

FROM INPUT TO IMPACT:

A People-Powered Approach to Budgeting + Governance

PRESENTED BY

Odie Donald II

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER



NFBPA
National Forum for Black Public Administrators

GEORGETOWN
UNIVERSITY



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



CHALLENGES OF TRADITIONAL CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

☑ Past Challenges

- Old systems don't fit contemporary needs
- Global health emergency/delayed recovery

☑ Current Challenges

- Polarizing political environments
- Apathy toward government
- Disconnection between the public and private sector
- Shrinking municipal budgets



**TO ENGAGE RESIDENTS
YOU MUST INVOLVE
RESIDENTS!**



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT HAS ITS BENEFITS!



The Benefits of Public Budget Forums

Unanimous passage of largest budgets in the City of South Fulton, Augusta-Richmond County, and Atlanta's history

Alignment of public and government priorities

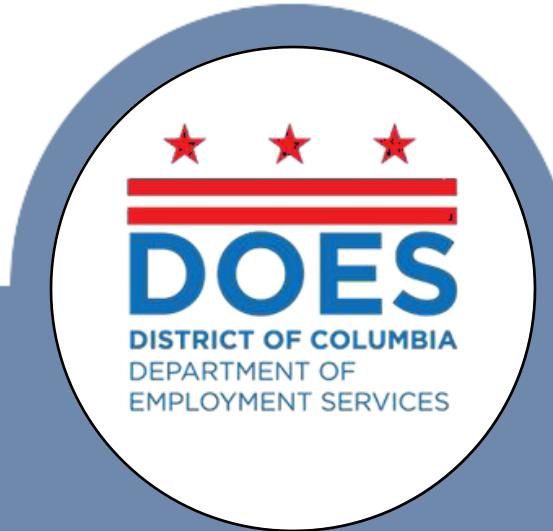
Improved public perception of government

PIVOTING TOWARD NEW SOLUTIONS



CITY MANAGER

Public Budget Forums, Citizen Budget Activities, Mayor's Walk, Community Conversations



LABOR COMMISSIONER

Public Budget Forums, Community Conversations, DC Works Podcast



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Public Budget Forums, Mayor's Walk, Community Conversations

CASE STUDY: SOUTH FULTON



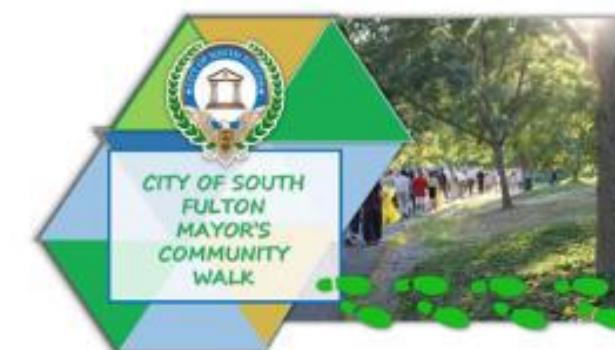
The Benefits of The Mayor's Walk

Access to City Services Improved

Community Relations Address

Community Issues

DISTRICT 4-CEDAR GROVE PLAZA: 5TH MAYOR'S COMMUNITY WALK



MAYOR WILLIAM "BILL" EDWARDS COMMUNITY WALK
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24TH, 2018
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
60 DAY REPORT

STARTING & ENDING LOCATION: CEDAR GROVE PLAZA (6015 LYNMARK WAY FAIRBURN, GA 30213)



CASE STUDY: DC GOVERNMENT



The Benefits of Community Conversations

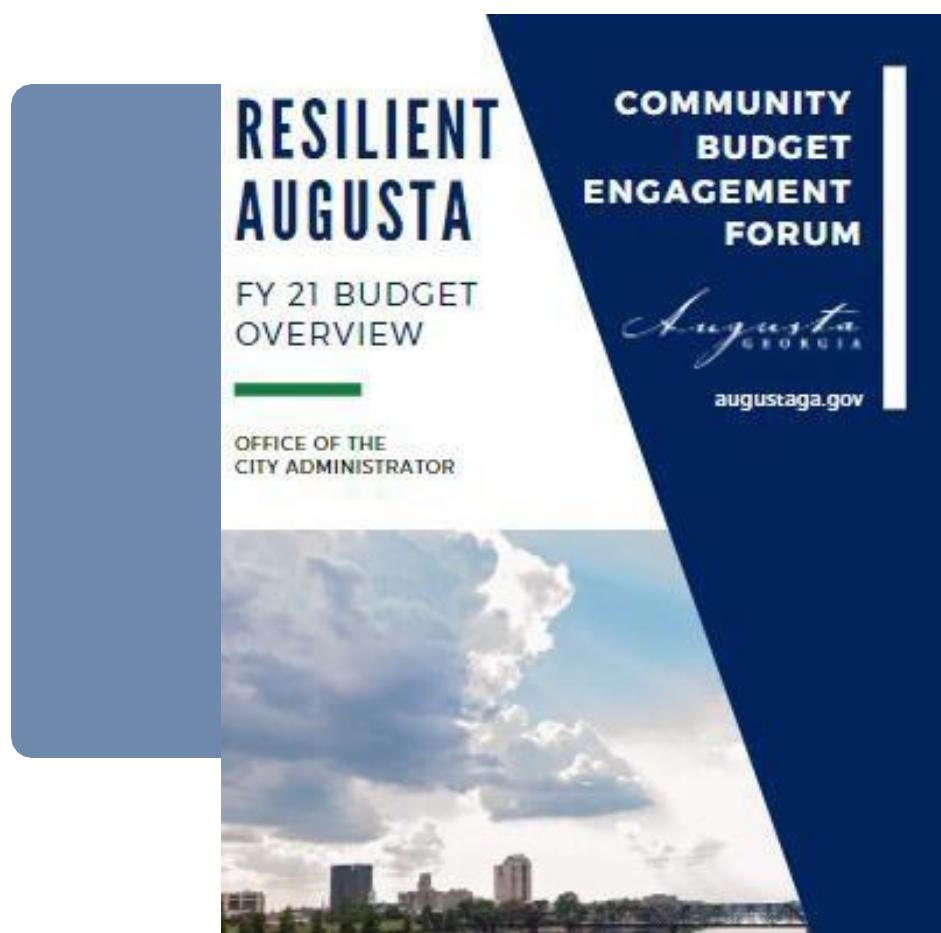


CUSTOMER SERVICE
BILL OF RIGHTS

- I. THE RIGHT TO PROFESSIONAL TREATMENT**
Our Customers have the right to receive prompt, courteous, and respectful service
- II. THE RIGHT TO KNOW WHO IS ASSISTING YOU**
Our Customers have the right to know the name of the DOES Employees and the Department or Office who assist them
- III. THE RIGHT TO EASE OF ACCESS**
Our Customers have the right to easily access clear and concise information, or be referred to the appropriate agency, when contacting DOES regarding inquiries or requests related to program services
- IV. THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD**
Our Customers have the right to receive a response to their questions and concerns about DOES services and ensure that every question or request is addressed appropriately
- V. THE RIGHT TO BE PROTECTED**
Our Customers have the right to have their personal identity and financial information, protected during and after all interactions with DOES employees
- VI. THE RIGHT TO FAIR SERVICE DELIVERY**
Our Customers have the right to consistent and fair delivery of DOES services; DOES serves all District residents without consideration to economic, social or cultural status
- VII. THE RIGHT TO TIMELY SERVICE**
Our Customers have the right to receive responsive and timely service to their inquiries and requests from all DOES employees

CASE STUDY: AUGUSTA, GA

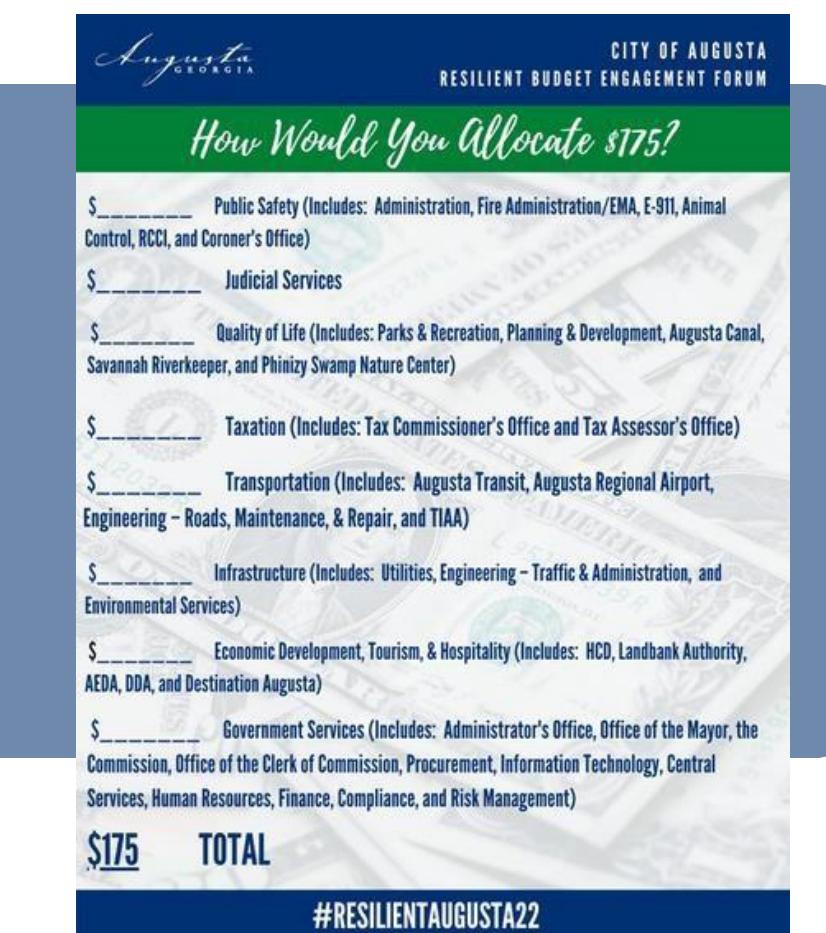
Resilient Augusta - Budget Overview Booklet



My Budget Priority Cards

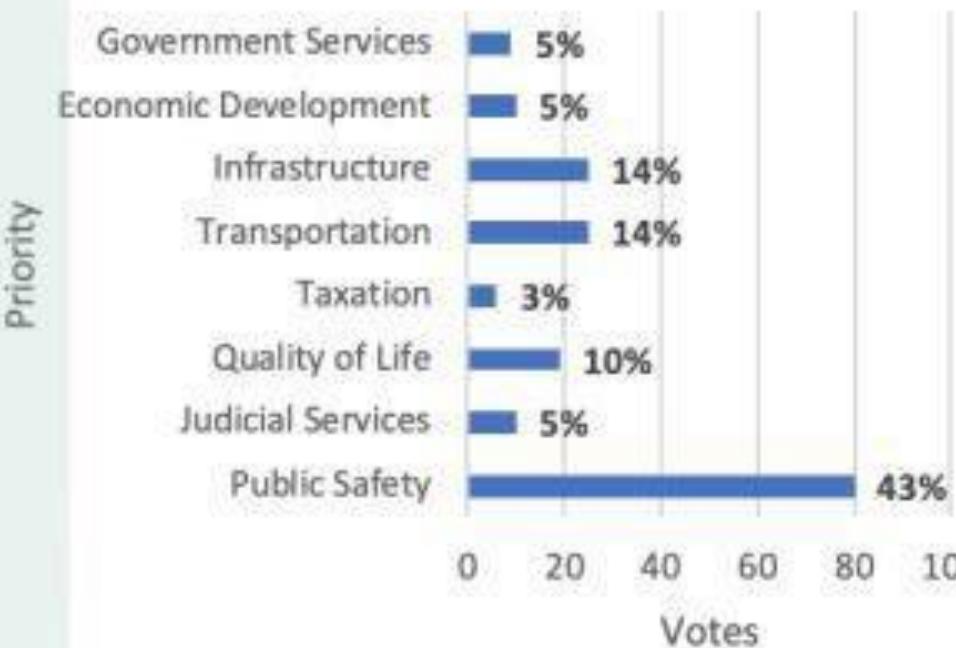


Budget Allocation Card

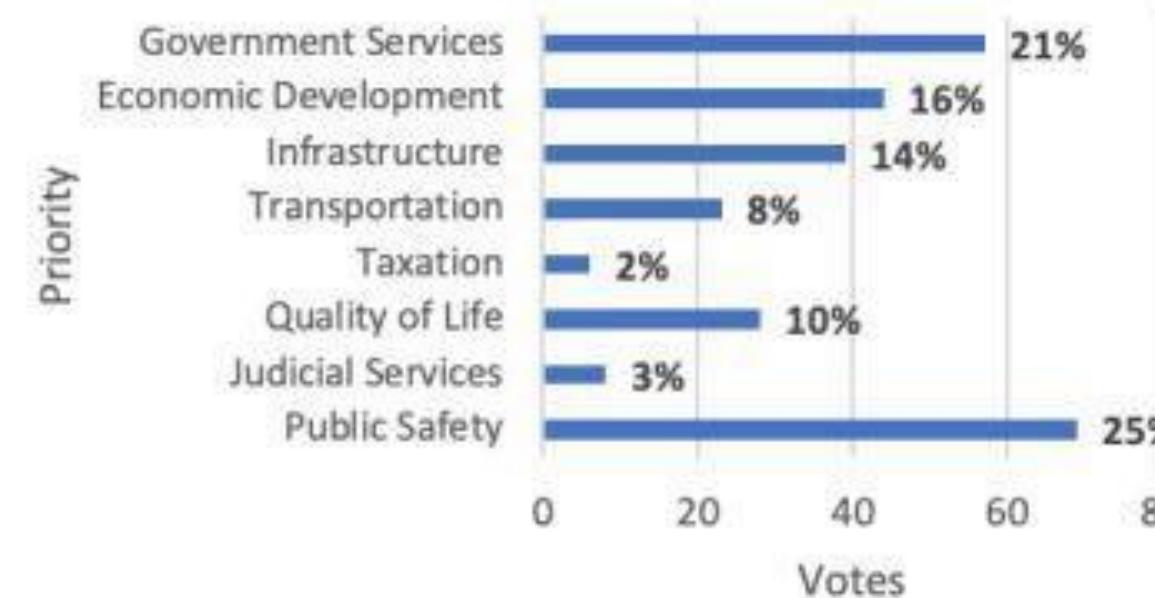


AUGUSTA, GA STATISTICS + OUTCOMES

Online Survey Results- Budget Priorities



Budget Forum Survey Results- Budget Priorities



Survey results from community budget engagement forums indicate Public Safety is the top priority to residents, while Infrastructure, Transportation, Quality of Life, and Economic Development (to include housing) also served as high level priorities.

The Augusta Commission unanimously passed the FY2022 budget, the largest (\$1 billion) in Augusta's history, without a residential property tax increase.

PEOPLE FIRST, PEOPLE ALWAYS



CASE STUDY: ATLANTA

People's Day is one of the ways that the administration engaged the community (employees, senior citizens, and others) directly.





WHAT HAPPENED WHEN WE GAVE 27 ATLANTA YOUTH \$790 MILLION?

The Benefits of Youth Engagement

In June 2023, Capital B Atlanta, in collaboration with partners like the Center for Civic Innovation, Atlanta Civic Circle, the City of Atlanta and Canopy Atlanta, hosted the Youth Civic Summit. Twenty-seven high school students participated, as a part of Atlanta's "Year of the Youth" initiative.

CLICK HERE

HOW DID YOUTH ALLOCATE FUNDS?



TRANSPORTATION

\$111M

Infrastructure issues

\$59M

Clean streets



CITY PLANNING

\$114M

Parks & Recreation

\$104.3M

Grocery stores and better
housing



PUBLIC SAFETY

\$63M

Mental health and de-escalation
training

\$58M

City's court system to
accommodate more mental
health cases



PUBLIC SAFETY

\$44.2M

New facilities at Fulton County
Jail for a safer environment for
inmates

\$76.5M

Fire department to better serve
community



THE REST (\$\$\$)

\$180.9M

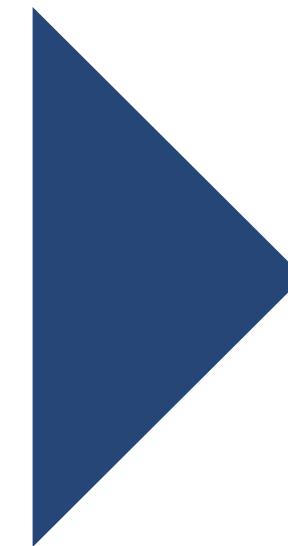
City executive offices to invest
in programming

\$68.6M

Protection against cyber attacks



**GOOD GOVERNMENT
REQUIRES RESIDENT
PARTICIPATION**



CASE STUDY: RICHMOND, VA ENGAGE RVA





WHAT IS ENGAGE RVA?

The **EngageRVA** budget engagement process leverages City departments, internal and external communication services, data collection, and citizen education to simulate the experiences of government officials, while receiving insight from the public during the development of the FY2027 Budget.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Mayor sets vision and the CAO delivers and defines goals for administrative and operational staff
- The activities are carefully communicated across a variety of platforms including local media
- City Departments bring key sector insights and knowledge
- Departments with Finance and Budget office support provide information regarding finances and process
- Various mediums are used to distribute information, gather data and support town halls
- City leaders engage the public through a variety of methods





#ENGAGERVA

GOALS

- **Improve** public understanding of the budget process
- **Explain** how the budget is both developed and allocated
- **Collect** public input on priorities by service area





#ENGAGERVA AUDIENCES



RESIDENTS



BUSINESSES



NON-PROFITS



EMPLOYEES



STATE/LOCAL
OFFICIALS

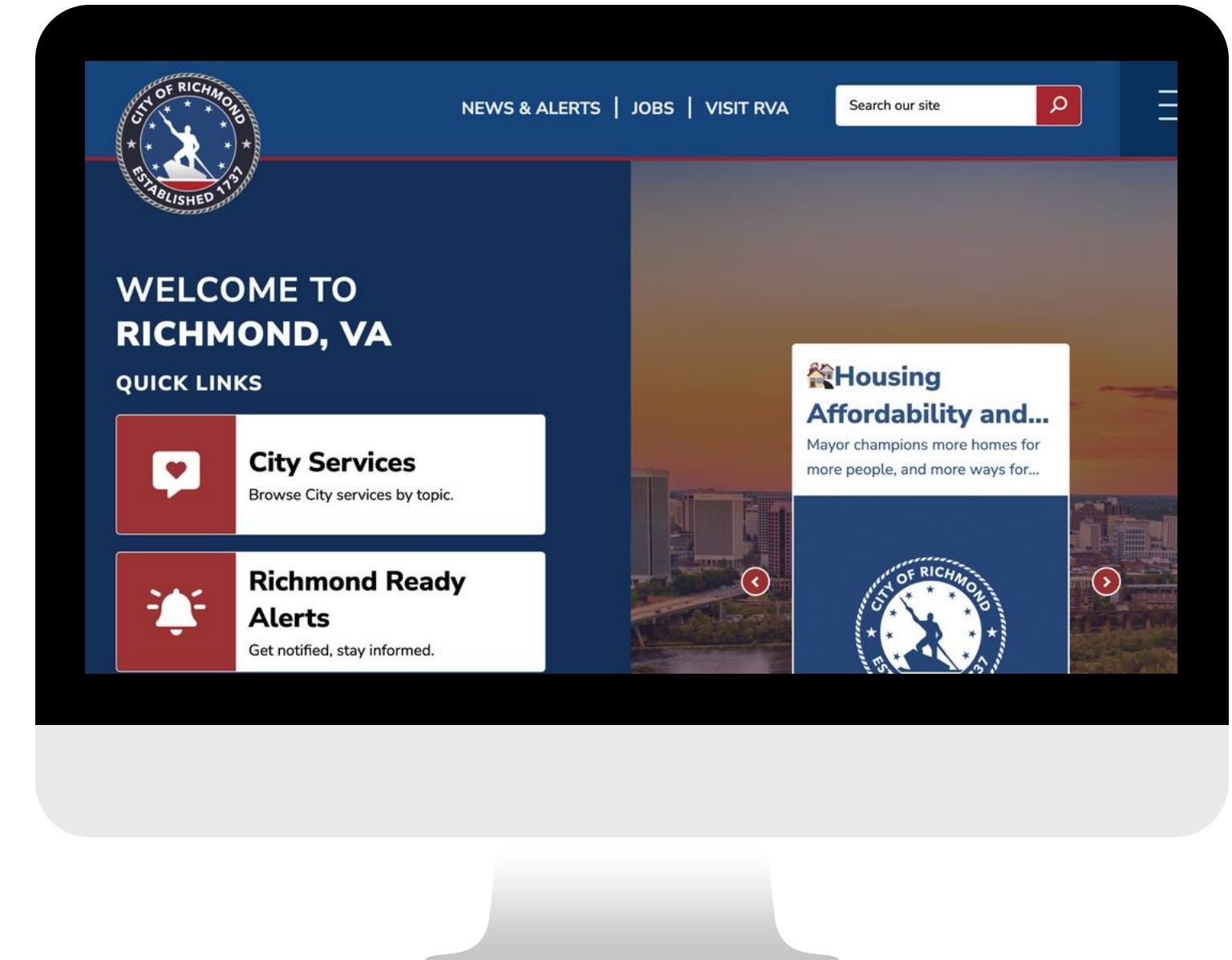


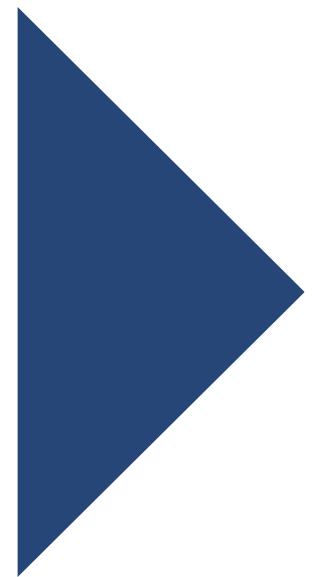
PRESS/MEDIA



BUDGET ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

- **Webpage (rva.gov)**
- **Engagement Page (go.rva.gov/engage)**
- **Online Survey**
- **Town Halls**
- **Social Media**
- **Print Collateral**





BUDGET ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

HOW DOES IT WORK?





#ENGAGE RVA

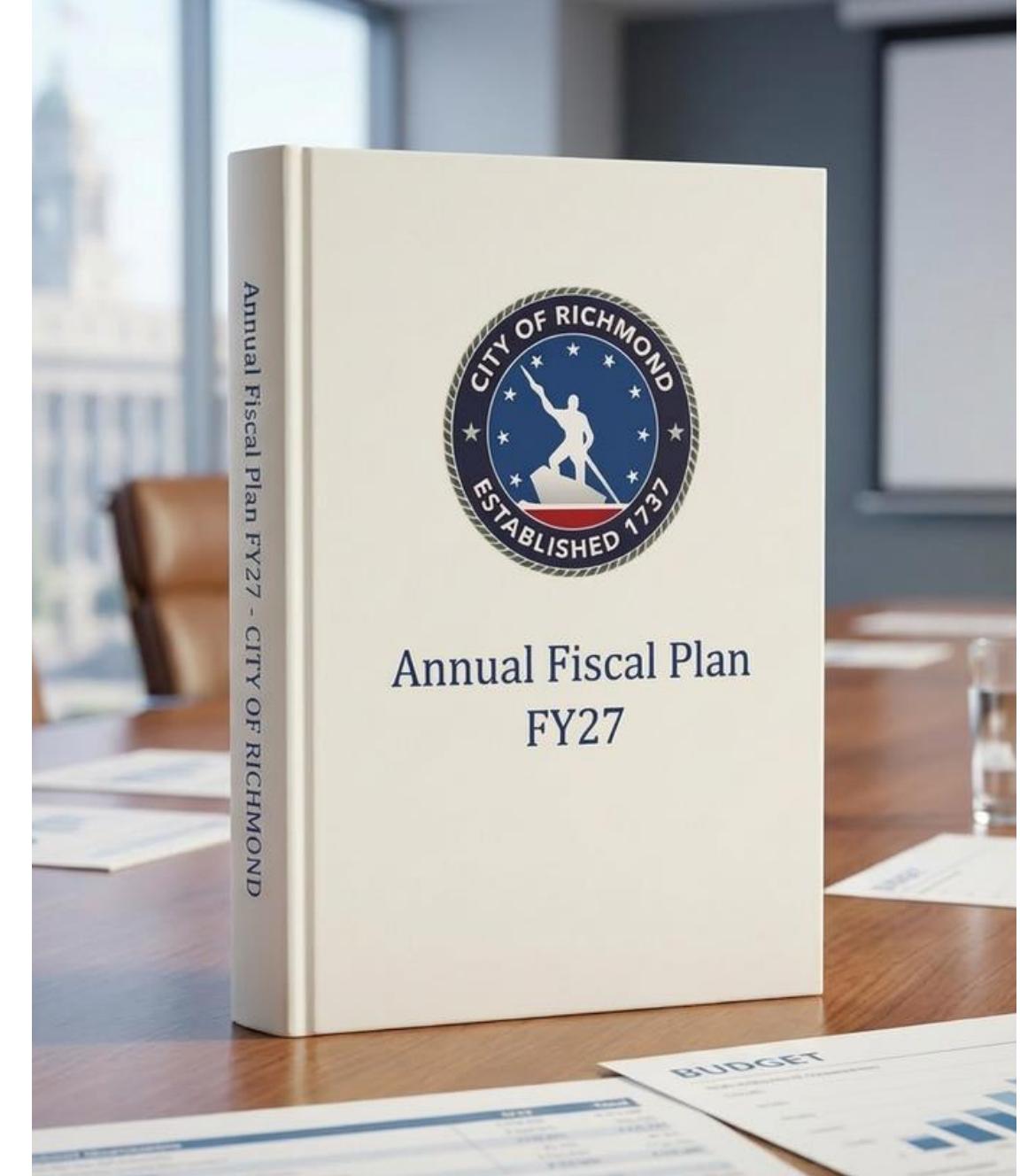
TELL US YOUR PRIORITIES!

Residents will learn how the City's budget process works and have opportunities to share input before the Mayor's proposed budget is released.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Residents can engage with City leaders and staff through in-person events and online tools, including a survey to share priorities and community needs.

CITY PARTNERS: Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, City Departments, Budget, Communications



TIMELINE: January 20 - February 28, 2026



TOWN HALL

PROCESS OVERVIEW

MEETING FORMAT



- Public Meetings
- Regional Locations
- 2-Hour Duration
- 50 People per Meeting

OBJECTIVES



- General education about budget
- Inform public before budget working meetings
- Residents will **learn, give feedback** on how their tax dollars are used and have an opportunity to **prioritize budget needs** based on service area

AGENDA



- Welcome/Networking
- Budget Presentation
- Overview of the Process
- Prioritizing Activities
- Closing & Next Steps

TIMELINE: January 20 – February 28



MESSAGING IS KEY

CAMPAIGN THEME

How do you prioritize and connect with the City budget?

OBJECTIVE

Our goal is to increase public awareness of the budget process and promote opportunities for community engagement.

APPROACH

Surveys and online tools distributed across multiple digital platforms.

SUCCESS MEASURE: We will track and measure engagement across all campaign activities.

TIMELINE: January 28 – Budget Passage





HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE?

WHAT TOOLS DO WE USE?





LANDING WEBPAGE

The Landing Webpage provides access to documents central to educating residents about the budget process.

What You'll Find on the Page

- **Engage RVA overview**
- **Introductory video featuring the Mayor and City leadership (February)**
- **Town Hall explainer presentation (this document)**
- **Online survey link for resident input**
- **Town Hall calendar and sign-up (ongoing)**
- **Post-engagement results and outcomes (forthcoming)**

A smartphone is shown displaying the official website of the City of Richmond, RVA.GOV. The screen shows a banner for "City News" featuring "Press Releases and Announcements" with a photo of several people. Below the banner, a news article is visible with the title "City announces New Year's Day closures". The article details that City offices will be closed on New Year's Day (January 1) and resume normal business on January 2. It also lists specific service disruptions like trash collection. To the right of the main content, a sidebar shows a "Most Recent" news feed with titles like "Dec 30 City announces", "Year's Day closu", "Dec 29 City of Richmon", and "Department of Utilities Projec".

City News
Press Releases and Announcements

City announces New Year's Day closures

The City of Richmond will close in observance of New Year's Day on Thursday, January 1. All city offices, including City Hall, will be closed. We will return to our regular business hours on Friday, January 2. Keep reading for information about City service schedules during the holiday.

- There will be **no trash collection or bulk and brush collection** on Thursday, January 1. Collection will resume on Friday, January 2, for routes normally collected on Thursday.
- The **East Richmond Road Convenience Center (ERRCC) Landfill**, located at 3800 East Richmond Road, will be closed on Thursday, January 1. ERRCC will reopen on Friday, January 2.
- **CVWMA recycling** will not be collected on

Most Recent

Dec 30 City announces
Year's Day closu
Dec 29 City of Richmon
Department of Utilities Projec
2025 Engineeri
Excellence Aw
Dec 23 City of Richmon
Deputy Chief
Administrative
Completes ICM
Credentialed Ex



OBJECTIVE

Provide clear and accessible opportunities for community budget engagement.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Dedicated page on go.rva.gov/engage that includes:

- **Education materials**
- **Budget process and procedural information**
- **Meeting dates and participation details**
- **Budget prioritization survey**

A screenshot of a website page titled "FY27 Budget Season". The page has a dark blue header with navigation links for "NEWS & ALERTS", "JOBS", "VISIT RVA", and a search bar. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for "Documents", "Econ Indicators", "NonDepartmental", "Grants", "Reports", "Agencies", and "Awards". The main content area features a section titled "Budget Town Halls" with the following text: "The City of Richmond is inviting residents to take part in a series of Budget Town Halls, providing a forum for shared community input on Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) budget priorities and an opportunity to better understand how the City's budget is developed and executed." It continues: "The town halls, which will be held in neighborhoods and community centers across the City, will include representatives from City departments and will feature engaging, interactive sessions to walk residents through the budget process, including how revenues are allocated, how funding decisions are made, and how community input will be considered and incorporated into the proposed budget." Below this text is a "Register Now" button. At the bottom of the page is a table with two rows of data, each representing a budget town hall. The columns are "Date", "Time", "Location", and "Registration Link".

Date	Time	Location	Registration Link
Tuesday, January 20	6:00 - 8:00 p.m.	Lucks Field Community Center (1925 U Street)	Register here
Saturday, January 24	12:00 - 2:00 p.m.	To be announced	Coming soon



ONLINE SURVEY

OBJECTIVE

Provide a way for the public to prioritize the budget based on City service areas grouped into categories.

APPROACH

Online form shared on multiple sites includes:

- Ability to **allocate** resources to key service areas
- Service **prioritization**
- Demographic **data collection**

BUDGET TOWN HALL
COMMUNITY BUDGET ENGAGEMENT

EXIT SURVEY

Full Name _____ Age _____

Q3. Male Q4. African-American/Black Asian-American
Gender Female Race American Indian Hispanic
 Non-binary Caucasian/White Mexican-American
 I prefer not to answer I prefer to self-describe Other

Q5. Your Council District (choose one)
 District 1 District 2 District 3 District 4 District 5
 District 6 District 7 District 8 District 9 Unknown

Q6. Relationship with the City of Richmond
 Resident Non-resident Business owner Other

Q7. After this town hall, how well do you understand how the City's budget works?
 Very well Somewhat Not very well Not at all

Q8. Which parts of the budget were clearer after attending today's session?
 Where the money comes from
 How funds are spent
 The cost of City services
 How decisions are made

Q9. How helpful were the activities in understanding the City's budget?
 Very helpful
 Somewhat helpful
 Not helpful

Q10. Was the duration of the town hall appropriate?
 Too long About right Too short

Q11. Did today's session help you think differently about City spending priorities?
 Yes No Unsure

Q12. Which activities were most useful?
(choose all that apply)
 Budget 101 presentation Allocate your \$1,100
 Cost of City Services stations Prioritizing City Services

Q13. What is one thing we could improve for future budget town halls?



OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

OBJECTIVE

Provide a printed booklet during town halls to educate residents on City services. This resource will also be available on the City website.

APPROACH

- Provide residents with insights into how their tax dollars are spent by the City of Richmond.
- Give residents a better understanding of the outcomes they receive from the taxes they invest.



THANK YOU



Odie Donald II, Chief Administrative Officer



Rva.gov



LinkedIn.com/in/odiedonald

