







# 2021

## Municipal Management Priorities Survey

REPORT OF FINDINGS

Prepared by: Dr. Beverly A. Cigler, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor Emerita, Penn State University

## 2021 Pennsylvania Municipal Management Priorities Survey

## **Report of Findings**

For

The Chrostwaite Institute

and

Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs

April 2022

Prepared by: Dr. Beverly A. Cigler

Distinguished Professor,

Emerita

Penn State University

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1-3
Background and Purpose.  The Survey  Data Management and Analysis  Municipalities Receiving the Survey  Survey Response Rates  Respondent Position	1 1 1 2 2 2
Questionnaire Content	3-5
Municipal Background Characteristics	3
Characteristics of the Responding Municipalities	5-14
Population Size Population Trends Geographic Region Rural-Suburban-Urban Character General Fund Revenues Staff Expansion Plans Provision of Police Services Provision of Fire Services Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems Stormwater Authorities Comprehensive Plans Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances Zoning Ordinances	5 8 8 9 10 11 11 11 12 12 12 13 14
Ratings of Initiatives by the Survey Municipalities	14-2
Highest Priority Initiatives  Top 3 Priority Initiatives  Average Ratings for All 16 Initiatives  Other Initiatives	14 15 16 20
Municipal Influences on Initiative Ratings	21-38
Position of the Respondent	21 22

Population of the Municipalities	25
Population Trend of the Municipalities	26
Geographic Region of the Municipalities	27
	29
General Fund Revenues	31
Staff Expansion Plans	33
Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems and Authorities	34
Status of Comprehensive Plans	34
Status of Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances (SALDOs)	34
Status of Zoning Ordinances	35
Provision of Police and Fire Services	37
Changing Priorities	38
Summary and Implications	-42
References	43
Appendix A: The 2021 Pennsylvania Municipal Management Priorities Survey	
Appendix B: Invitation to Participate Letter Sent to Municipalities	
Appendix C: Other Municipal Initiatives identified in Question	

## 2021 Pennsylvania Municipal Management Priorities Survey INTRODUCTION

#### **Background and Purpose**

This report is the second in a series of planned research efforts by the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) and the Chrostwaite Institute to determine priorities for various municipal initiatives by the Commonwealth's local governments. The first report provided findings from a 2017 survey (Cigler, 2019). A second study, conducted during summer 2021, basically uses the survey questionnaire initially developed to gather more recent data. Both sets of findings inform policymakers and others interested in building the capacity of local governments, helping to shape educational programming for appointed and elected municipal officials. They offer those officials information useful for municipal management and planning.

This report analyzes responses to the 2021 Pennsylvania Municipal Management Priorities Survey, focused on the management priorities deemed most and least pressing by municipal officials. Municipal characteristics such as form of government, population, and region are considered in understanding differences among communities. Where appropriate, findings identified in 2017 are compared with those identified in 2021.

#### The Survey

The survey was developed by the PSAB staff, modelled after the 2017 survey. On June 21, 2021, it was sent via email to 1056 municipalities with a population of 2,500 or more, except Pennsylvania's largest cities, with a request for the municipal manager/chief administrative officer, to complete and submit the survey online. Appendix A is a copy of the survey. The letter inviting the municipalities to participate is attached as Appendix B. SurveyMonkey was used to transmit the survey and to tabulate responses. Twice in July and three times in August, reminders and surveys were emailed to municipalities that had not yet responded to encourage them to respond. As an additional incentive for responding, those participating could enter into a drawing for two \$25 gift cards.

The survey consisted of three sections: (1) municipal and respondent background information; (2) respondent ratings of various priorities for their municipalities; and (3) perceived changes in priorities over the past five years.

## **Data Management and Analysis**

SurveyMonkey software converted the raw data from the questionnaires into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) file. Quality-control measures were employed to assure that the data were accurately placed in SPSS, which was used to perform the data analysis. Cross-tabulation tables were developed to compare and measure associations across the information gathered. Statistical significance tests were applied using standard guidelines (Andrews et al. 1981). Analyses of data and report writing for both the 2017 and 2021 surveys

were performed by Dr. Beverly A. Cigler, a Penn State Distinguished Professor Emerita of Public Policy and Administration who taught at Penn State Harrisburg.

#### **Municipalities Receiving the Survey**

The survey was sent via email to 1,056 Pennsylvania municipalities. A population threshold of 2,500 or greater resulted in 83 townships of the first class, 599 townships of the second class, 322 boroughs, and 52 cities of the third class receiving the survey. Larger cities and the lone third class city with just 800 residents did not receive surveys. Overall, second class townships, the most common form of government in Pennsylvania, comprised 57% of the governments receiving surveys. The 2017 and 2021 samples of municipalities were almost identical.

#### **Survey Response Rates**

The overall survey response rate was about 42%. Differences in the response rate of the various municipal types were small (Table 1). The 2017 Survey response rate was almost 60%, likely because the 2017 respondents had the option for either a paper or an online response whereas in 2021 there was no paper option. Analysis of the 2017 responses, however, did not show significant differences depending on which response option was used so a less costly online option was selected for the 2021 survey.

Form of municipality*	Surveys mailed	Surveys returned	Percent returned
City	52	23	44.2
Borough	322	157	48.8
1st Class Township	83	40	48.2
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Township	599	226	37.7
Total	1056	446	42.2

Table 1. Survey return rates.

## **Respondent Position**

Guidance accompanying the survey asked that it be completed by the "municipal manager or chief administrative officer of the municipality." An open-ended question asked respondents to indicate their position, resulting in a wide variety of responses. In fact, 121 unique positions were listed. Employees in many small communities hold more than one position. Examples include supervisor/secretary, manager/chief of police, finance director/assistant borough manager, assistant township manager/chief planner.

<sup>\*</sup>Municipal class names shortened for tables in this report.

For analysis, position responses were combined into two categories: municipal employees and elected officials. Municipal managers, administrators, and secretaries, as well as treasurers, clerks, and other appointees were classified as municipal employees. Mayors, council persons, supervisors, and other elected officials were classified as elected officials. Of the 446 individuals who responded to the survey, 95% could be classified as municipal employees and just 5% were elected officials. Eighty percent of the municipal employees were municipal managers or chief administrative officers. The 2017 and 2021 surveys had comparable positions represented by respondents. Table 2 presents a description of respondents.

Table 2. Position of survey respondents.

Position	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents
Municipal Employees	423	94.8
Elected Officials	23	5.2
Total	446	100.0

## **QUESTIONNAIRE CONTENT**

The questionnaire sought to determine what initiatives are perceived by the respondents to be municipal priorities. One section gathered background characteristics of the municipalities and a second section focused on the initiatives that are perceived to be the highest priorities.

## **Municipal Background Characteristics**

Background characteristics included questions about the form of municipal government, its population, rural-suburban-urban status, geographic region, land area, and general fund revenues. There were questions about the provision of police and fire services and whether the municipality operates under a MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System), has a separate stormwater authority, a comprehensive plan, a municipal subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO), and a zoning ordinance. Table 3 presents the complete list of background questions. (See Appendix A for the complete questionnaire, listing every question.)

Table 3. Background information on survey municipalities.

• ]	Position of the respondent?
• ]	Form of municipality?
• (	Operate under a home rule charter?
• ]	Population of municipality?
• (	Geographic region of municipality?
• ]	Population increasing or decreasing?
• ]	Land area of municipality?
• ]	Rural, suburban, or urban?
• [	Total general fund revenues for municipality?
• ]	Expanding staff over the next five years?
• ]	How are your police services provided?
• ]	Paid municipal fire department?
• (	Operate under an MS4 from DEP?
• ]	Have a stormwater authority?
• ]	Have a comprehensive plan?
• 1	When was your comprehensive plan last updated?
• ]	Have a Municipal Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance?
• 1	When was the SALDO last updated?
• ]	Do you have a zoning ordinance?
• 1	When was the zoning ordinance last updated?

## **Possible Municipal Initiatives**

Each respondent was asked to provide a rating for each of 16 specified initiatives that the municipality might undertake in the next five years and also was given the opportunity to list other high-priority initiatives not included on the list. The initiatives covered a wide range of possible issues that every municipality faces such as economic development, planning, growth, funding, debt, police and fire services, and others. Table 4 lists the municipal initiatives presented to each respondent.

Table 4. Municipal initiatives included in the survey questionnaire.

Human resources management
2. Provision of municipal services via internet (e-government)
3. Infill development/redevelopment
4. Fire service improvements
5. Emergency medical service improvements
6. Police service improvements
7. Managing debt service payment
8. Community planning
9. Managing pension costs and other legacy liabilities
10. Improving operating revenues
11. Smart growth
12. Blight prevention and remediation
13. Community and economic development
14. Stormwater management
15. Obtaining grants and intergovernmental revenues
16. Capital infrastructure maintenance and improvements
List other high-priority municipal initiatives

## CHARACTERISTICS of the RESPONDING MUNICIPALITIES

Several attributes of the municipalities were scrutinized to learn whether population, geographic region, rural-suburban-urban character, and other attributes have a bearing on the survey responses. That is, do these attributes affect the priorities of the municipality? For some analyses, data are simplified by collapsing responses into fewer categories. This allows for tables that are easier to read and for patterns in responses to be better identified. The following sections of the report describe the background attributes.

## **Population Size**

Respondents placed their municipality in one of six population categories: less than 2,500, 2,501 to 5,000, 5,001 to 7,500, 7,501 to 10,000, 10,001 to 15,000, and greater than 15,000. Six municipalities did not respond to the question. Some respondents may have not responded accurately or their municipality's population may have changed and they used an outdated census figure. Table 5a shows the number of responding municipalities in each population category. Table 5b shows the same data expressed as percentages.

Table 5a. Number of the responding municipalities within each population category.

	Number of municipalities						
Form of municipality	Less than 2,500	2,501 to 5,000	5,001 to 7,500	7,501 to 10,000	10,001 to 15,000	Greater Than 15,000	Total
City	0	2	5	7	3	6	23
Borough	7	84	34	18	11	2	156
1 <sup>st</sup> Class Township	0	9	4	3	7	16	39
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Township	4	105	48	25	18	22	222
Total	11	200	91	53	39	46	440

Table 5b. Percent of the responding municipalities within each population category.

	Percent of municipalities						
Form of municipality	Less than 2,500	2,501 to 5,000	5,001 to 7,500	7,501 to 10,000	10,001 to 15,000	Greater Than 15,000	Total
City	0	9	22	30	13	26	100
Borough	4	54	22	12	7	1	100
1 <sup>st</sup> Class Township	0	23	10	8	18	41	100
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Township	2	47	22	11	8	10	100
Total	3	45	21	12	9	10	100

For all analyses in this report, the population categories were collapsed into three: 5,000 or less. 5,001 to 15,000, and greater than 15,000. Using this categorization, 48% of the responding municipalities (211 out of 440) have populations of 5,000 or less. The breakdown is shown in Figure 1.

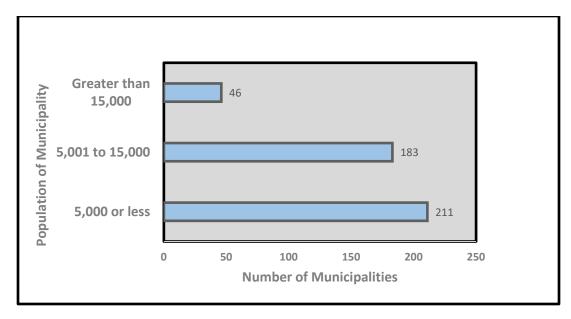


Figure 1. Population categories of the responding municipalities.

Part of the analysis compares results from the 2021 survey with those from the 2017 survey. Figure 2 shows that the population makeup of both surveys is very similar.

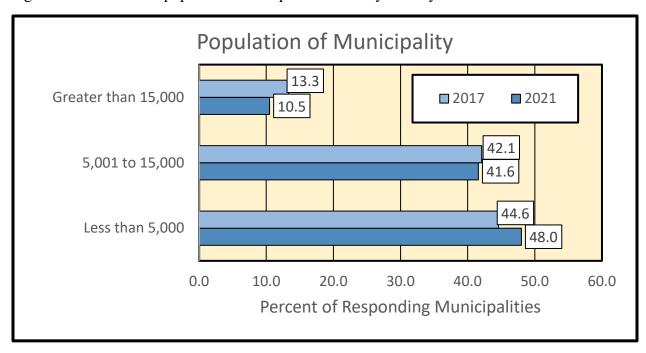


Figure 2. Comparison of the populations of responding municipalities for the surveys in 2017 and 2021.

#### **Population Trends**

Whether a municipality has an increasing or decreasing population may have bearing on community needs. Those with increasing populations may need to expand their infrastructure such as water lines, sewer lines, and roads. Those with declining populations may also have great need for repairs or replacement to infrastructure or might have entirely different needs related to blight or infill, as examples. The questionnaire asked whether a community had an increasing or decreasing population, or whether it was holding steady.

Almost half (45.8%) of the responding municipalities indicated their population has stayed about the same over the past 10 years. Thirty-five percent claim an increasing population, while only 16% reported a population decrease. Figure 3 shows the array of population trends reported in 2017 and 2021, which are very similar.

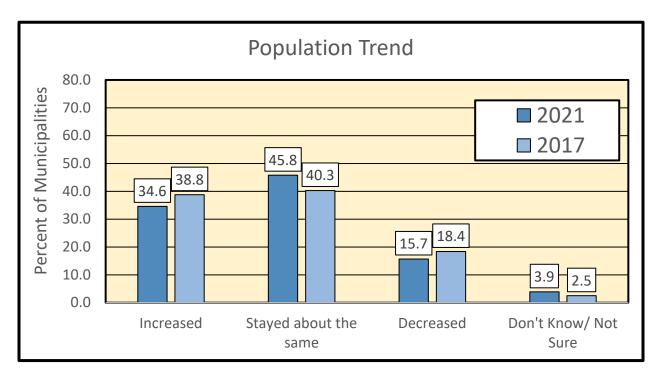


Figure 3. Population trends for the responding municipalities with a comparison to the results from the 2017 survey.

## **Geographic Region**

Respondents placed their municipality in one of seven geographic regions: northeast, northwest, northern tier, central, south central, southeast, or southwest. The categories were not specifically defined and a respondent may be unsure of where to place the municipality. For example, is Reading southeast or south central? Is Bradford northwest or northern tier? To remove some of the ambiguity and simplify the analysis, geographic region was recoded into only three categories, east, central, and west. The simplification does not remove all ambiguity, but provides a bit more certainty and allows for more reliable statistical analysis.

Using the collapsed classification, about 45% of the responding municipalities identify as being in the east; 25% in the central, and 30% in the west (Figure 4).

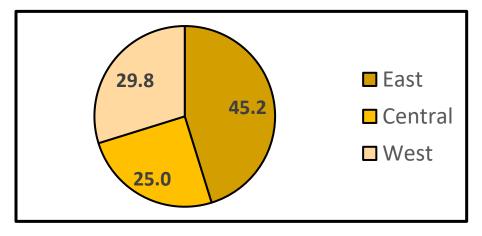


Figure 4. Geographic distribution of municipalities responding to the survey.

#### Rural-Suburban-Urban Character

Respondents also characterized their municipalities as "mostly rural," "mostly suburban," or "mostly urban." Just 16% of the responding municipalities self-identified as "mostly urban" while almost half indicated they are "mostly rural." Eight respondents failed to answer this question. Figure 5 provides the information graphically.

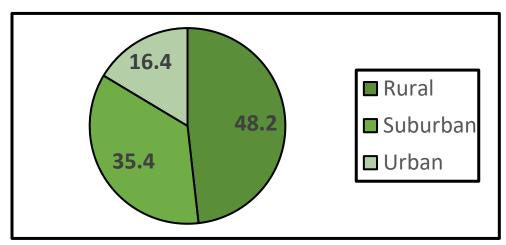


Figure 5. Percentages of respondents identifying their municipality as either rural, suburban, or urban.

On the rural-suburban-urban scale, the make-up of the 2017 and 2021 municipalities is almost identical (Figure 6).

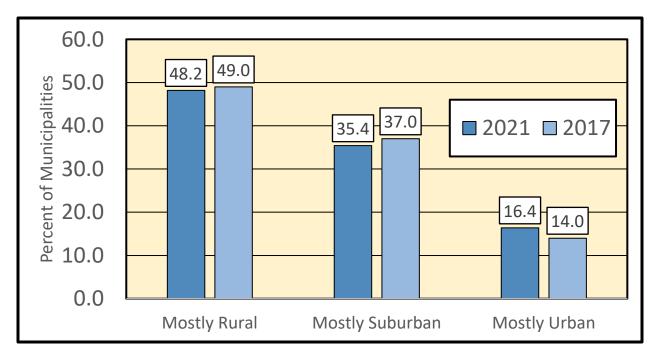


Figure 6. Comparison of the rural-suburban-urban character of survey respondents in 2021 compared to the 2017 survey.

#### **General Fund Revenues**

Respondents selected from six options to identify their general fund revenues: less than or equal to \$500,000, \$500,001 to \$1 million, greater than \$1 million to \$3 million, greater than \$3 million to \$5 million, greater than \$5 million to \$10 million, or greater than \$10 million. Again, it is useful to collapse the responses into three categories: less than or equal to \$1 million, greater than \$1 million to \$5 million, or greater than \$5 million. Almost half of the responding municipalities fall into the middle category, greater than \$1 million to \$5 million. The 2021 breakdown, which matches the 2017 survey results almost exactly, is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Annual general fund revenues for the responding municipalities.

General fund revenues	Number of municipalities	Percent of municipalities
Less than or equal to \$1 million	116	26.6
Greater than \$1 million to \$5 million	210	48.1
Greater than \$5 million	110	25.2
Total	436	99.9 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Summation less than 100% is due to rounding.

#### **Staff Expansion Plans**

One hundred forty-four (33%) of the responding municipalities anticipate hiring new staff members in the next five years. Two hundred ninety-two (67%) do not anticipate new hires. Ten individuals did not respond.

Forty-five percent of municipalities experiencing population increases anticipate hiring new staff whereas only 26% of those with stable or decreasing populations expect to hire new staff members. More highly-populated municipalities are more likely to hire new staff. Fifty-three percent of municipalities with populations greater than 15,000 expect to add staff within the next five years, but only 21% of those with populations under 5,000 expect to hire. The difference is statistically significant based on the Goodman and Kruskal tau statistic ( $\tau = 0.038$ , p = <0.01).

#### **Provision of Police Services**

Information was requested regarding how each municipality provides for police protection. Five response options were listed: through our own department, through a regional police department, contracted out with another municipality/municipalities, by the Pennsylvania State Police, or other, please specify. The 2021 survey results mirrored those of 2017. A large majority of the responding municipalities (62%) have their own police departments. More than a quarter rely on the Pennsylvania State Police and regional police forces account for just about 7% of the responding municipalities (Table 7).

Table 7. Provision of police services for the r	responding	municipalities.
---	------------	-----------------

How are your police services provided?	Number of municipalities	Percent of municipalities
Through our own department	272	62.4
Through a regional police department	32	7.3
Contracted out with another municipality	10	2.3
By the Pennsylvania State Police	120	27.5
Other	2	0.5
Total	436	100.0

#### **Provision of Fire Services**

The survey asked whether the municipality's fire department is paid or volunteer. Almost all (92%) of the municipalities rely on volunteer fire fighters. Staffing and other issues related to volunteer fire fighters were not explored in the survey and no questions were specifically directed to the provision of emergency medical services.

#### **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems**

A Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, frequently referred to as an MS4, is a conveyance system that handles stormwater for a municipality. It carries stormwater, i.e., rainwater that flows through storm drains, pipes, ditches and overland runoff, but not sewer water so is not part of a combined sewer system. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, working through the state permitting program, requires municipalities in U.S. Census Bureau defined urbanized areas to construct and maintain MS4s. Further, they are required to develop stormwater-management programs to prevent pollutants from entering the stormwater system. The result is that residents of many communities are required to pay a fee to support the MS4 program. Two hundred forty-four (55%) of the responding municipalities operate under an MS4. Table 8 provides the details.

Does your municipality operate under an MS4?	Number of municipalities	Percent of municipalities
Yes	244	54.7
No	185	41.5
Don't know/No answer	17	3.8
Total	446	100.0

Table 8. Existence of an MS4 for the responding municipalities.

#### **Stormwater Authorities**

Some municipalities have an existing stormwater authority. Others, when required to operate under an MS4, may establish a stormwater authority to assist in implementing the stormwater management program. Only 8% of the survey responses indicated that the municipality has a stormwater authority and 92% said there was not an authority. Twenty-six respondents failed to respond. Table 9 provides the details.

Table 9.	Existence o	of a stormwate	r authority	for the	responding	g municipali	ties.

Does your municipality have a stormwater authority?	Number of municipalities	Percent of municipalities
Yes	33	7.9
No	387	92.1
Total	420	100.0

## **Comprehensive Plans**

About 81% of the responding municipalities have comprehensive plans in place, just 8% indicated not having a comprehensive plan. An additional 48 respondents (11%) claimed either

not to know or to be unsure of the existence of a comprehensive plan. Twenty-three others (5%) did not respond to the question. Table 10 provides the details for the 423 responses. The valid responses from the question in 2017 revealed 94% of municipalities claiming to have a comprehensive plan compared to the 81% in 2021.

Table 10. Existence of a comprehensive plan for the responding municipalities.

Does your municipality have a comprehensive plan?	Number of municipalities	Percent of municipalities
Yes	342	80.9
No	33	7.8
Don't know/Not sure	48	11.3
Total	423	100.0

Respondents were asked how recently the comprehensive plan was updated. For those responding, about 63% indicated that the plan was updated within the past 10 years. Thirty-two percent said it has been more than 10 years since an update. Five percent were not sure. A large number of respondents (103) failed to answer the question. This is not too surprising because so many didn't know whether a plan even existed for their municipality.

#### **Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances**

Information was requested on the existence of a municipal subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO). About 85% of the respondents indicated a SALDO is in effect for their municipality, 9% said that there was none, and 5% did not know or were unsure. An additional twenty-three respondents did not answer the question. Complete data are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Existence of a subdivision and land development ordinance for the responding municipalities.

Does your municipality have a SALDO?	Number of municipalities	Percent of municipalities
Yes	361	85.4
No	39	9.2
Don't know/Not sure	23	5.4
Total	423	100.0

Respondents were asked how recently their community's SALDO was updated. Of the responding municipalities, 57% indicated an update within the last 10 years and 16% said it was updated within the past two years. Thirty-one percent indicated no updates in the past 10 years.

#### **Zoning Ordinances**

Respondents provided information on zoning ordinances. About 90% claimed that their municipality has a zoning ordinance and about 9% indicated no zoning ordinance. The question was not answered by 24 respondents. The numbers are reported in Table 12.

TC 11 10	T		1'	C 41	1'	municipalities.
I ahle I /	HVictorice of	t 2 7011110	Ordinance	tor the rec	nonding	milmicingliftee
1 autc 12.	L'AISICHEE O	I a Zomme	orumance	TOT THE TES	Bumunia	mumerbandes.

Does your municipality have a zoning ordinance?	Number of municipalities	Percent of municipalities
Yes	381	90.3
No	39	9.2
Don't know/Not sure	2	0.5
Total	422	100.0

Over two-thirds of the municipalities claim to have updated their zoning ordinance within the past 10 years and 24% within the past two years. But, almost one quarter indicated it has been more than 10 years since the zoning ordinance was updated. Thirty-three respondents were not sure and the question was not answered on 67 of the returned questionnaires.

## RATINGS OF INITIATIVES BY THE SURVEY MUNICIPALITIES

## **Highest Priority Initiatives**

A major goal of the Pennsylvania Municipal Management Priorities Survey was to determine what issues/initiatives are considered to be the most and least important for municipalities in the Commonwealth. Survey respondents were presented a list of 16 municipal initiatives (Table 4) and asked to assign a priority rating for each. The priority rating scale went from 1 to 10 with "1" being the lowest and "10" being the highest priority. Of the 16 initiatives, capital infrastructure maintenance and improvement received the highest percentage of "10" ratings, with 25.4% of the municipalities so responding. Obtaining grants received the second highest percentage of "10" ratings (23.4%). The third and fourth issues receiving the highest percentage of "10" ratings are community and economic development and stormwater management, with 12.7% and 12.5%, respectively. The third and fourth issues received about 50% higher ratings than any of the remaining lower rated initiatives among the list of 16 possible priorities.

Managing debt service payments received the lowest percentage of "10" ratings (2.5%) and human resources management received the second lowest percentage (3.2%) of "10" ratings. The highest and lowest rankings are very similar to those in the 2017 study (Cigler, 2019). Table 13 lists the ratings for all 16 initiatives in 2021.

Table 13. Highest priority ratings for municipal initiatives included in the survey questionnaire.

Municipal Initiative	Number of respondents ranking this initiative as highest priority	Percent of respondents ranking this initiative as highest priority
Infrastructure maintenance and improvements	102	25.4
Obtaining grants	94	23.4
Community and economic development	51	12.7
Stormwater management	50	12.5
Blight prevention and remediation	34	8.5
Smart growth	29	7.2
Improving operating revenues	23	5.7
Managing pension costs	22	5.5
Community planning	21	5.2
Infill development/redevelopment	20	5.0
Fire service improvements	20	5.0
Police service improvements	19	4.7
Emergency medical service improvements	15	3.7
Provision of services via internet (e-government)	15	3.7
Human resources management	13	3.2
Managing debt service payment	10	2.5

## **Top 3 Priority Initiatives**

Even if an initiative is not rated as the very highest priority, it may still be an important issue for a municipality. Here, we consider any initiative that was rated as the highest, second highest, or third highest priority (scores of "10," "9," or "8" in the questionnaire) and call them "Top 3 Priority." Two initiatives, infrastructure and grants stand out as the only initiatives with more than half of the respondents rating them as "Top 3 Priority." Stormwater and community and economic development also were highly rated as "Top 3 Priority," ranked by 43% and 38% of the respondents, respectively. These results are very similar to the highest priority ratings for the initiatives. Seven different initiatives received fewer than 20% "Top 3 Priority" ratings (Table 14).

Table 14. Top 3 Priority ratings for municipal initiatives included in the survey questionnaire.

	Number of	Percent of
	respondents	
T., 141, 141, 11		respondents
Initiative	ranking this	ranking this
	initiative as a	initiative as a
	Top 3 Priority	Top 3 Priority
Infrastructure maintenance and improvements	238	59.4
Obtaining grants	232	57.9
Stormwater management	172	42.9
Community and economic development	152	37.9
Improving operating revenues	116	28.9
Smart growth	114	28.4
Blight prevention and remediation	109	27.2
Community planning	108	26.9
Managing pension costs	84	20.9
Infill development/redevelopment	76	19.0
Fire service improvements	72	18.0
Managing debt service payment	70	17.5
Provision of services via internet (e-government)	66	16.5
Police service/public safety improvements	64	16.0
Human resources management	63	15.7
Emergency medical service improvements	49	12.2

#### **Average Ratings for All 16 Initiatives**

The previous two sections of this report evaluated the highest priority initiatives, the lowest priority initiatives, and the Top 3 Priority initiatives. An additional way to look at the prioritization assigned by the respondents is to examine the average priority rating for each initiative.

Logically, cities may have different priorities than boroughs or townships. So, for each form of government, an average rating for each of the initiatives was calculated. Remember that a rating of "10" is the highest priority that can be assigned while a rating of "1" is the lowest priority. Thus, a higher score indicates a higher priority. The average ratings are presented in Table 15 with the highest average priority for each initiative highlighted in yellow.

Table 15. Average priority rating for each initiative by form of municipality.

Form of Government	Community Development	Community Planning	Infill	Smart Growth	Blight
City	8.90	7.00	7.75	7.00	8.45
Borough	7.11	6.35	5.13	6.06	6.38
1st Class Township	7.17	6.57	6.49	6.46	5.74
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Township	5.44	5.21	4.20	4.88	4.19
Average rating	6.36	5.83	4.91	5.55	5.32

Table 15 -- continued. Average priority rating for each initiative by form of municipality.

Form of Government	Infrastructure	HR Management	Police Service	Fire Service	Obtaining Grants
City	8.95	5.75	5.80	6.00	8.95
Borough	8.12	5.17	5.96	5.06	8.01
1st Class Township	8.20	5.94	6.54	6.43	8.34
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Township	6.92	4.15	4.04	4.82	6.71
Average rating	7.56	4.76	5.04	5.10	7.45

Table 15 -- continued. Average priority rating for each initiative by form of municipality.

Form of Government	Stormwater Management	Operating Reserves	Managing Debt	Pension Costs	E-Government
City	6.65	7.80	6.95	6.90	5.50
Borough	7.00	6.44	4.85	5.53	5.33
1st Class Township	8.03	7.06	5.94	7.14	6.00
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Township	6.12	4.82	3.34	4.19	4.44
Average rating	6.63	5.75	4.29	5.06	4.95

Table 15 -- continued. Average priority rating for each initiative by form of municipality.

Form of Government	EMS Services
City	4.35
Borough	4.38
1st Class Township	5.49
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Township	4.54
Average rating	4.56

Several points are notable. First, for 9 of the 16 initiatives, cities have higher priority ratings than any of the other municipal forms. For the other seven initiatives, first class townships had the highest priority rating. This result supports the findings elsewhere in this report, i.e., cities have lots of pressing issues and they are of high priority. For several of the initiatives, cities assign a much higher priority than do other types of municipality. For example, the average score for blight for cities is 8.45 while the average score for blight for the other three forms of municipality is 5.45. Police, fire, and EMS services are rated by first class townships as higher priorities than other municipalities rate them. Considering boroughs only, the highest priorities are infrastructure, obtaining grants, community and economic development, and stormwater management. The lowest borough priorities are EMS, debt, fire services, and infill.

This analysis also confirms the findings of the most pressing and least pressing initiatives for Pennsylvania's municipalities. The highest average ratings for all forms of government combined are for infrastructure and obtaining grants (average ratings are 7.6 and 7.5, respectively). After that, stormwater management (6.6) and community and economic development (6.4) are also important for the survey respondents. These four are the only initiatives with average priority ratings higher than 6.0. The initiatives having the lowest priorities are debt, EMS, human resources, and infill. Debt had the lowest average rating at 4.3.

A visual presentation of these results is presented in Figure 5. From this graph, it is apparent that the Commonwealth's cities have the highest priority ratings for most of the initiatives, and by a wide margin for some initiatives such as community and economic development, infill, blight, and debt. Also, it is easy to identify the initiatives having the lowest overall priorities such as debt, EMS, human resources, infill, and e-gov. The lowest ratings for all but one initiative, EMS, were conveyed by second class townships, which are financially more secure than other forms of government in Pennsylvania. It is expected that these largely suburban and often sprawling jurisdictions would have the lowest ratings for most initiatives among all forms of government.

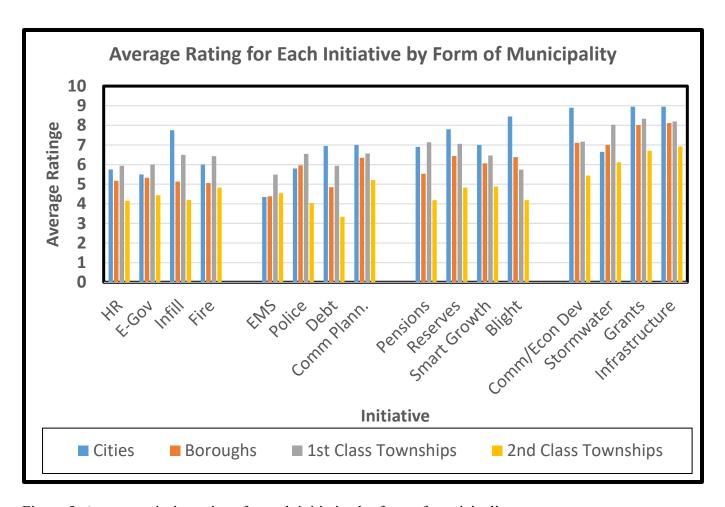


Figure 5. Average priority ratings for each initiative by form of municipality.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is the appropriate test for determining whether the differences among scores for the various forms of municipality are statistically different. This test was performed individually for each initiative using the ANOVA routine in SPSS. Prior to the analysis, the homogeneity of variances among the data groups was checked, finding homogeneity for 12 of the initiatives. The variances were not homogeneous for operating reserves, community and economic development, obtaining grants, and infrastructure. The results for these initiatives should be interpreted with caution.

The differences are statistically different for all but one initiative, EMS. This means that, in general, the cities responding have different priority ratings from boroughs which are different from townships. The differences seen in the ratings would not be expected by chance. The results of the analysis of variance are presented in Table 16.

Table 16. Results of analysis of variance to determine differences among average initiative rating scores for the different forms of municipality.

C	1 2	
Municipal Initiative	F statistic from ANOVA procedure	Statistical Significance
Human resources management	9.11	< 0.01
Provision of services via internet (e-government)	6.95	< 0.01
Infill development/redevelopment	20.07	< 0.01
Fire service improvements	5.30	< 0.01
Emergency medical service improvements	2.04	n.s. <sup>1</sup>
Police service improvements	25.35	< 0.01
Managing debt service payments	23.69	< 0.01
Community planning	10.33	< 0.01
Managing pension costs	22.46	< 0.01
Improving operating reserves	24.22	< 0.01
Smart growth	9.22	< 0.01
Blight prevention and remediation	32.55	< 0.01
Community and economic development	24.75	< 0.01
Stormwater management	8.26	< 0.01
Obtaining grants	15.75	< 0.01
Infrastructure maintenance and improvements	12.63	< 0.01

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$  n.s. = Not significant

Table 16 confirms that there are differences in the priorities among and between cities, townships, and boroughs, but the results do not specify the exact differences. For example, are cities different from townships, but not different from boroughs? Another example is whether first and second class townships differ. Another is whether boroughs are different from first class townships, but not different from second class townships. Many comparisons are possible. These differences have been analyzed using Tukey's HSD test. To save space, the results are not presented here but are available from the preparer of this report.

#### Other Initiatives

Survey respondents had an opportunity to name any other initiatives important for their municipalities that were not included in the list of 16 initiatives provided in the survey. They named forty-nine different initiatives, and some were named two or three times. Capital improvements (for example security cameras, a new recycling center, and fire station construction) were mentioned by 15 of the respondents. Some of the named initiatives fit into the initiatives presented on the original survey. For example, respondents mentioned road

improvements and MS4 issues on 10 of the returned questionnaires. The entire list of other initiatives provided by respondents is presented in Appendix C of this report.

#### MUNICIPAL INFLUENCES ON INITIATIVE RATINGS

The next several sections of this report examine the characteristics of municipalities that influence their ratings for various initiatives. The background information collected in the survey is used to define the characteristics of the responding municipalities. The percentages of the respondents assigning a particular rating for each initiative indicates the priority that initiative commands.

#### **Position of the Respondent**

Earlier in this report, it was indicated that there were 121 different answers to the question, "What is your position title?" Responses were combined into two logical categories: municipal employees and elected officials. The categorization was used to determine whether the priority ratings assigned by municipal employees differs from elected officials. The comparison is analyzed using a contingency table (cross tabulation) In this case, a 2 x 2 table with two categories for position and two categories (yes or no) for highest priority rating. The statistical significance of the results is tested by the Chi-square statistic (Andrews et al., 1981). The results are presented in Table 17.

Table 17. Results of contingency table analysis showing the relation between the position of the survey respondent and his or her number 10 priority rating for each initiative.

Municipal Initiative	Chi-square statistic from contingency table analysis	Statistical Significance
Human resources management	2.31	n.s. <sup>1</sup>
Provision of services via internet (e-government)	0.84	n.s.
Infill development/redevelopment	4.15	n.s.
Fire service improvements	4.15	n.s.
Emergency medical service improvements	7.00	< 0.05
Police service improvements	0.00	n.s.
Managing debt service payments	0.49	n.s.
Community planning	3.76	n.s.
Managing pension costs	1.26	n.s.
Improving operating reserves	0.32	n.s.
Smart growth	1.71	n.s.
Blight prevention and remediation	3.29	n.s.

Table 17 – continued. Results of contingency table analysis showing the relation between the position of the survey respondent and his or her number 10 priority rating for each initiative.

Municipal Initiative	Chi-square statistic from contingency table analysis	Statistical Significance
Community and economic development	5.14	< 0.05
Stormwater management	1.15	n.s.
Obtaining grants	1.28	n.s.
Infrastructure maintenance and improvements	5.84	< 0.05

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> n.s. = Not significant

These results indicate that, for all but three initiatives, there is no statistically significant difference between the priority ratings for elected officials and municipal employees. For EMS, community and economic development, and infrastructure, however, there is a difference. For each of those three initiatives, elected officials were more likely to assign a priority rating of "10" than were municipal employees (Table 18). The differences between the two types of respondents are not critical in light of the very small number of elected officials answering the survey—just 23 or 5.2% of 446 respondents, as reported in Table 2.

Table 18. Percentages of highest priority ratings (10) for initiatives by position of respondent.

Position of respondent	EMS is highest priority (%)	Economic development is highest priority (%)	Infrastructure is highest priority  (%)
Municipal employee	3	11	22
Elected officials	13	26	44

## Form of Government for the Municipalities

The data show that various forms of municipal government differ in assigning highest priority ratings for initiatives. For 8 of the 16 initiatives, a larger percentage of first class townships assigned a rating of "10" than did any other form of municipality. This was the case for HR, egov, EMS, debt, community planning, pensions, smart growth, and stormwater management. For 6 of the 16 initiatives, the cities surveyed were more likely to perceive an initiative as a top priority (number "10" rating) than other municipalities. This holds for infill, fire services, operating reserves, blight, obtaining grants, and infrastructure (Table 19, with highest priority for each initiative highlighted in yellow).

Table 19. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by form of municipality.

Form of Government	HR Management	E-Government	Infill	Fire Service
City	0.0	0.0	21.7	8.7
Borough	2.8	4.5	3.2	3.2
1st Class Township	8.6	7.5	12.5	7.5
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Township	3.0	2.2	2.2	4.4

Table 19 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by form of municipality.

Form of Government	EMS Service	Police Service	Debt	Community Planning
City	0.0	0.0	4.3	4.3
Borough	1.9	7.0	1.9	5.7
1st Class Township	7.5	10.0	10.0	7.5
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Township	4.0	1.8	0.9	3.5

Table 19 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by form of municipality.

Form of Government	Pension Costs	Operating Reserves	Smart Growth	Blight
City	8.7	13.0	8.7	39.1
Borough	5.1	7.0	6.4	10.2
1st Class Township	15.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Township	2.7	2.2	5.8	2.2

Table 19 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by form of municipality.

Form of Government	Economic Development	Stormwater Management	Obtaining Grants	Infrastructure
City	39.1	17.4	39.1	39.1
Borough	13.4	12.1	26.1	25.5
1st Class Township	22.5	27.5	35.0	27.5
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Township	5.3	7.1	13.3	18.6

Again, a contingency table analysis is appropriate to determine if the differences between government forms are significant in a statistical sense. Several cells in the contingency tables have expected cell counts of less than 5, suggesting that the results should be interpreted with caution.

For 9 of the 16 initiatives, the form of government makes a statistically significant difference in the likelihood for assigning a rating of highest priority (a rating of "10") (Table 20). For five of the nine initiatives (infill, operating reserves, blight, community and economic development, and obtaining grants), respondents from the cities were more likely to assign the rating of highest priority. For the other four initiatives (police services, debt, pensions, and stormwater management), first class townships were more likely to assign the highest priority rating. There was no statistically significant difference in the results for infrastructure. This is because a high number of municipalities were prone to assign a top priority rating to infrastructure, regardless of their form of government.

Table 20. -- Results of contingency table analysis showing the relation between the form of municipal government and likelihood of assigning the highest priority rating ("10") for each initiative.

Municipal Initiative	Chi-square statistic from contingency table analysis	Statistical significance
H	2.00	1
Human resources management	3.99	n.s. <sup>1</sup>
Provision of services via internet (e-government)	4.41	n.s.
Infill development/redevelopment	25.33	< 0.01
Fire service improvements	2.42	n.s.
Emergency medical service improvements	4.19	n.s.
Police service improvements	10.59	< 0.05
Managing debt service payments	13.43	< 0.01
Community planning	1.76	n.s.
Managing pension costs	11.85	< 0.01
Improving operating reserves	9.95	< 0.05
Smart growth	1.20	n.s.
Blight prevention and remediation	43.61	< 0.01
Community and economic development	31.21	< 0.01
Stormwater management	15.55	< 0.01
Obtaining grants	19.84	< 0.01
Infrastructure maintenance and improvements	6.89	n.s.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> n.s. = Not significant

#### **Population of the Municipalities**

Using the three population categories used throughout this report for all analyses, there are still cell counts of less than 5 in a contingency table so results should be interpreted with caution. Using the three population categories, there are differences among them in respondent perceptions of top priority (rating of "10") initiatives. In general, a municipality with a population greater than 15,000 is more likely to rate an initiative as a top priority but differences are statistically significant for only two initiatives: pensions and infrastructure. Table 21 gives all percentages. Table 22 provides the statistics.

Table 21. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by population category.

Population Category	HR Management	E- Government	Infill	Fire Service
5,000 or less 5,001 to 15,000	1.6 4.0	3.3 3.3	2.4 6.6	3.8 5.5
Greater than 15,000	7.5	4.3	6.5	4.3

Table 21 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by population category.

Population Category	EMS Service	Police Service	Debt	Community Planning
5,000 or less	3.3	4.3	1.9	4.7
5,001 to 15,000	3.8	4.4	2.2	4.4
Greater than 15,000	2.2	4.3	4.3	6.5

Table 21 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by population category.

Population Category	Pension Costs	Operating Reserves	Smart Growth	Blight
5,000 or less	1.9	4.3	3.8	6.6
5,001 to 15,000	7.1	6.6	8.7	8.7
Greater than 15,000	10.9	4.3	10.9	8.7

Table 21 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by population category.

Population Category	Economic Development	Stormwater Management	Obtaining Grants	Infrastructure
5,000 or less	9.5	9.5	17.1	18.0
5,001 to 15,000	13.1	12.0	25.1	30.6
Greater than 15,000	15.2	17.4	26.1	17.4

Table 22. -- Results of contingency table analysis showing the relation between population category for a municipality and likelihood of assigning the highest priority rating ("10") for each initiative.

Provision of services via internet (e-government)  Infill development/redevelopment	4.23 0.14 4.42	n.s. <sup>1</sup> n.s. n.s.
Provision of services via internet (e-government)  Infill development/redevelopment	0.14 4.42	n.s.
Infill development/redevelopment	4.42	11.2.
man do coopmon to do coopmon		11.5.
Fire service improvements	0.64	n.s.
1	0.32	n.s.
8 7	0.00	n.s.
•	1.03	n.s.
	0.38	n.s.
• • •	9.32	< 0.01
	1.12	n.s.
Smart growth	5.43	n.s.
Blight prevention and remediation (	0.68	n.s.
Community and economic development	1.92	n.s.
Stormwater management 2	2.48	n.s.
_	4.49	n.s.
Infrastructure maintenance and improvements	9.69	< 0.01

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> n.s. = Not significant

## **Population Trend of the Municipalities**

Population trend is not a very strong indicator of how the municipalities rate the initiatives. Whether a municipality is undergoing a population increase, decrease, or has a stable population has a statistically significant impact for only blight and community and economic development. For these, municipalities experiencing population loss are more likely to rate the initiative as a top priority. Twenty-five present of municipalities experiencing a population decrease rated blight as a top priority, compared to only 1% of municipalities increasing in population. Twenty-eight percent of municipalities with decreasing populations indicated that community and economic development is a top priority but only 6% of those with increasing population pointed to that as a top priority.

These ratings are not surprising. As the population of a municipality declines, residents and businesses exit leaving behind empty homes and stores. Fewer people also means less incoming tax revenue. Thus, blight and community and economic development become important priorities.

Obtaining grants is another initiative especially important for municipalities experiencing population decline. Thirty-two percent of those municipalities rated obtaining grants as a top priority while only 18% of municipalities with increasing populations offered that rating. This difference is not significant in a statistical sense, but is real for municipalities needing a monetary infusion to supplement their revenue stream.

#### Geographic Region of the Municipalities

Three geographic regions were used for analyses in this report: east, central, and west. For all but one initiative, geographic region did not make a statistically significant difference in the assignment of top priority ratings. For example, many municipalities rated obtaining grants as a top priority but that high priority was shared in all geographic regions. The lone initiative where the geographic region was significant was blight. Municipalities in the west are a little more than twice as likely to rate blight as a top priority (rating of "10") compared to municipalities in the central or eastern regions of the Commonwealth. The percentages for top priority ratings are presented in Table 23 and the statistics are presented in Table 24.

Table 23. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by geographic region.

Geographic Region	HR Management	E- Government	Infill	Fire Service
East	2.7	3.5	3.0	4.5
Central	3.9	3.6	5.5	5.5
West	3.5	3.1	6.1	3.8

Table 23 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by geographic region

Geographic Region	EMS Service	Police Service	Debt	Community Planning
East	3.5	4.5	2.0	5.0
Central	3.6	6.4	1.8	4.5
West	3.1	2.3	3.1	4.6

Table 23 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by geographic region.

Geographic Region	Pension Costs	Operating Reserves	Smart Growth	Blight
East	5.0	4.5	7.0	5.5
Central	2.7	3.6	9.1	5.5
West	6.9	7.6	3.8	13.0

Table 23 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by geographic region.

Geographic Region	Economic Development	Stormwater Management	Obtaining Grants	Infrastructure
East	9.0	9.5	19.6	23.1
Central	10.9	13.6	19.1	19.1
West	16.0	12.2	26.0	26.7

Table 24. -- Results of contingency table analysis showing the relation between geographic region and for a municipality and likelihood of assigning the highest priority rating ("10") for each initiative.

Municipal Initiative	Chi-square statistic from contingency table analysis	Statistical significance
Human resources management	0.31	n.s. <sup>1</sup>
Provision of services via internet (e-government)	0.08	n.s.
Infill development/redevelopment	2.02	n.s.
Fire service improvements	0.37	n.s.
Emergency medical service improvements	0.08	n.s.
Police service improvements	2.44	n.s.
Managing debt service payments	0.52	n.s.
Community planning	0.05	n.s.
Managing pension costs	2.16	n.s.
Improving operating reserves	2.29	n.s.
Smart growth	2.82	n.s.
Blight prevention and remediation	7.21	< 0.01
Community and economic development	3.83	n.s.
Stormwater management	1.31	n.s.

Table 24 – continued. Results of contingency table analysis showing the relation between geographic region and for a municipality and likelihood of assigning the highest priority rating ("10") for each initiative.

Chi-square statistic from contingency table analysis	Statistical significance
2.35	n.s.
1.95	n.s.
	statistic from contingency table analysis 2.35

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> n.s. = Not significant

#### **Rural-Suburban-Urban Character of the Municipalities**

The rural-suburban-urban character of a municipality played an important role in the perceptions of survey respondents. The self-described urban municipalities were almost always more likely to rate an initiative as a top priority than respondents from suburban or rural municipalities. For seven of the initiatives, infill, smart growth, blight, community and economic development, stormwater management, obtaining grants, and infrastructure, the responses differed statistically. The percentages are reported in Table 25 and the statistics are reported in Table 26.

Table 25. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by rural-suburban-urban character of the municipality.

Character of Municipality	HR Management	E- Government	Infill	Fire Service
Mostly rural	2.6	2.8	1.9	3.8
Mostly suburban	3.6	3.	5.2	5.8
Mostly urban	4.6	5.6	11.1	4.2

Table 25 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by rural-suburbanurban character of the municipality.

Character of Municipality	EMS Service	Police Service	Debt	Community Planning
Mostly rural	3.8	3.3	1.9	3.8
Mostly suburban	3.9	5.2	2.6	6.5
Mostly urban	1.4	5.6	2.8	4.2

Table 25 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by rural-suburbanurban character of the municipality.

Character of Municipality	Pension Costs	Operating Reserves	Smart Growth	Blight
Mostly rural	3.3	2.8	3.8	4.3
Mostly suburban	6.5	6.5	10.3	5.8
Mostly urban	6.9	9.7	6.9	22.2

Table 25 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by rural-suburbanurban character of the municipality.

Character of Municipality	Economic Development	Stormwater Management	Obtaining Grants	Infrastructure
Mostly rural	8.1	7.1	14.7	18.0
Mostly suburban	11.6	17.4	27.7	27.7
Mostly urban	22.2	11.1	27.8	29.2

Table 26. -- Results of contingency table analysis showing the relation between the rural-suburban-urban character for a municipality and likelihood of assigning the highest priority rating ("10") for each initiative.

Municipal Initiative	Chi-square statistic from contingency table analysis	Statistical significance
Human resources management	0.74	n.s. <sup>1</sup>
Provision of services via internet (e-government)	1.22	n.s.
Infill development/redevelopment	10.66	< 0.01
Fire service improvements	0.86	n.s.
Emergency medical service improvements	1.08	n.s.
Police service improvements	1.04	n.s.
Managing debt service payments	0.28	n.s.
Community planning	1.46	n.s.
Managing pension costs	2.51	n.s.
Improving operating reserves	5,80	n.s.
Smart growth	6.18	< 0.05
Blight prevention and remediation	25.46	< 0.01

Table 26 -- continued. Results of contingency table analysis showing the relation between the rural-suburban-urban character for a municipality and likelihood of assigning the highest priority rating ("10") for each initiative.

Municipal Initiative	Chi-square statistic from contingency table analysis	Statistical significance
Community and economic development	10.47	< 0.01
Stormwater management	9.40	< 0.01
Obtaining grants	11.07	< 0.01
Infrastructure maintenance and improvements	6.41	< 0.05

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> n.s. = Not significant

#### **General Fund Revenues**

Respondents placed the annual general fund revenues for their municipality into one of six categories that were collapsed into three (\$1 million or less, \$1 million to \$5 million, and greater than 5 million) for analysis. Priority ratings among the categories were statistically different for five initiatives: pensions, smart growth, community and economic development, stormwater management, and grants. For each of those, a higher percentage of municipalities in the highest revenue category awarded the top priority rating more frequently than did municipalities in either of the two lower revenue categories (Table 27 and Table 28).

Table 27. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by annual general fund revenues of the municipality.

Annual General Fund Revenues	HR Management	E- Government	Infill	Fire Service
\$1 Million or less	0.0	1.7	1.7	4.3
\$1 Million to \$5 million	3.6	3.8	4.3	4.3
Greater than 5 million	5.9	4.5	8.2	5.5

Table 27 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by annual general fund revenues of the municipality.

Annual General Fund Revenues	EMS Service	Police Service	Debt	Community Planning
\$1 Million or less	4.3	3.4	2.6	4.3
\$1 Million to \$5 million	2.9	3.3	1.4	3.8
Greater than 5 million	3.6	7.3	3.6	7.3

Table 27 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by annual general fund revenues of the municipality.

Annual General Fund Revenues	Pension Costs	Operating Reserves	Smart Growth	Blight
\$1 Million or less	0.9	2.6	2.6	4.3
\$1 Million to \$5 million	3.8	6.2	6.2	8.6
Greater than 5 million	11.8	6.4	11.8	10.0

Table 27 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by annual general fund revenues of the municipaliy.<sup>1</sup>

Annual General Fund Revenues	Economic Development	Stormwater Management	Obtaining Grants	Infrastructure
\$1 Million or less	6.9	6.9	15.5	19.8
\$1 Million to \$5 million	11.0	10.0	21.0	22.9
Greater than 5 million	18.2	19.1	29.1	28.2

Table 28. -- Results of contingency table analysis showing the relation between the annual general fund revenues for a municipality and likelihood of assigning the highest priority rating ("10") for each initiative.

Municipal Initiative	Chi-square statistic from contingency table analysis	Statistical significance
	0	1
Human resources management	5.79	n.s. <sup>1</sup>
Provision of services via internet (e-government)	1.52	n.s.
Infill development/redevelopment	5.46	n.s.
Fire service improvements	0.25	n.s.
Emergency medical service improvements	0.49	n.s.
Police service improvements	3.00	n.s.
Managing debt service payments	1.63	n.s.
Community planning	1.98	n.s.
Managing pension costs	15.44	< 0.01
Improving operating reserves	2.29	n.s.
Smart growth	7.89	< 0.05
Blight prevention and remediation	2.88	n.s.
Community and economic development	7.18	< 0.05
Stormwater management	9.13	< 0.01
Obtaining grants	6.24	< 0.05
Infrastructure maintenance and improvements	2.26	n.s.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> n.s. = Not significant

# **Staff Expansion Plans**

Overall, about a third of the responding municipalities anticipate adding staff in the next five years. Forty-six percent of first class townships anticipate adding staff, compared to 36% of the boroughs, and 27% of the cities. Differences among municipal forms are not statistically significant (Chi square = 5.58, p = 0.13). This result presents challenges. Based on their top priority ratings for initiatives, cities have the most pressing problems and would likely need additional staff to address them. However, the cities also rate obtaining grants as a high priority and that might help fund additional staffing. The survey did not explore whether city respondents

thought they could obtain more grants or whether they envisioned other ways to address problems without new hires.

### **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems and Authorities**

This report has noted that about 55% of the responding municipalities operate under a municipal separate storm sewer system, however, having an MS4 in place seems to have little bearing on the priority ratings for the initiatives. There was no statistical difference in the number of top priority ratings for 14 of the 16 initiatives. The two initiatives where priorities differed were smart growth and stormwater. Nine percent of municipalities with an MS4 in place rate smart growth as a top priority, but only about 4% of those without an MS4 do so. Almost 14% of the municipalities that have an MS4 in place rate stormwater management as a number one priority whereas only about 9% of those without an MS4 consider this to be a top priority. Different ratings for other initiatives were small and not significant in a statistical sense.

Having a stormwater authority made no statistical difference in the top priority ratings for any of the initiatives, as measured by a Fisher's exact test for 2 x 2 cross tabulation tables. (The Fisher's exact test corrects for small sample sizes and is recommended over the Chi-square test for sample sizes (McDonald, 2014).)

#### **Status of Comprehensive Plans**

There was no statistically significant difference in the top priority ratings for any of the initiatives based on the status of comprehensive plans. That is, the ratings for municipalities with a plan in place did not differ from those municipalities that did not have a comprehensive plan. Remember that about 81% of the respondents that answered the question about a comprehensive plan answered in the affirmative. A higher percentage of municipalities with a comprehensive plan awarded higher ratings for 11 of the 16 initiatives as a top priority, but the differences are not statistically significant.

# Status of Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances (SALDOs)

A higher percentage of municipalities having a SALDO in effect assigned the top priority rating for 10 of the 16 initiatives than did municipalities without a SALDO. However, none of these differences were statistically significant. For example, 13% of municipalities with a SALDO rated stormwater as a top priority and 5% of those without a SALDO gave a top priority rating to stormwater (Table 29). The differences in percentages for most of the initiatives were even narrower. The conclusion is that having a SALDO in place or not has little bearing on the perceptions of high priority initiatives.

Table 29. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by presence or absence of a SALDO for the municipality.

Status of SALDO	HR Management	E- Government	Infill	Fire Service
SALDO yes	3.5	4.2	4.4	5.3
SALDO no	0.0	0.0	7.7	2.6

Table 29 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by presence or absence of a SALDO for the municipality.

Status of SALDO	EMS Service	Police Service	Debt	Community Planning
SALDO yes	4.2	5.0	1.9	5.3
SALDO no	0.0	0.0	2.6	2.6

Table 29 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by presence or absence of a SALDO for the municipality.

Status of SALDO	Pension Costs	Operating Reserves	Smart Growth	Blight
SALDO yes	5.5	5.3	7.5	7.8
SALDO no	2.6	7.7	2.6	10.3

Table 29 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by presence or absence of a SALDO for the municipality.

Status of SALDO	Economic Development	Stormwater Management	Obtaining Grants	Infrastructure
SALDO yes	11.6	12.7	23.0	25.5
SALDO no	15.4	5.1	23.1	7.9

# **Status of Zoning Ordinances**

Having a municipal zoning ordinance in effect made it more likely that a respondent would assign the top priority rating for obtaining grants (probability of this occurring by chance is 3% as measured by Fisher's Exact Test). For 15 of the 16 initiatives, a higher percentage of the municipalities with a zoning ordinance rated the initiative as a top priority than did

municipalities without a zoning ordinance. For example, 26% of municipalities with a zoning ordinance rated infrastructure as a top priority whereas only 13% of municipalities without a zoning ordinance did so. All the percentages for top priority ratings are presented in Table 30.

Table 30. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by presence or absence of a zoning ordinance for the municipality.

Status of Zoning Ordinance	HR Management	E- Government	Infill	Fire Service
Zoning ordinance yes Zoning ordinance no	3.3	3.7	5.0	5.2
	2.8	2.6	2.6	0.0

Table 30 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by presence or absence of a zoning ordinance for the municipality.

Status of Zoning Ordinance	EMS Service	Police Service	Debt	Community Planning
Zoning ordinance yes Zoning ordinance no	3.9	5.0	2.4	5.2
	0.0	0.0	2.6	2.6

Table 30 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by presence or absence of a zoning ordinance for the municipality.

Status of Zoning Ordinance	Pension Costs	Operating Reserves	Smart Growth	Blight
Zoning ordinance yes Zoning ordinance no	5.5	5.8	7.6	8.7
	2.6	2.6	0.0	2.6

Table 30 -- continued. Percentages of highest priority ratings for initiatives by presence or absence of a zoning ordinance for the municipality.

Status of Zoning Ordinance	Economic Development	Stormwater Management	Obtaining Grants	Infrastructure
Zoning ordinance yes Zoning ordinance no	12.3	12.6	23.9	25.5
	10.3	5.1	7.7	12.8

#### **Provision of Police and Fire Services**

As noted in Table 7, most of the municipalities in the study (62%) have their own police departments, but many smaller municipalities rely on the Pennsylvania State Police to provide police services or contract out. In fact, 33% with populations under 15,000 in the study either contract our or rely on the State Police for police services. Less than 5% of the study communities with populations greater than 15,000 do the same.

How police services are provided makes a difference for six of the 16 initiatives (pensions, reserves, blight, community and economic development, stormwater, and grants). For five of these initiatives (pensions, reserves, blight, community and economic development, and grants), municipalities having their own police department were more likely to assign a higher rating to the initiative. These differences are statistically significant (Chi square = 17.6, p = .001). However, the manner in which police services are provided for a municipality did not affect the ratings for the importance of the police services initiative. Table 31 summarizes the results for the police initiative.

Table 31. Type of police service provision related to the police services initiative rating as a number one priority.

How are your police services provided?	Police is a number one priority initiative (percent)	Police is a Top 3 Priority initiative (percent)
Through our own department	6	23
Through a regional police department	3	7
Contracted out with another municipality	10	10
By the Pennsylvania State Police	1	2

The vast majority (92%) of the responding municipalities rely on volunteer firefighters. Yet, many such fire departments have difficulty maintaining and recruiting volunteers. Despite that, only 4.6% of the respondents rated fire as a top priority. Could it be that our municipal officials have not yet grasped the severity of this problem which is not looming in the future, but is here now?

### **Changing Priorities**

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provided \$1.9 trillion to facilitate recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Included in the Plan is \$350 billion in aid to states, cities, and tribal governments. Some of these funds will go to municipalities. The survey asked whether municipal priorities changed due to receipt or anticipation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Eleven percent of the respondents indicated that the funds have caused or will cause priorities to change.

The survey asked whether priorities for municipalities have changed in the past five years. One hundred twenty-nine respondents answered the question. Nineteen of those indicated there has been no change. The most frequently mentioned priority was a heightened focus on MS4 requirements and stormwater which was mentioned by 20 respondents. Infrastructure and quality of life/open space were tied for the second-most mentioned priorities with 19 mentions each. Blight/redevelopment was mentioned by 11 respondents. Other priorities having several mentions are listed in Table 32. In addition, many other priorities were mentioned, but by only a few respondents. This only serves to emphasize the focus on infrastructure-related issues. After all, MS4 and stormwater issues are really a subset of the broader infrastructure umbrella.

Table 32. Priorities that have changed in the past five years.

Priority	Mentioned as changing priority
MS4/Stormwater	20
Infrastructure	19
Quality of Life/Open Space	19
Blight/Redevelopment	11
Funding issues	7
Fire services	5
Police/Public Safety	4
Grants	3

## SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The 2021 Pennsylvania Municipal Management Priorities Survey was sent to 1,056 Pennsylvania municipalities: all first and second class townships, boroughs and third class cities of 2,500 or more in population. The largest cities did not receive surveys nor did one third class city that didn't meet the population threshold. The overall questionnaire return rate was 42%. This ranged from a low of 38% from first class townships to a high of 49% for boroughs. Respondents were overwhelmingly appointed officials (95%), primarily managers/secretaries and a variety of other local managerial positions. A few elected officials (5%) responded. There were not statistically significant differences between the appointed and elected officials in their responses to any critical questions. The 2021 survey closely resembles the first in a planned series of municipal priority surveys which was conducted in 2017.

The largest number of responding municipalities (48%) have populations of less than 5,000 and around 10% have populations greater than 15,000. The communities are located across the Commonwealth: 45% in the east, 25% in central, and 30% in western Pennsylvania. Just 16% self-identify as mostly urban, almost half claim to be mostly rural, and 35% mostly suburban communities. Nearly half (48%) of the governments have general fund revenues greater than \$1 to \$5 million, 27% fall into the \$1 million or less category, and 25% have general fund revenues greater than \$5 million.

Most participating governments (67%) do not anticipate significant staffing changes within the next five years, with communities losing population the least likely to be hiring. Most of the study municipalities (62%) have their own police departments and few (7%) are part of a regional police department or contract with another municipality (2%). Nearly 28% of the communities obtain their police services from the Pennsylvania State Police. Volunteer fire departments are the norm in 92% of the municipalities. A Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) is in existence for 55% of the governments, but just 8% currently have a stormwater authority.

The survey gathered data on municipal comprehensive plans, subdivision and land development ordinances (SALDOs), and zoning ordinances. Comprehensive plans were reported by 81% of the responding municipalities but 48 (11%) of the respondents claimed not to know of the existence of a plan and (5%) did not address the question. Zoning ordinances were reported by 90% of the communities, with just two respondents claiming to be unaware or unsure. Eighty-five percent of those responding reported a community SALDO, with just 5% claiming not to know or being unsure.

While 63% of the communities reported that their comprehensive plans had been updated in the last 10 years, nearly a third (32%) indicated that it was more than 10 years since an update. While just 5% of the respondents were unsure about updates, 103 individuals did not respond to the question. Among municipalities responding, 57 % said their SALDO was updated within the last ten years and 16% indicated an update within the last two years. Over two-thirds of the respondents said their community had a zoning ordinance updated within the last 10 years, with 24% claiming an update within the past two years. However, nearly a fourth of the communities

noted that it was more than ten years since the zoning ordinance was updated, 33 respondents didn't know or were unsure, and 67 did not answer the question, a lack of response similar to the question about updated comprehensive plans.

Information gathered by the 2021 survey's background questions was comparable to the sane characteristics revealed in the 2017 survey. This made it possible to compare and contrast findings across the two time periods.

Issues faced by communities in 2021 were the major focus of the latest survey. Capital infrastructure maintenance and improvement received the most rankings of highest priority among 16 issues considered by respondents, whether appointed or elected officials. Obtaining grants was a close second in ranking. The 3rd and 4th highest ranked initiatives--community and economic development and stormwater management—received about 50% higher rankings than all of the other lower ranked issues. Managing debt service payments was ranked last in priority and human resources management was ranked next to lowest. The dominance of infrastructure and obtaining grants corresponds to the 2017 survey rankings and human resources and other internal management concerns were not perceived to be of high importance in either survey.

Respondents from different forms of government, especially cities, rated some initiatives differently. Especially important is that cities gave highest priority rankings to more initiatives (9 of 16) than did other forms of government. First class townships did the same among all government forms for the other seven initiatives. Clearly, Pennsylvania's 3rd class cities have numerous pressing issues, Blight, for example, is a key concern of the cities, while first class townships appear to be more concerned than other government forms regarding police, fire, and emergency medical services. In their responses, borough officials gave highest priority to infrastructure, grants, community and economic development, and stormwater management. The boroughs gave lowest priority to emergency medical service, debt, fire services, and infill.

Important to remember is that for all forms of government, such issues as infrastructure, obtaining grants, community and economic development, and stormwater management are of high importance. However, cities rate more issues as having the highest priority and sometimes by a very wide margin compared to other forms of government, including, for example, infill, blight, and pensions. As would be expected with so many relatively wealthy, sprawling, suburban communities, second class townships rate most of the issues as lower priorities compared to other government forms. The lone issue receiving a high rating for second class townships was EMS.

There are also differences across population categories in perceptions of initiatives as top priorities. In general, communities with populations greater than 15,000 are more likely to rate an initiative as a top priority but differences are statistically significant for only two initiatives: pensions and infrastructure. A consistent survey finding is that municipalities with relatively large populations have more top priority rated initiatives. However, whether the community is growing, losing population or stable is not a very strong indicator of how initiatives are rated. The population trends show statistically significant different priorities for just two of initiatives: blight and community and economic development. For both, population loss for a municipality is

more likely to lead to a top priority rating than municipalities experiencing stability or an increased population. Specifically, 25% of communities experiencing population loss rate blight as a top priority but only1% of those with increasing population do so. Similarly, community and economic development is rated as a top priority by 28% of communities with decreasing population compared to just 6% with increasing population.

Geographic region yielded a statistically significant difference in top priority rating for just one initiative: blight. Municipalities in western Pennsylvania were a little more than twice as likely as communities in other regions of the state to rate blight as a top priority. It is noted, however, that some issues receive a top priority rating throughout the regions of the Commonwealth. Obtaining grants is an example. The rural-suburban-urban character of a municipality plays an important role in the perceptions of respondents regarding the initiatives. Urban municipalities were almost always more likely to rate an initiative as a top priority than respondents describing their municipalities as mostly suburban or mostly rural. For seven initiatives, the responses were statistically different: infill development/redevelopment, smart growth, blight prevention and remediation, community and economic development, stormwater management, obtaining grants, and infrastructure.

Levels of general operating revenues also pose statistical differences among and between municipalities. This occurred for five initiatives: pensions, smart growth, community and economic development, stormwater management, and obtaining grants. For each of those initiatives a larger percentage of municipalities in the highest general fund category rated the initiative as a top priority compared to the municipalities with smaller operating revenues.

A common theme from the ratings of various initiatives is evident, based on background characteristics of the municipalities. Form of government, large population, and urban character largely define how respondents rate initiatives as having highest priority. Respondents from larger, more urbanized communities—especially cities and some first class townships—perceive their governments to have more issues demanding greater attention (highest priority ratings) than other municipalities. In general, higher operating revenues coincide with a higher likelihood of assigning a number 1 priority rating to an initiative.

Overall, the survey findings offer a wealth of information to help inform additional research, educational and technical assistance programming targeted for local government, and suggestions for legislative policy direction. A number of topics specifically suggest a need for more training, such as updating comprehensive plans and SALDOs. Other topics stand out for the need for more detailed exploration, such as the relative lack of shared service arrangements for the provision of police and fire services. It was surprising that police, fire, and EMS services were not ranked higher by so many communities in light of staffing and funding shortages. Funding for a \$25M grant program for EMS was signed by the Governor in February 2022 and funds to help volunteer fire departments have increased in recent years, but such programs offer relatively small funding.

Several very broad topical areas emerge as very high priority concerns that affect a large number of municipalities. These are capital infrastructure maintenance and improvements, obtaining

grants, community and economic development, and stormwater management, which is a specific infrastructure topic. Evidence of the interest in these priority areas is that they were also the prominent interests in the 2017 survey.

The survey confirmed that it was useful to use the same design and relatively identical samples in 2017 and 2021 to obtain longitudinal data as the comparative information produced heightens confidence in the survey results. Highlighted throughout the findings is the smallness of the Commonwealth's numerous local governments. While that has many advantages, such as simplifying complexity and allowing for close contact with constituencies, the lack of capacity—technical, managerial, financial, etc.—poses immense problems for the small governments to compete in securing grants and implementing major projects.

Several study findings are especially concerning. As with the 2017 research, the 2021 questions regarding priority ratings for human resources management showed this as a low priority. Clearly, successful program implementation for any issue requires strong human resources management, as does designing programs and obtaining grants initially. Local and state governments nationwide have lost staff during the COVID pandemic. The survey findings, in addition, revealed that increased hiring is not as widely anticipated as would be expected given the great concern respondents expressed regarding various issues and the substantial interest in obtaining grants.

The project survey was completed shortly before a much debated bipartisan infrastructure bill was passed by Congress. It will make available historic grant monies to state and local governments, which requires not only expertise in obtaining the grants but also finding and training workers to implement capital infrastructure programs. The legislation includes funding for numerous types of infrastructure but some of the survey respondents seemed to have problems with the definition of infrastructure since their open responses on high priority initiatives were for projects that clearly fit into the list of sixteen initiatives presented to them. In addition, the opportunity to list initiatives did not include much variety in listing the many types of possible infrastructure projects.

Clearly, specialized grant training for all aspects of this massive infrastructure opportunity is appropriate. For whatever reasons, the study respondents noted their infrastructure and other needs, but not the staffing increases and human resources management role in successful implementation. This is especially the case for cities. Similarly, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) offers an infusion of funds for state and local governments over several years. Pennsylvania's communities need expertise in obtaining the funds, but also in using them. Cities were less likely than other forms of government to be adding future staff to assist in dealing with their many and high-priority issues, which suggests that high levels of attention be given to staffing. The legislature, in addition, needs to pay close attention to the priority needs of third class cities in the Commonwealth.

Yet another concerning finding from the 2021 research is the number of respondents either unaware, unsure of, or unwilling to respond to basic questions about the status of some of their land use and growth policies, such as the existence of comprehensive plans and whether and when various plans have been updated. There are clear linkages between having plans in place and up-to-date and obtaining funds for key initiatives related to land use issues.

# **REFERENCES**

- Andrews, Frank M., Laura Klem, Terrence N. Davidson, Patrick O'Malley, and Willard L. Rodgers. 1981. A guide for selecting statistical techniques for analyzing social science data, second edition. Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 70 pp.
- Cigler, Beverly A. 2019. Pennsylvania Municipal Management Priorities Survey Report of Findings. Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. 54 pp. plus appendices.
- McDonald, J.H. 2014. Handbook for Biological Statistics (3rd ed.). Sparky House Publishing, Baltimore, Maryland. 299 pp.

#### APPENDIX A: FINAL SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Thank you for participating in the PA Municipal Management Priorities Survey.

This survey is to be completed by your municipal manager or chief administrative officer. Please answer questions for the municipality where you work or serve as a public official, not where you reside. All individual survey responses will be kept anonymous, and reporting will only be on responses in aggregate.

An optional drawing entry form at the end of the survey may be completed if you would like to enter a drawing for one of two \$25 visa gift cards.

Thank you for your time completing this important survey. Survey findings will be shared with all participants and published online.

* 1. What is yo	ur position title?
* 2. How many number)	years have you been with the municipality you serve, in any capacity? (enter whole
* 3. What form	of municipality do you serve?
O	City
O	Borough or Incorporated Town
O	Township of 1st Class
O	Township of second Class
O	Other (please specify)
	<del></del>
4. Does your m	unicipality operate under a home rule charter?
O	Yes
O	No

*5. What is you	r municipality's population? Select one of the following population ranges.
O	less than 2,500
O	2,500 to 5,000
O	5,001 to 7,500
O	7,501 to 10,000
O	10,001 to 15,000
O	Greater than 15,000
* 6. Which of the municipality?	ne following Pennsylvania geographic regions BEST represents the location of your
O	Northeast
O	Northwest
O	Northern Tier
O	Central
O	South Central
O	Southeast
O	Southwest
* 7. Has your mu	nicipality's population increased, stayed about the same, or decreased in the last 10 years?
O	Increased
O	Stayed about the same
O	Decreased
O	Don't know/Not sure
* 8. Which of the	e following BEST describes your community?
O	Mostly rural
O	Mostly suburban
O	Mostly urban

* 9. In a typical y	ear, what are your municipality's total general fund revenues?
O	Less than or equal to \$500,000
O	\$500,001 to \$1 million
O	Greater than \$1 million to \$3 million
O	Greater than \$3 million to \$5 million
O	Greater than \$5 million to \$10 million
O	Greater than \$10 million
10. Do you antic	ipate expanding your full-time staff in the next 5 years?
O	Yes
O	No
* 11. How are po	olice services provided in your municipality?
0	Through our own department
0	Through a regional police department
0	Contracted out with another municipality/municipalities
O	By the Pennsylvania State Police
O	Other (please specify)
•	a paid municipal fire department, where most or all staff are on your payroll?
O	Yes
O	No
O	
13. Do you opera system (MS4)?	ate a Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) permitted municipal separate storm sewer
O	Yes
O	No

14. What year w	vas your MS4 initially permitted? (enter year - for example, 2018)
15 Dayou anar	ate a storm water outhority?
15. Do you oper	ate a storm water authority?
O	Yes
O	No
* 16. Do you ha	ve a municipal comprehensive plan?
O	Yes
O	No
O	Don't Know/Not sure
17. When was y	our comprehensive plan last updated?
O	Within 2 years
O	Within 5 years
O	Within 10 years
O	It's been more than 10 years
O	Don't know/Not sure
* 18. Do you ha	ve a municipal subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO)?
O	Yes
O	No
O	Don't Know/Not sure
19. When was y	our municipal subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) last updated?
O	Within 2 years
O	Within 5 years
O	Within 10 years
O	It's been more than 10 years
O	Don't know/Not sure

O	Yes
О	No
О	Don't know/Not sure
21. When was yo	ur zoning ordinance last updated?
O	Within 2 years
O	Within 5 years
O	Within 10 years
O	It's been more than 10 years
O	Don't know/Not sure

\* 20. Do you have a municipal zoning ordinance?

\* 22. Over the next 5 years, what initiatives is your municipality planning to focus its attention, time, and resources on relative to other initiatives? Use a scale of 1 through 10, with 1 being the lowest priority and 10 as the highest priority.

	Lower priority									Highest priority
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	level 10
Human Resources Management (i.e. recruitment, training, succession planning, collective bargaining, compensation)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Provision of municipal services via internet (egovernment)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Infill development/redevelopment (residential and commercial)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire service improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Emergency medical service (EMS) improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Police Service improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Managing debt service payment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Managing pension cost and other legacy liabilities (other post-employment benefits)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Improving operating reserves (rainy day fund)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smart growth (i.e. compact/mixed use development, walkability, open space preservation)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blight prevention and remediation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community and economic Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stormwater management	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obtaining grants and intergovernmental revenues	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

			T	1	1	1	T		T	T	1
Capital infrastructure maintenance and	е	C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
improvements List any other high					*		/212222	if/			
List any other mgi	i priority ii	inclative	3 1101 1110	idded iii	the abov	Ciliatiix	(picase	эреспу)			
		•									
23. Have your prid funds?	orities cha	nged du	e to rece	ipt or an	ticipatio	n of Ame	rican Re	scue Plar	Act (AR	PA) fisca	l recover
O	Yes										
O	No										
0	I don't know										
24. Have your con	nmunity's	prioritie	s change	d in the	past five	years? If	f yes, ho	w have yo	our prior	ities cha	nged?
		•									
25. Drawing Entry	Contact F	orm (op	tional)								
Name											
Address											
City/Town											
State/Province											
Zip/Postal Code											
Email Address											
Phone Number											

#### APPENDIX B: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE LETTER

The Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) invites you to complete a survey of municipal management priorities. *This survey should be completed by the appointed municipal manager or chief administrative officer* of the municipality.

The purpose of the survey is to identify municipal priorities and how they may differ by geographic region, community character, and other basic demographic factors. Results of the survey will be used to help inform policymakers and other stakeholders of common municipal priorities that could be further supported and to advise educational programing for municipal officials. A version of this survey was conducted in 2017 and sent to boroughs, townships, and 3<sup>rd</sup> class cities with a 60 percent response rate.

The Report of Findings from the 2017 survey is available for download online at the Chrostwaite Institute's website, Chrostwaite.org, under "Research Reports and Projects."

Your completion of this current survey will help to provide an update on how municipal priorities throughout the state have shifted since 2017.

Please note: Completed surveys will be collected until 8/11/21. We ask that you complete the survey online by that date.

Drawing for \$25 Visa Gift Card

Participants who submit a completed survey will have the opportunity to enter their name into a drawing for one of two \$25 Visa gift cards. If you would like to enter the drawing, please complete the drawing entry form at the end of the questionnaire. You will be asked for your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address if you have one. Participant contact information will only be used for the purposes of conducting the drawing and will only be accessible by our research team. At the conclusion of the data collection period, PSAB will randomly select 2 participants to receive a \$25 Visa gift card.

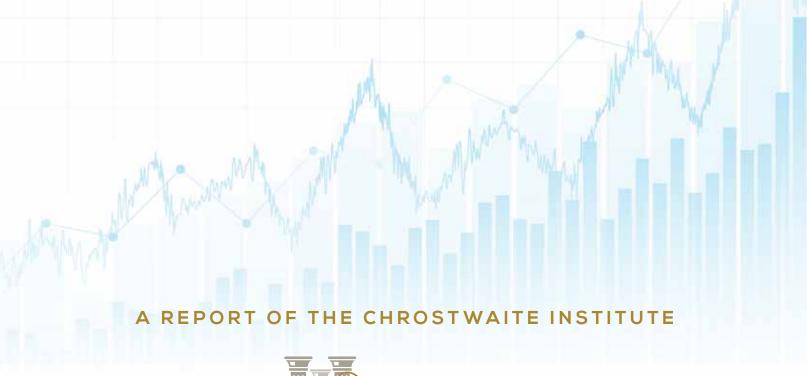
If you need any further information on the survey, please contact PSAB staff, Josh Ehrman, at jehrman@boroughs.org.

We hope that you will consider participating in this important survey. Thank you for your time and interest.

# APPENDIX C: OTHER MUNICIPAL INITIATIVES IDENTIFIED IN QUESTION 22

1.         Adapting to SSHE integration         1           2.         Audio-visual system for council chambers         1           3.         Board does not favor growth         1           4.         Bridge replacement         1           5.         Burglar alarm system         1           6.         Capital investments (new building)         1           7.         Climate action plan formulation         1           8.         Community center planning and construction         1           9.         Community events for adults         1           10.         Comprehensive plan update         1           11.         Downtown streetscape and revitalization project         2           12.         Electrical service update for township building         1           13.         Emergency management         1           14.         EMS service         1           15.         EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           16.         Energy use reduction         2           17.         Fire alarm system         1           18.         Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           19.         Fire station construction         1	Count	Initiative	Number of times mentioned
3.       Board does not favor growth       1         4.       Bridge replacement       1         5.       Burglar alarm system       1         6.       Capital investments (new building)       1         7.       Climate action plan formulation       1         8.       Community center planning and construction       1         9.       Community events for adults       1         10.       Comprehensive plan update       1         11.       Downtown streetscape and revitalization project       2         12.       Electrical service update for township building       1         13.       Emergency management       1         14.       EMS service       1         15.       EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free       1         16.       Energy use reduction       2         17.       Fire alarm system       1         18.       Fire service       1         19.       Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free       1         20.       Fire station construction       1         21.       Flex time       1         22.       Flood protection       1         23.       Health insurance	1.	Adapting to SSHE integration	
4.       Bridge replacement       1         5.       Burglar alarm system       1         6.       Capital investments (new building)       1         7.       Climate action plan formulation       1         8.       Community center planning and construction       1         9.       Community events for adults       1         10.       Comprehensive plan update       1         11.       Downtown streetscape and revitalization project       2         12.       Electrical service update for township building       1         13.       Emergency management       1         14.       EMS service       1         15.       EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free       1         16.       Energy use reduction       2         17.       Fire alarm system       1         18.       Fire service       1         19.       Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free       1         20.       Fire station construction       1         21.       Flex time       1         22.       Flood protection       1         23.       Health insurance       1         24.       Keeping expenditures down       1	2.	Audio-visual system for council chambers	1
5.         Burglar alarm system         1           6.         Capital investments (new building)         1           7.         Climate action plan formulation         1           8.         Community center planning and construction         1           9.         Community events for adults         1           10.         Comprehensive plan update         1           11.         Downtown streetscape and revitalization project         2           12.         Electrical service update for township building         1           13.         Emergency management         1           14.         EMS service         1           15.         EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           16.         Energy use reduction         2           17.         Fire alarm system         1           18.         Fire service         1           19.         Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           20.         Fire station construction         1           21.         Flex time         1           22.         Flood protection         1           23.         Health insurance         1           24.         Keeping expenditures d	3.	Board does not favor growth	1
6.         Capital investments (new building)         1           7.         Climate action plan formulation         1           8.         Community center planning and construction         1           9.         Community events for adults         1           10.         Comprehensive plan update         1           11.         Downtown streetscape and revitalization project         2           12.         Electrical service update for township building         1           13.         Emergency management         1           14.         EMS service         1           15.         EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           16.         Energy use reduction         2           17.         Fire alarm system         1           18.         Fire service         1           19.         Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           20.         Fire station construction         1           21.         Flex time         1           22.         Flood protection         1           23.         Health insurance         1           24.         Keeping expenditures down         1           25.         Land acquisition	4.	Bridge replacement	1
7.         Climate action plan formulation         1           8.         Community center planning and construction         1           9.         Community events for adults         1           10.         Comprehensive plan update         1           11.         Downtown streetscape and revitalization project         2           12.         Electrical service update for township building         1           13.         Emergency management         1           14.         EMS service         1           15.         EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           16.         Energy use reduction         2           17.         Fire alarm system         1           18.         Fire service         1           19.         Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           20.         Fire station construction         1           21.         Flex time         1           22.         Fload protection         1           23.         Health insurance         1           24.         Keeping expenditures down         1           25.         Land acquisition         1           26.         MS4 issues         1 <td>5.</td> <td>Burglar alarm system</td> <td>1</td>	5.	Burglar alarm system	1
8. Community center planning and construction  9. Community events for adults  10. Comprehensive plan update  11. Downtown streetscape and revitalization project  12. Electrical service update for township building  13. Emergency management  14. EMS service  15. EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free  16. Energy use reduction  17. Fire alarm system  18. Fire service  19. Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free  10. Fire station construction  11. Flex time  12. Flood protection  23. Health insurance  24. Keeping expenditures down  25. Land acquisition  26. MS4 issues  17. New recycling center  28. New sanitation truck  19. NOT RAISING TAXES  30. Park and community center improvements  31. Park and recreation improvements  32. Police department new hires  33. Police merger with other municipalities  14. Public works facility construction  15. Road improvements	6.	Capital investments (new building)	1
9.         Community events for adults         1           10.         Comprehensive plan update         1           11.         Downtown streetscape and revitalization project         2           12.         Electrical service update for township building         1           13.         Emergency management         1           14.         EMS service         1           15.         EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           16.         Energy use reduction         2           17.         Fire alarm system         1           18.         Fire service         1           19.         Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           20.         Fire station construction         1           21.         Flex time         1           22.         Flood protection         1           23.         Health insurance         1           24.         Keeping expenditures down         1           25.         Land acquisition         1           26.         MS4 issues         1           27.         New recycling center         1           28.         New sanitation truck         1 <t< td=""><td>7.</td><td>Climate action plan formulation</td><td>1</td></t<>	7.	Climate action plan formulation	1
10.         Comprehensive plan update         1           11.         Downtown streetscape and revitalization project         2           12.         Electrical service update for township building         1           13.         Emergency management         1           14.         EMS service         1           15.         EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           16.         Energy use reduction         2           17.         Fire alarm system         1           18.         Fire service         1           19.         Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           20.         Fire station construction         1           21.         Flex time         1           22.         Flood protection         1           23.         Health insurance         1           24.         Keeping expenditures down         1           25.         Land acquisition         1           26.         MS4 issues         1           27.         New recycling center         1           28.         New sanitation truck         1           29.         NOT RAISING TAXES         1           30. <td>8.</td> <td>Community center planning and construction</td> <td>1</td>	8.	Community center planning and construction	1
11.         Downtown streetscape and revitalization project         2           12.         Electrical service update for township building         1           13.         Emergency management         1           14.         EMS service         1           15.         EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           16.         Energy use reduction         2           17.         Fire alarm system         1           18.         Fire service         1           19.         Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           20.         Fire station construction         1           21.         Flex time         1           22.         Flood protection         1           23.         Health insurance         1           24.         Keeping expenditures down         1           25.         Land acquisition         1           26.         MS4 issues         1           27.         New recycling center         1           28.         New sanitation truck         1           29.         NOT RAISING TAXES         1           30.         Park and recreation improvements         1	9.	Community events for adults	1
12.         Electrical service update for township building         1           13.         Emergency management         1           14.         EMS service         1           15.         EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           16.         Energy use reduction         2           17.         Fire alarm system         1           18.         Fire service         1           19.         Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           20.         Fire station construction         1           21.         Flex time         1           22.         Flood protection         1           23.         Health insurance         1           24.         Keeping expenditures down         1           25.         Land acquisition         1           26.         MS4 issues         1           27.         New recycling center         1           28.         New sanitation truck         1           29.         NOT RAISING TAXES         1           30.         Park and community center improvements         1           31.         Park and recreation improvements         2           32.	10.	Comprehensive plan update	1
13.       Emergency management       1         14.       EMS service       1         15.       EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free       1         16.       Energy use reduction       2         17.       Fire alarm system       1         18.       Fire service       1         19.       Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free       1         20.       Fire station construction       1         21.       Flex time       1         22.       Flood protection       1         23.       Health insurance       1         24.       Keeping expenditures down       1         25.       Land acquisition       1         26.       MS4 issues       1         27.       New recycling center       1         28.       New sanitation truck       1         29.       NOT RAISING TAXES       1         30.       Park and community center improvements       1         31.       Park and recreation improvements       2         32.       Police department new hires       1         33.       Police merger with other municipalities       1         34.       Public works	11.	Downtown streetscape and revitalization project	2
14.       EMS service       1         15.       EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free       1         16.       Energy use reduction       2         17.       Fire alarm system       1         18.       Fire service       1         19.       Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free       1         20.       Fire station construction       1         21.       Flex time       1         22.       Flood protection       1         23.       Health insurance       1         24.       Keeping expenditures down       1         25.       Land acquisition       1         26.       MS4 issues       1         27.       New recycling center       1         28.       New sanitation truck       1         29.       NOT RAISING TAXES       1         30.       Park and community center improvements       1         31.       Park and recreation improvements       2         32.       Police department new hires       1         33.       Police merger with other municipalities       1         34.       Public works facility construction       1         35. <t< td=""><td>12.</td><td>Electrical service update for township building</td><td>1</td></t<>	12.	Electrical service update for township building	1
15.         EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           16.         Energy use reduction         2           17.         Fire alarm system         1           18.         Fire service         1           19.         Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free         1           20.         Fire station construction         1           21.         Flex time         1           22.         Flood protection         1           23.         Health insurance         1           24.         Keeping expenditures down         1           25.         Land acquisition         1           26.         MS4 issues         1           27.         New recycling center         1           28.         New sanitation truck         1           29.         NOT RAISING TAXES         1           30.         Park and community center improvements         1           31.         Park and recreation improvements         2           32.         Police department new hires         1           33.         Police merger with other municipalities         1           34.         Public works facility construction         1	13.	Emergency management	1
16.       Energy use reduction       2         17.       Fire alarm system       1         18.       Fire service       1         19.       Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free       1         20.       Fire station construction       1         21.       Flex time       1         22.       Flood protection       1         23.       Health insurance       1         24.       Keeping expenditures down       1         25.       Land acquisition       1         26.       MS4 issues       1         27.       New recycling center       1         28.       New sanitation truck       1         29.       NOT RAISING TAXES       1         30.       Park and community center improvements       1         31.       Park and recreation improvements       2         32.       Police department new hires       1         33.       Police merger with other municipalities       1         34.       Public works facility construction       1         35.       Road improvements       1	14.	EMS service	1
17.       Fire alarm system       1         18.       Fire service       1         19.       Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free       1         20.       Fire station construction       1         21.       Flex time       1         22.       Flood protection       1         23.       Health insurance       1         24.       Keeping expenditures down       1         25.       Land acquisition       1         26.       MS4 issues       1         27.       New recycling center       1         28.       New sanitation truck       1         29.       NOT RAISING TAXES       1         30.       Park and community center improvements       1         31.       Park and recreation improvements       2         32.       Police department new hires       1         33.       Police merger with other municipalities       1         34.       Public works facility construction       1         35.       Road improvements       1	15.	EMS service for surrounding municipalities for free	1
18.       Fire service       1         19.       Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free       1         20.       Fire station construction       1         21.       Flex time       1         22.       Flood protection       1         23.       Health insurance       1         24.       Keeping expenditures down       1         25.       Land acquisition       1         26.       MS4 issues       1         27.       New recycling center       1         28.       New sanitation truck       1         29.       NOT RAISING TAXES       1         30.       Park and community center improvements       1         31.       Park and recreation improvements       2         32.       Police department new hires       1         33.       Police merger with other municipalities       1         34.       Public works facility construction       1         35.       Road improvements       1	16.	Energy use reduction	2
19. Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free  20. Fire station construction  21. Flex time  22. Flood protection  23. Health insurance  24. Keeping expenditures down  25. Land acquisition  26. MS4 issues  27. New recycling center  28. New sanitation truck  29. NOT RAISING TAXES  30. Park and community center improvements  31. Park and recreation improvements  22. Police department new hires  33. Police merger with other municipalities  34. Public works facility construction  1 1  20. Fire station construction  1 20. In the service for surrounding municipalities for free free station in the service for free station in t	17.	Fire alarm system	1
20.       Fire station construction       1         21.       Flex time       1         22.       Flood protection       1         23.       Health insurance       1         24.       Keeping expenditures down       1         25.       Land acquisition       1         26.       MS4 issues       1         27.       New recycling center       1         28.       New sanitation truck       1         29.       NOT RAISING TAXES       1         30.       Park and community center improvements       1         31.       Park and recreation improvements       2         32.       Police department new hires       1         33.       Police merger with other municipalities       1         34.       Public works facility construction       1         35.       Road improvements       1	18.	Fire service	1
21.       Flex time       1         22.       Flood protection       1         23.       Health insurance       1         24.       Keeping expenditures down       1         25.       Land acquisition       1         26.       MS4 issues       1         27.       New recycling center       1         28.       New sanitation truck       1         29.       NOT RAISING TAXES       1         30.       Park and community center improvements       1         31.       Park and recreation improvements       2         32.       Police department new hires       1         33.       Police merger with other municipalities       1         34.       Public works facility construction       1         35.       Road improvements       1	19.	Fire service for surrounding municipalities for free	1
22.       Flood protection       1         23.       Health insurance       1         24.       Keeping expenditures down       1         25.       Land acquisition       1         26.       MS4 issues       1         27.       New recycling center       1         28.       New sanitation truck       1         29.       NOT RAISING TAXES       1         30.       Park and community center improvements       1         31.       Park and recreation improvements       2         32.       Police department new hires       1         33.       Police merger with other municipalities       1         34.       Public works facility construction       1         35.       Road improvements       1	20.	Fire station construction	1
23.       Health insurance       1         24.       Keeping expenditures down       1         25.       Land acquisition       1         26.       MS4 issues       1         27.       New recycling center       1         28.       New sanitation truck       1         29.       NOT RAISING TAXES       1         30.       Park and community center improvements       1         31.       Park and recreation improvements       2         32.       Police department new hires       1         33.       Police merger with other municipalities       1         34.       Public works facility construction       1         35.       Road improvements       1	21.	Flex time	1
24.Keeping expenditures down125.Land acquisition126.MS4 issues127.New recycling center128.New sanitation truck129.NOT RAISING TAXES130.Park and community center improvements131.Park and recreation improvements232.Police department new hires133.Police merger with other municipalities134.Public works facility construction135.Road improvements1	22.	Flood protection	1
25.       Land acquisition       1         26.       MS4 issues       1         27.       New recycling center       1         28.       New sanitation truck       1         29.       NOT RAISING TAXES       1         30.       Park and community center improvements       1         31.       Park and recreation improvements       2         32.       Police department new hires       1         33.       Police merger with other municipalities       1         34.       Public works facility construction       1         35.       Road improvements       1	23.	Health insurance	1
26.       MS4 issues       1         27.       New recycling center       1         28.       New sanitation truck       1         29.       NOT RAISING TAXES       1         30.       Park and community center improvements       1         31.       Park and recreation improvements       2         32.       Police department new hires       1         33.       Police merger with other municipalities       1         34.       Public works facility construction       1         35.       Road improvements       1	24.	Keeping expenditures down	1
27.       New recycling center       1         28.       New sanitation truck       1         29.       NOT RAISING TAXES       1         30.       Park and community center improvements       1         31.       Park and recreation improvements       2         32.       Police department new hires       1         33.       Police merger with other municipalities       1         34.       Public works facility construction       1         35.       Road improvements       1	25.	Land acquisition	1
28. New sanitation truck 1  29. NOT RAISING TAXES 1  30. Park and community center improvements 1  31. Park and recreation improvements 2  32. Police department new hires 1  33. Police merger with other municipalities 1  34. Public works facility construction 1  35. Road improvements 1	26.	MS4 issues	1
29.       NOT RAISING TAXES       1         30.       Park and community center improvements       1         31.       Park and recreation improvements       2         32.       Police department new hires       1         33.       Police merger with other municipalities       1         34.       Public works facility construction       1         35.       Road improvements       1	27.	New recycling center	1
30. Park and community center improvements 1 31. Park and recreation improvements 2 32. Police department new hires 1 33. Police merger with other municipalities 1 34. Public works facility construction 1 35. Road improvements 1	28.	New sanitation truck	1
31.Park and recreation improvements232.Police department new hires133.Police merger with other municipalities134.Public works facility construction135.Road improvements1	29.	NOT RAISING TAXES	1
32. Police department new hires 1  33. Police merger with other municipalities 1  34. Public works facility construction 1  35. Road improvements 1	30.	Park and community center improvements	1
33.Police merger with other municipalities134.Public works facility construction135.Road improvements1	31.	Park and recreation improvements	2
34. Public works facility construction 1 35. Road improvements 1	32.	Police department new hires	1
35. Road improvements 1	33.	Police merger with other municipalities	1
·	34.	Public works facility construction	1
36. Road maintenance 2	35.	Road improvements	1
	36.	Road maintenance	2
37. Roads and bridges 1	37.	Roads and bridges	1

38.	SALDO development	2
39.	Security cameras	1
40.	Solid waste recycling, collection, disposal	1
41.	Staffing restructure for the future	1
42.	Stormwater management authority creation	1
43.	Stormwater projects	1
44.	Tax base insufficient to keep up with costs (especially police)	1
45.	Traffic problems	1
46.	Trail enhancement projects	3
47.	Transportation projects	1
48.	Water system improvements	1
49.	Zoning ordinance updates	1
	Total	56





Building on 100 years of community leadership.

## SUPPORT PROVIDED BY PSAB AND BCA





