets out there really quick and it has been. The word on the street is Wyandotte County is tough to deal with and that's not acceptable and I don't know how you think we're going to increase economic development when we have no one in that position and we're constantly putting up roadblocks.

I agree with getting folks in those positions and having somebody actively going out. We can't put all of our eggs in WYEDC, they do a great job, but they're a partner and we need to have our own people doing it also.

Also, I'd like to say that I agree with presenting a budget that reflects the county side and the city side. I think it was mentioned that we're going to potentially have this simulator again next year—I was a participant at the Bonner location for the simulator for the event and I think that it would really be helpful that if we're able to show the county side and the city side separately.

Commissioner Markley said as far as the situation overall here, I love the budget simulator. I like that it forces people to understand that they can't only ask, they have to decide what might be taken away because traditionally we had budget public hearings as required by state law and we would have lot of folks come up and say we want you to lower taxes and that same person, in the same breath almost, would say and we want these 10 additional services and, obviously, it just doesn't work like that. I like that it forces that discussion and that understanding. I do think 28 participants is not fabulous. I would say we probably need to look at a new way of handling that.

My recommendation would be that staff members divvy up the existing neighborhood group meetings and one staff member goes to a neighborhood group meeting and does a simulator. You could have gone to the Argentine Neighborhood meeting and my Turner Neighborhood meeting and had more than 28 participants at just those two neighborhood groups. I would say, don't send the whole crew of staff to every one of them because that's a lot, but my recommendation would be next year divvy them up. One staff member go to each neighborhood group meeting, do the simulator at those meetings and you would probably like more than quadruple your attendance in just doing it in that format.

That's my thought on that, but I appreciate all the work you guys put into it. I wish you would have had better turnouts at those events.

Commissioner Townsend said a few observations. When I went through this the first time and looked at it, I was a bit perplexed and I think some of it goes to what Commissioner Markley just said, the number of people who participated. But we see time and again certain things that the community where you get a lot bigger input in terms of numbers and response say they want infrastructure improvements and then you see a situation like this where they take money from that. It was just amazing to me to see what I thought were inconsistencies there.

As a member of the Economic Development Standing Committee, I echo entirely what Commissioner Johnson said. That has to be a priority. We need to get professionals in there with a lot of appropriate initials behind them to help us man and direct that department. So, you know, as Commissioner Stites said, or alluded to, there will be somebody there when the phone rings that is dedicated to just that and not just development. You may need some other bodies in that as well.

Thanks to all those who participated, but like I said, when I looked at this a couple of times, I was amazed at what seemed to me to be inconsistencies about what we hear about the needs generally. There was very little taken away from the areas where we spend most of our money, so that was interesting. One last thing, well, I'll move on because I can't recall it now, but thank you all.

Commissioner Bynum said a couple of items, I am working right now with staff to bring the drafts of the two rebate ordinances forward. Those can be brought in July, and also hopefully, the charter ordinance amendments that would allow for the separate rates on BPU PILOT and then I would just advocate again for the Commission to please come to consensus on the PILOT relief particularly for the older adult population that we talked about.

Lastly, I have a question which is, I heard that this is our last budget workshop of this type, so I'm wondering what it is that's coming next. What's next in our budget process here?

Mr. Lindsey said what's next in our budget process is on August 10th, Administrator Johnston will present his 2024 Proposed Budget and after that there will be a number of workshops.

Commissioner Townsend said once you called on Commissioner Bynum, then it immediately came back to me what my other comment was going to be. I guess I'll ask publicly, it doesn't have to be answered tonight, but I'm still a bit confused. I remember the $6M which was the sum announced that would have impact on the budget if certain things were done by reducing BPU and the resounding, in terms of numbers of commissioners who spoke about that including me, is that sounds great, what is not going to be done. Just so I'm clear, I can get offline and find out if the ordinance is in and of themselves and what's proposed that is the $6M or that's something else. That's the other part, the other side of the coin, if that takes us down another $6M, we'd have to do a whole lot to make that up. What's not happening and that's something we need to still keep in mind.

Commissioner Bynum said I would defer to our staff who ran those numbers, but the two ordinances that I'm referencing are the Sales Tax and Utility Tax rebates. In addition to that, our Clerk's Office also processed the Homestead rebates, which are paid elsewhere, but nonetheless, I believe our Deputy Clerk told us that they processed something like 549 of those applications that qualified. So, I do not believe that the $6M figure is correct, but I again would defer to staff and the reason I say that is because if we pass those two ordinances which will update the income levels, but also make them align with the state's Homestead Rebate Program, and if we eliminate the PILOT for that targeted group of individuals, anyone who qualified for any of that would still have to come in and apply. I simply I think that would take multiple years for those folks that are able under some new guidelines to become aware that they can come in and apply.

It's just me thinking. I don't think that every single person who qualifies is going to be running in to apply because it's going to take a while for us to get the word out to them. Anyway, that's my two cents and, Commissioner, we can swing back around to you in an email and clarify the numbers.

Commissioner Townsend said thank you and I'll do that. I was pretty sure that just those charter changes wouldn't equate to $6M, but I was pretty confident that was a number that when they were talking about impact to the budget overall, $6M was a real ear and eye opener, so I'm not sure where that was coming from. Maybe that was by reducing the PILOT rate itself, but thank you. I'll go back and listen to that meeting also.

Mr. Lindsey said as far as the ordinances, the impact, it would not be $6M. We don't have a complete estimate yet, but what the ordinances for the Sales Tax and Utility Rebate this past year, we paid out $154K and we're thinking there is a possibility that it could be three times that amount, so possibly we may be looking at like $500K to $600K with expanding the ordinances. It would not be $6M.

Commissioner Johnson said, Commissioner Bynum, I'm all the way onboard with the rebates as you have proposed. I think that helps to at least begin to address the issues of gentrification in our community. That's going to be—as we talk about growing our community, the issue of gentrification is going to always be something that we need to be mindful of. These rebates as you have proposed is a way for us to help those persons that are eligible be able to get some relief on that.

The other piece that I have also proposed or counter-proposed to what you presented to us is that we look at lowering the BPU PILOT. This is in light of—what I'm hearing is that there is going to be actually a few increases in fees for the BPU. If we can get some real ground work on lowering the BPU PILOT, I'm recommending that we at least try to look at it over a 10-year period of time or such time that will bring us into the area that is amongst our peers. I don't know how that would work. I would need staff to do some deliberation on that and preparation on that, but I would like to take smaller chunks over a longer period of time particularly in light of the fact that we're talking about increasing in fees.

The community may not see a big change immediately, but it is a way to do it in such a way that it dulls the pain of making any sharp cuts that we need on our side of the incoming expense statement.

Mayor Garner said I have a question for Commissioner Bynum if she is still there and thank you, I had asked Commissioner Bynum to take on that task force to look at the PILOT. She eagerly agreed to and it looks like they're doing great work with staff and community input. Just clarity for myself and maybe even for some commissioners, I know we've had conversations—I had recommended last year several times about splitting the PILOT between business and residential and I believe Legal came back with some clarity on that, that basically green light it allowing that. I don't know and maybe staff or, Commissioner Bynum, you could clarify that dynamic on where we're at as well as when we look at clarity for capping the PILOT at a certain amount through ordinance as well as looking at if BPU happens to pass a rate increase, obviously, that would affect the PILOT as well and that would coincide with that—just kind of being revenue neutral in that regard not taking on those additional revenues that would come from that. That could also either add relief in some factor or be applied to what you're trying to do. I didn't know if you were looking at that, Ms. Bynum, but those are some questions. If you have the answers, or staff, I think that would be some great clarity for me.

Commissioner Bynum said I just looked through our presentation to the Commission a couple of days ago, but unfortunately, I'm at home sick right now, but nonetheless we want to bring forward the charter ordinance change that would allow for the two different rates or different rates for residential versus commercial, so that is part of the package that we would need to bring forward and we can bring that forward sooner rather than later and it would also cap the rate. That's within that charter ordinance work that was brought to us in, I think, February and we just held it at that time for the committee work to present. I think that might have answered both your questions.

If they do vote to raise rates at the BPU, it does translate to more dollars, but there's a point at which that's a wash and not helpful, so I would want to make sure that we're looking with our staff at what those numbers would be with a rate increase. You know, what would that increased revenue be because if I'm paying more for water and lights and then the Unified Government gives me some minor reduction on the PILOT part, it could just end up being a wash and not really a reduction of money coming out of my pocket, but I'm interested in that as well.

Mayor Garner said that was the biggest question, if that board does vote to raise their rates is just—I could see being a double whammy for our residents, especially our seniors and our lower income residents that are already struggling if not only they pay more for rates, but then they pay more in fees and PILOT, PILOT obligations as well that could come from the Unified Government, so thank you for that work. Hopefully that continues to be part of that consideration we take into those most in need in our community as we move whatever recommendation proposal that you're going to bring to the full Commission for a final debate and consideration and decision.

Mayor Garner said if there are no further questions from this Commission, I would like to say thank you to staff, great job. Thank you to all those community members. I've gone to some of the DotteTalks and I can say my observation is that it's really amazing that the residents really take this seriously. They take a deep dive, they spend a lot of time, they debate, they have great conversation and communication, very respectful dialogue between our residents on identifying what the priorities should be and facing those challenges head on, making cuts that are hard decisions, but making those decisions saying this is what we can live with. To me that's the value of this effort that staff has put on and really reflects what community-driven should be.

I agree with Commissioner Markley that, hopefully, we can capture more residents by connecting with Livable Neighborhoods and our NBR's and really getting out to these neighborhood groups and spending a little more time with them and allowing them to be involved to capture, hopefully, additional data. The whole purpose of this when you talk about—I've always been a proponent of being community-driven in lot of what we do and hoping to meet the reasonable expectations that, and I like to say reasonable, expectations that the community has for us. It gives this Commission the opportunity to make some informed decisions based on what the community values as necessities here in Wyandotte County, so thank you all so much and thank you for all those that are viewing, I will now entertain a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Davis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, to adjourn. Roll call was taken and there were nine "Ayes," Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, McKiernan.

MAYOR GARNER ADJOURNED
THE MEETING AT 6:13 p.m.

____
Brett Deichler
Unified Government Clerk

dt