Analysis: 2014 Multnomah County Office of Citizen Involvement Online Budget Survey

Background: The Multnomah County Citizen Involvement Committee (CIC) conducted an online budget survey through its Office of Citizen Involvement (OCI) to give county residents an additional opportunity to provide input into the 2014-15 budget-making process. The survey had proven to be a productive tool in 2011 and 2012 to generate public input about county budget priorities. Initiating a survey this year was particularly useful, given that public input can inform decisions about how to allocate approximately $5 million that is available in additional funding. Additionally, the survey increases the public's knowledge of Multnomah County, its services, and its budget. CIC members, OCI staff, and the Budget Office collaborated again on the development of the 2014 questionnaire.

Survey Design and Response: The survey consisted of five questions (*pages 12-13*). The first three were similar to those asked in the 2011 and 2012 surveys. The first question asked respondents to select their top three service categories from 17 choices (*pages 14-15*). The second question asked respondents to rank the service categories they selected from first to third. Scores were then assigned based on the ranking order. The third question was qualitative—respondents were asked to describe the features they valued the most about the selected service categories. These features were analyzed and categorized based on similarity to gain insight into the qualities the public values most. The fourth question asked respondents to select one choice from 10 services and programs to which the additional funds could be allocated. Nearly all of the services and programs were mentioned in the 2014 Budget Director's Message. The fifth question was qualitative as respondents were asked to describe the features they valued the most about their choices. Similar to question three, the features were analyzed and categorized based on similarity and included in the final 2014 budget survey report. One change with the 2014 survey is that libraries were no longer included as a service category, due to the new library district and its reduced impact on the county's general fund.

In 2014, the survey was posted online and paper copies were made available between January 30 and March 11, and April 4 through April 20. In a continuing effort to broaden the number of Multnomah County residents who could participate, the survey was also offered in Spanish both online and using paper copies. To maximize participation, the availability of the survey was well-publicized using a number of formats. Publicity about the survey ranged from postings on county websites and social media accounts, to an article that appeared in The Oregonian. Ultimately, 1,258 surveys were submitted by the public. This is a 140% increase from the number of surveys submitted in 2012.

Questions 1 & 2 Results and Summary: The results of these questions were examined using three different analyses. All three show slightly different orderings of the selected service categories. The first two analyses demonstrate a distinct gradation from most to least broadly supported service categories, with a definite break between the top eight service categories and the other nine. Seven of the eight most-favored service categories are health and human services in nature, with the other being Roads and Bridges. These results are similar to the 2012 survey, except the distinct gradation appeared between the top 10 service categories and the other eight. Of the top 10 service categories in 2012, seven were, by and large, health and human services in nature. The top eight service categories in 2014 also appeared in the top 10 services selected by the public in the earlier surveys. One difference in the 2014 survey is respondents were only allowed to select three service categories rather than six. This may have nominally impacted the survey results when comparing them. As previously mentioned, libraries were a top selection in 2012 but were not included in this year's survey.

The first question analyzes breadth of support by focusing on the number of times service categories were selected in the top three (*see page 3*). Those selected the most and by at least approximately 20% of respondents were, in order: Mental Health Services (47.4%), SUN Schools and Early Childhood
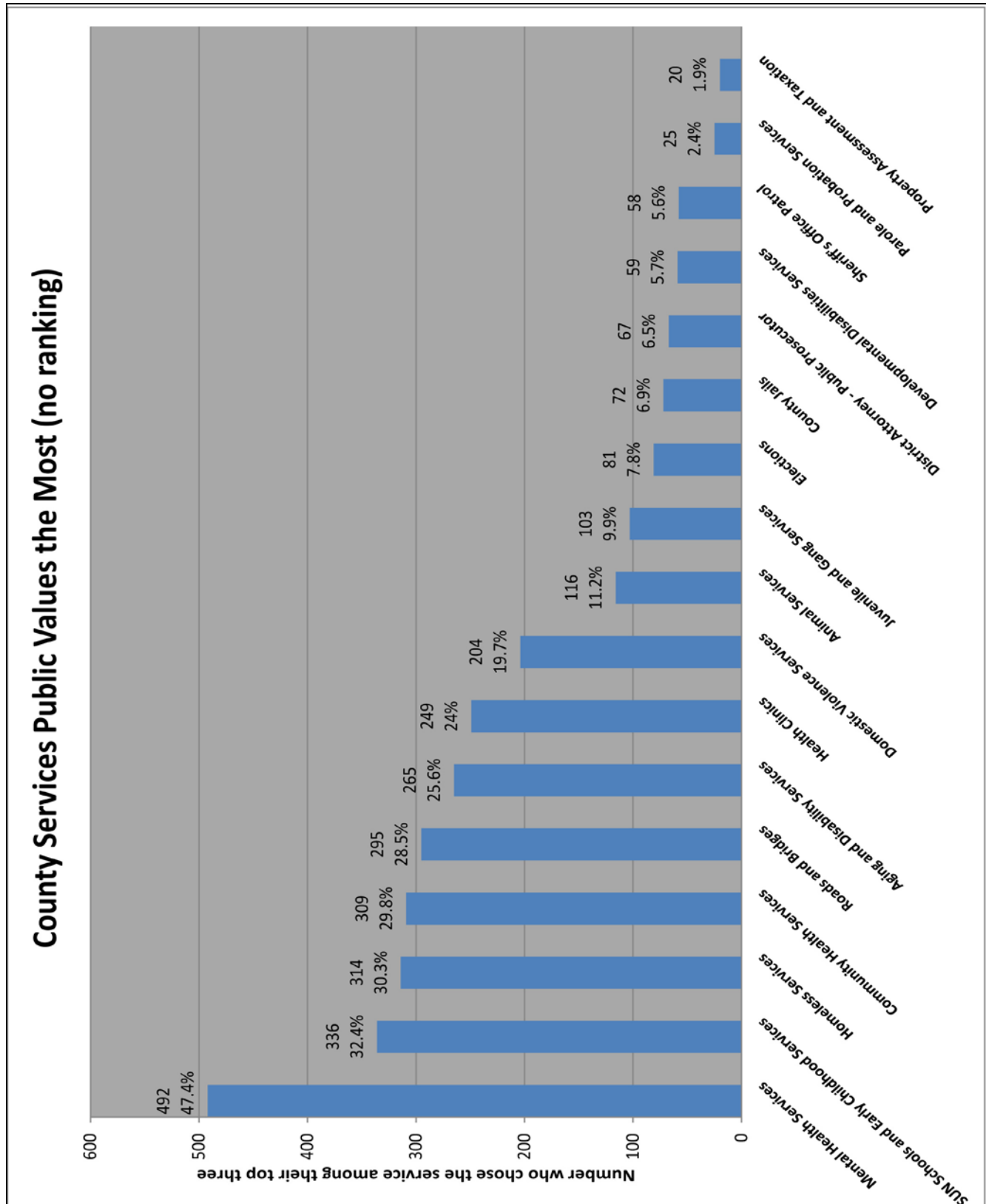
Services (32.4%), Homeless Services (30.3%), Community Health Services (29.8%), Roads and Bridges (28.5%), Aging and Disability Services (25.6%), Health Clinics (24%), and Domestic Violence Services (19.7%). Mental Health Services had the most support by far. In comparison to the 2012 budget survey, support for SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services, Roads & Bridges, and Homeless Services moved up most significantly while Health Clinics dropped the most. Interestingly, Roads & Bridges was not even in the top eight service categories in 2012, which demonstrates a significant increase in support for these services.

The second question analyzes depth of support by assigning points based on how the respondents ranked the three service categories selected in question one (*see page 4*). The top service categories were, in order: Mental Health Services (16.7%), SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services (12.1%), Roads and Bridges (10.3%), Homeless Services (10.1%), Community Health Services (10%), Aging and Disability Services (8.1%), Health Clinics (8%), and Domestic Violence Services (6.8%). Compared to question one, the ordering of the service categories changed only slightly with Roads and Bridges moving up slightly and Homeless Services and Community Health Services moving down slightly. Compared to 2012 however, significant differences exist as Roads and Bridges was prioritized four spots higher and SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services prioritized two spots higher. Health Clinics decreased significantly in prioritization dropping four spots. In general, the gradients between the service categories varied much more and the differences were steeper this year when compared to the 2012 survey. This is particularly true of the top service category in both surveys, Mental Health Services, which received 16.7% of all points this year as compared to 11% in 2012. This suggests respondents support prioritizing resources for Mental Health Services at an even higher level than in 2012.

The final analysis of questions one and two calculated the average value that respondents assigned the service categories when ranking them (*see page 5*). This value is an indicator of the strength of support by respondents who ranked the service categories. Analysis revealed that strength of support varied moderately as compared to the breadth and depth of support. Six service categories had average point values of either 2.1 or 2.0. Two services, Property Assessment and Taxation and Elections, were among the most prioritized by respondents who chose them, despite not appearing in the top nine categories when analyzing breadth and depth of support. Property Assessment and Taxation is particularly remarkable since it was selected the least amount by respondents as a valued service, and yet those who did select it prioritized it among the most valued county services. Along with Property Assessment and Taxation, SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services, Roads and Bridges, Mental Health Services, Elections, and Domestic Violence Services had large numbers of enthusiastic supporters, since they were most likely to be ranked as their top service when selected. Compared to 2012, respondents advocating for specific county services was definitely more of a decisive factor.
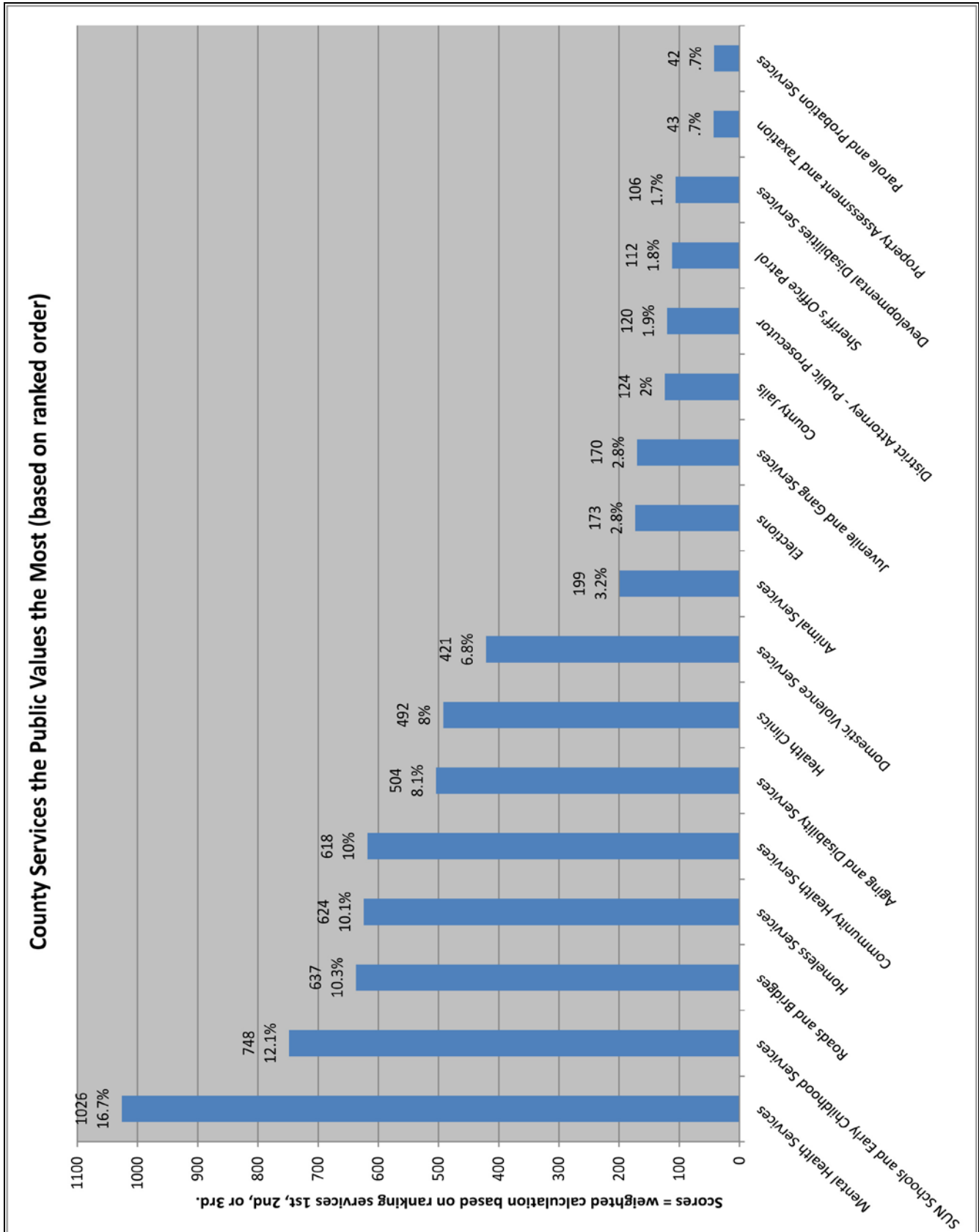
Chart 1: County Services Public Values the Most

From a total of 17 service categories, the respondents were asked to choose the three county service categories that they valued the most. This chart displays the number of respondents who chose each service within their three selections.

County Services Public Values the Most (no ranking)

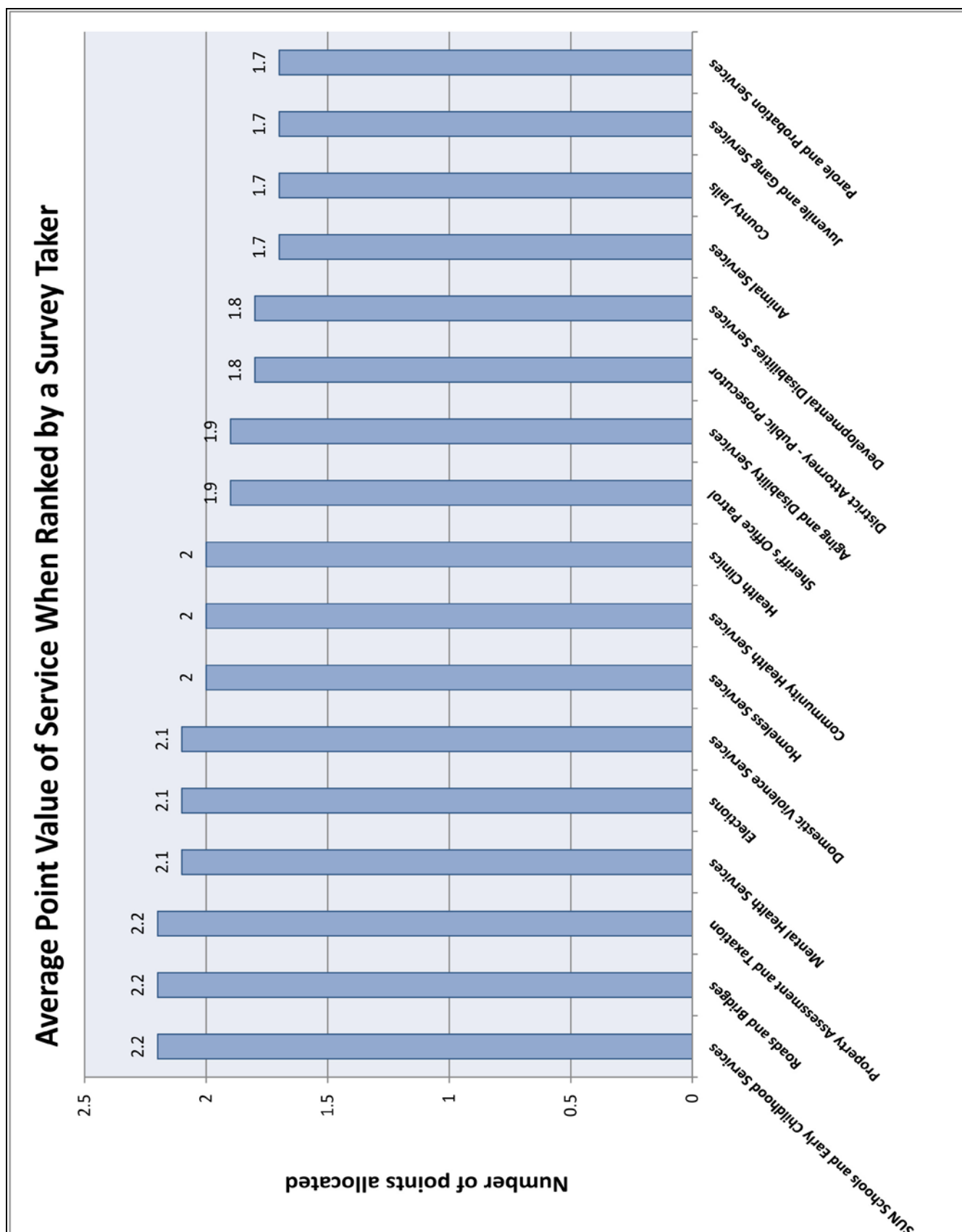| Service	Number	Percent
Mental Health Services	492	47.4%
SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services	336	32.4%
Homeless Services	314	30.3%
Community Health Services	309	29.8%
Roads and Bridges	295	28.5%
Aging and Disability Services	265	25.6%
Health Clinics	249	24%
Domestic Violence Services	204	19.7%
Animal Services	116	11.2%
Juvenile and Gang Services	103	9.9%
Elections	81	7.8%
County Jails	72	6.9%
District Attorney - Public Prosecutor	67	6.5%
Developmental Disabilities Services	59	5.7%
Sheriff's Office Patrol	58	5.6%
Parole and Probation Services	25	2.4%
Property Assessment and Taxation	20	1.9%

Number who chose the service among their top three

Chart 2: County Services the Public Values the Most

Each service is shown with the total value allocated by all respondents when they ranked service categories (3 to 1). A service that a respondent ranked at 3 was awarded three points and a service ranked at 1 was awarded one point.

County Services the Public Values the Most (based on ranked order)

Scores = weighted calculation based on ranking services 1st, 2nd, or 3rd.

Service	Score	Percent
Mental Health Services	1026	16.7%
SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services	748	12.1%
Roads and Bridges	637	10.3%
Homeless Services	624	10.1%
Community Health Services	618	10%
Aging and Disability Services	504	8.1%
Health Clinics	492	8%
Domestic Violence Services	421	6.8%
Animal Services	199	3.2%
Juvenile and Gang Services	173	2.8%
County Jails	170	2.8%
District Attorney - Public Prosecutor	124	2%
Sheriff's Office Patrol	120	1.9%
Developmental Disabilities Services	112	1.8%
Property Assessment and Taxation	106	1.7%
Elections	43	.7%
Parole and Probation Services	42	.7%

Chart 3: Average Point Value Assigned to Service Categories

Total ranking value allocated to a service averaged by number of respondents ranking that service among top three.

The chart shows a horizontal bar chart with the following categories and their average point values:

Service Category	Average Point Value
SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services	2.2
Roads and Bridges	2.2
Property Assessment and Taxation	2.2
Mental Health Services	2.1
Elections	2.1
Domestic Violence Services	2.1
Homeless Services	2
Community Health Services	2
Health Clinics	2
Sheriff's Office Patrol	1.9
Aging and Disability Services	1.9
District Attorney - Public Prosecutor	1.8
Developmental Disabilities Services	1.8
Animal Services	1.7
County Jails	1.7
Juvenile and Gang Services	1.7
Parole and Probation Services	1.7

Y-axis label: **Average Point Value of Service When Ranked by a Survey Taker**

X-axis label: **Number of points allocated** (ranging from 0 to 2.5)

Question 3 Results and Summary: Respondents submitted 1,741 comments concerning the features they valued most about the county programs and services they selected. The comments were reviewed and categorized by similarity. While the features described in the comments frequently overlapped which made them difficult to categorize, some common qualities about the features of valued programs and services emerged. The comments ranged broadly—falling into 260 different categories—and yet over 85% of the comments fell under eight topics.

These eight topics were prioritized in order based on the number of comments received. Similar to the ranking data, seven fall under the general heading of health and human services. Additionally, one topic addresses county infrastructure. Seven of the topics appeared in the top 10 from the 2012 survey. Domestic violence was new this year. Interestingly, the two topics receiving the most comments, mental health and youth education and support services, were different than in 2012, in part due to the library being removed as a service category. Significantly more comments were received this year concerning the topics of mental health, youth education and support services, and homelessness.

Over 34% of the responses fell into the top two topics:

1. **People with mental health problems need care and attention.** Example comments included: should be accessible to all regardless of economic status; critical for preventing crime, homelessness, and other societal problems; vulnerable and high needs population that tends to be lower income; reduces suffering, and promotes safety, productivity, and public health for affected individuals as well as the larger community; pressing problem that is too underfunded to successfully address.

2. **Youth need to receive early education, social service assistance, and after-school activities.** Example comments included: educational support services are critical for youth to be successful; investment prevents longer-term problems (e.g., poverty, crime, dropout rates) and social service needs; youth are the future making investment in them crucial; educational settings bring neighborhoods together and create a better community for all; after-school programming and activities help youth stay engaged; early intervention services important to set youth up for success; provide services (e.g., meals) and educational opportunities for vulnerable and disadvantaged parents and families (e.g., low-income) which, in turn, connects youth to school and promotes their success.

Over 51% of the responses fell into the next six categories:

3. **Address homelessness and ensure everyone in the community has housing.** Example comments included: number of people who are homeless is growing and frequently outside their control due to factors like current economy and lack of affordable housing; vulnerable population that frequently faces additional issues like health problems; housing and safe shelter are the foundation for healthy, productive and successful individuals, families and communities.

4. **Maintain and upgrade county infrastructure.** Example comments included: functioning and safe infrastructure is bedrock of society since everyone uses it; natural disasters will inevitably occur; promotes economy and jobs, and long-term savings are created by maintaining it sooner than later; significant amount of current infrastructure is past its prime and in poor shape (e.g., potholes, seismically).

5. **Everyone needs health care.** Example comments included: must be accessible regardless of background and resources; essentially a human right given all people need it to alleviate suffering

and be productive; encourages prevention which keeps people out of emergency rooms and lowers long-term costs; a healthy population benefits all since it creates healthy communities.

6. **Aging and disabled populations must be supported.** Example comments included: vulnerable population (e.g., seniors, veterans) that frequently face a large range of problems (e.g., health, lack of resources) and desperately need attention and services; certain services, particularly for seniors, permit them to remain independent by staying in their homes and being able to care for themselves; provides safety and stability for clients and the larger community.

7. **Community health programs play an essential role.** Example comments included: attributes of healthy communities should be accessible to all regardless of resources; promote healthy children and adults as well as stable communities; prevent or reduce other major problems like crime, poverty and infectious disease epidemics.

8. **Domestic violence programs are necessary for victims.** Example comments included: protect victims and their families by enabling them to flee from abuse; heavy demand requires more resources and increased shelter space; victims are particularly vulnerable given what they are escaping and their lack of resources; changes victims' lives in part by providing opportunities to become self-sufficient; addressing domestic violence benefits all and keeps the community safe.
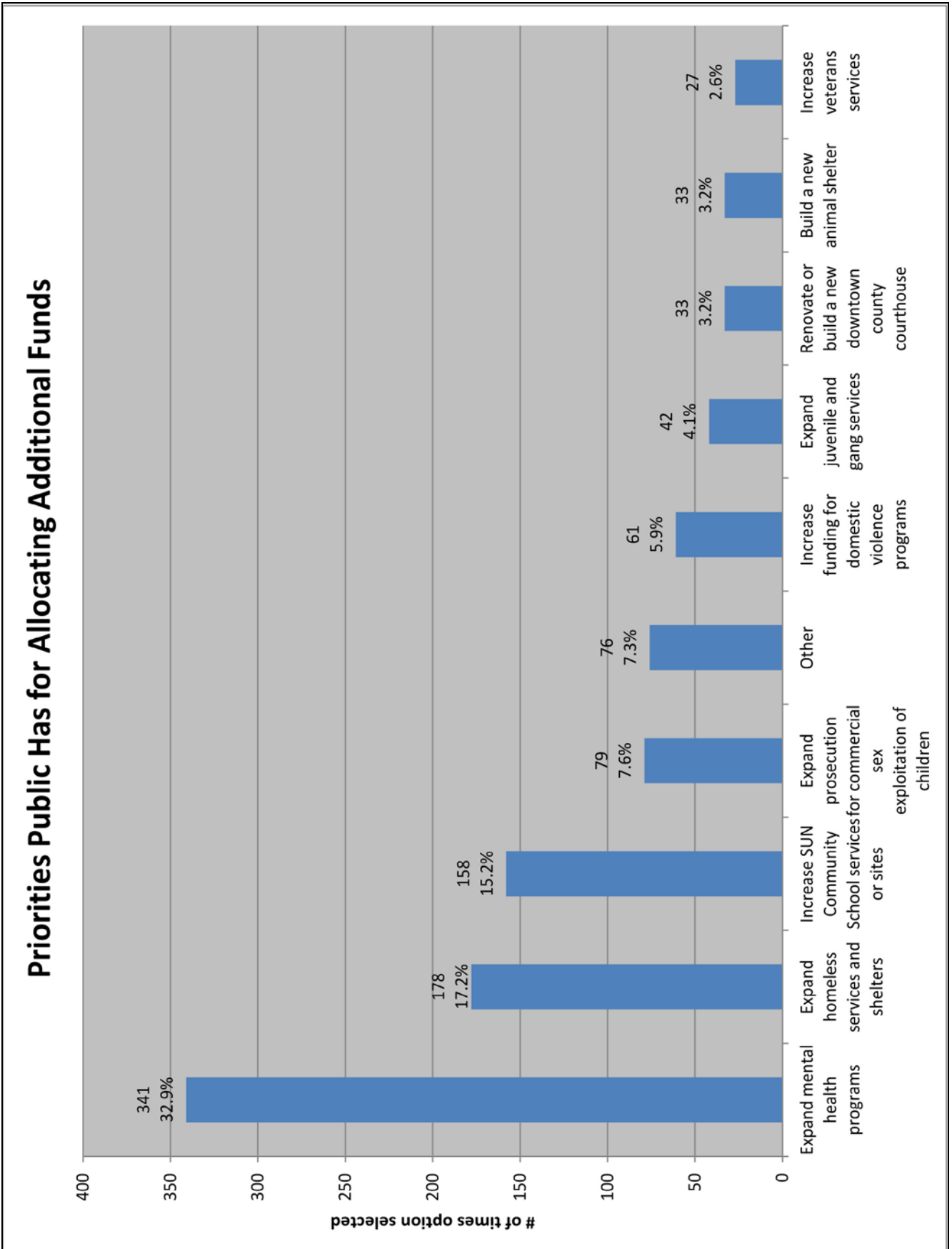
Two themes overarched across topics as more than 29% of comments embodied them:

1. **Generally support our community's most vulnerable and at-risk populations.** Example comments included: high needs populations frequently unable to care for themselves; difficult circumstances like poor health and homelessness hit these groups hardest; circumstances leading to vulnerable conditions are frequently not people's fault; community is likely to be less safe and functional if support isn't provided.

2. **Prevention and early intervention avoid related societal problems, decrease other service needs, reduce long-term costs and create the best outcomes.** Example comments included: prevent and/or reduce related societal problems (e.g., crime, poverty, homelessness, infectious disease); limit emergency room visits which saves money and creates healthier people; human productivity improves when basic needs are addressed in the first place; maintained infrastructure limits destruction during natural disasters, decreases damage when used, and reduces costs over the long-term.

Question 4 Results and Summary: Respondents selected one choice from 10 options for allocating the approximately $5 million in additional funding (*see page 8*). Three options were selected nearly 65% of the time. They were: expand mental health programs (32.9%); expand homeless shelters and services (17.2%); and increase SUN School Community School services or sites (15.2%). Most importantly, 'expand mental health programs' was selected at nearly double the rate of the second highest option. This clearly demonstrates that respondents overwhelmingly thought mental health services should be highly prioritized for additional funding.

Chart 4: Services Public Prioritizes for Allocating Additional Funds

Total number of times that each option was selected to receive additional funding.

Priorities Public Has for Allocating Additional Funds

Option	# of times option selected	Percentage
Expand mental health programs	341	32.9%
Expand homeless services and shelters	178	17.2%
Increase SUN Community School services or sites	158	15.2%
Expand prosecution for commercial sex exploitation of children	79	7.6%
Other	76	7.3%
Increase funding for domestic violence programs	61	5.9%
Expand juvenile and gang services	42	4.1%
Renovate or build a new downtown county courthouse	33	3.2%
Build a new animal shelter	33	3.2%
Increase veterans services	27	2.6%

Question 5 Results and Summary: Respondents submitted 865 comments concerning why they chose their selected option to receive additional funding. The comments were reviewed and categorized by similarity. The most frequent comments with regard to each option are listed below.

One of the most impressive things about this question is 131 of the comments (approximately one out of every seven respondents!) focused on expanding mental health programs to reduce and prevent a multitude of societal problems (e.g., crime, homelessness, domestic violence, gangs, HIV), as well as reduce other service demands and costs (e.g., health care costs). This suggests that respondents were very sophisticated and thoughtful in selecting and justifying their options, since this viewpoint takes into account the relationships between issues and the importance of addressing them now to avoid future social and financial costs.

1. **Expand mental health programs. (32.9%)** Example comments included: will reduce and prevent a multitude of societal problems (e.g., crime, homelessness, domestic violence, gangs, HIV), as well as reduce other service demands and costs (e.g., health care costs); critical to the health and quality of life of those affected as well as the larger community over the long-term; major issue that needs funding given the demand and its significant impacts.

2. **Expand homeless services and shelters. (17.2%)** Example comments included: help youth, families, domestic violence survivors and people who are among the most vulnerable, poor and needy; everyone needs housing to be productive and well; pressing issue given the economy and high housing costs are contributing to homelessness and it can't simply be solved by using enforcement sweeps; programs need significant funding to accommodate high need.

3. **Increase SUN Community School services or sites. (15.2%)** Example comments included: keep youth off the street and limit other problems like crime, poverty and dropouts, as well as other service demands; strong education is key to youth success; youth should be prioritized first and receive significant investment given their long-term impacts in society like the economy and community health.

4. **Expand prosecution for commercial sexploitation of children. (7.6%)** Example comments included: children are vulnerable and innocent and every effort must be made to guarantee their safety; pressing issue for metro area given its high prevalence and more resources are needed to ensure sufficient prosecution occurs.

5. **Other. (7.3%)** Example comments included: maintain transportation infrastructure since it affects everyone, increases safety, promotes prosperity, and is in poor condition in some cases; reduce taxes.

6. **Increase funding for domestic violence programs. (5.9%)** Example comments included: demand is huge and funding must increase to adequately meet need; increase safety and support for victims without resources and their families, who may not otherwise decide to leave abusive relationships.

7. **Expand juvenile and gang services. (4.1%)** Example comments included: provide rehabilitation that discourages relapse, thereby decreasing future involvement with the justice system; address now to reduce costs that Multnomah County services would otherwise have to incur in the future.

8. **Renovate or build a new downtown county courthouse. (3.2%)** Example comments included: the current courthouse is extremely prone to disasters and its ability to provide functional services is very limited; lower danger and long-term costs by addressing the courthouse as soon as possible.

9. **Build a new animal shelter. (3.2%)** Example comments included: services are currently insufficient to meet demands and need more funding.

10. **Increase veterans' services. (2.6%)** Example comments included: services need to increase and improve since current ones are hard to find, bureaucratic and underfunded.

Additional Opportunities for the Public to Provide Input Prior to Approval of the FY 2015 Budget: The Multnomah County budget is likely to be approved by the Board of County Commissioners on May 29, 2014. Public budget hearings are being held on April 30, May 7, and May 14 at different locations throughout the county. At the hearings, the County Commissioners will take public comments and testimony (up to three minutes) concerning the county's proposed budget. You can learn more about the public budget hearings as well the budget proposed by County Chair Marissa Madrigal at: https://web.multco.us/budget/fy-2015-chairs-proposed-budget

Time to make public comments is also available during the next four board meetings. The meetings will take place in the mornings on May 1, May 8, May 15, and May 22, in the Multnomah Building Boardroom located at 501 SE Hawthorne Boulevard in Portland. Additionally, individuals or community groups may want to consider scheduling a meeting with a County Commissioner to express their opinions.

Please feel free to contact the Office of Citizen Involvement to get more information about the opportunities listed above or any questions you have about this report. We can be reached at 503-988-3450 or citizen.involvement@multco.us.

2014 Budget Survey. Please complete all 5 questions!

Welcome to the 2014 Multnomah County budget survey! Please complete both pages of the survey and click "Submit" once you have finished.

1) Pick the top three services you value most that Multnomah County provides. See a description of the programs that each service covers.*

[ ] Aging and Disability Services

[ ] Animal Services

[ ] Community Health Services

[ ] County Jails

[ ] Developmental Disabilities Services

[ ] District Attorney - Public Prosecutor

[ ] Domestic Violence Services

[ ] Elections

[ ] Health Clinics

[ ] Homeless Services

[ ] Juvenile and Gang Services

[ ] Mental Health Services

[ ] Parole and Probation Services

[ ] Property Assessment and Taxation

[ ] Roads and Bridges

[ ] Sheriff's Office Patrol

[ ] SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services

2) Of the three services you selected in question #1, please rank them in order of importance to you. **

3) Please describe what features of the services you selected are important to you.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4) For the first time in over a decade, the County is not reducing its budget and may be able to minimally expand some services or improve critical infrastructure. Please select one item below on which you would spend additional funds:*

[ ] Renovate or build a new downtown county courthouse

[ ] Expand mental health programs

[ ] Expand juvenile and gang services

[ ] Expand prosecution of people involved in the commercial sexual exploitation of children

[ ] Expand homeless services and shelters

[ ] Increase veterans services

[ ] Increase SUN Community School services or sites

[ ] Increase funding for domestic violence programs

[ ] Build a new animal shelter

[ ] Other: _____

5) Please describe why you selected the choice you made in question 4.

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_____

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Thank You!

Thank you for taking our survey. Your responses are very important to us. If you'd like to receive a copy of the report delivered to the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners please send us an email at citizen.involvement@multco.us. Additionally, you can check our website at www.citizenweb.org in mid-April to see the report. Please also follow us on Facebook and Twitter to learn more about future public engagement opportunities with Multnomah County.

Your County, Your Services

Service Descriptions

Aging and Disability Services (ADS)

Helps the County's 217,000 older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans live independently by linking them to a wide range of quality services and resources that meet their diverse needs and preferences.

Animal Services

Licenses pets, operates an animal shelter, responds to animal emergencies, and rescues injured, sick, and abused animals. Animal Services receives over 7,500 animals in its shelter.

Community Health Services

Monitors and treats communicable diseases and addresses chronic diseases and environmental health conditions in the community.

County Jails

Screens arrestees, houses inmates before trial, and has custody of inmates after sentencing to jail. The jails provide medical and mental health services to inmates. Over 37,000 people move through the jail system every year.

Developmental Disability Services (DDSD)

Provides case management services linking clients to resources in the community. DDSD serves over 4,950 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities diagnosed prior to the age of twenty-two. Services may span the entire lifetime.

District Attorney - Public Prosecutor

Prosecutes offenders who commit criminal law violations. The DA reviews and prosecutes cases referred by seven police agencies and represents the State of Oregon in cases of juvenile dependency, delinquency, and child support. In 2013, the DA issued more than 20,000 cases – 15,000 misdemeanors and 5,000 felonies.

Domestic Violence Services

Services are provided through a multi-disciplinary, coordinated system that responds to victims and perpetrators: 5,000 victims receive community-based, in-person services; 2,000 receive District Attorney-based services; and 30,000 receive assistance by phone. Over 4,000 offenders are jailed, 1,400 are prosecuted, and 1,000 are supervised annually.

Elections

Conducts all local, city, county, state and federal elections for the citizens of and all political districts within Multnomah County. Under state and local law, special elections and recall elections can also be called at any time of the year. Elections counts anywhere from 200,000 to over 600,000 ballots.

Office of Citizen Involvement

Multnomah County

Health Clinics	Provides access to primary health and dental care for low-income and uninsured residents. County health clinics are located in the community and in schools and served over 70,000 people in 2012.
Homeless Services	Services to the homeless and those at risk of losing housing. Rent assistance, emergency shelter, temporary housing, and assistance accessing public benefits. Over 80% of the formerly homeless retain housing 12 months after exiting the program.
Juvenile and Gang Services	Delivers evidence-based services to delinquent youth and their families. Services range from informal handling (diversion) and formal probation, shelter care, mental health assessments, outpatient and secure residential substance abuse treatment, gang prevention and detention. Court Counselors supervise about 300 youth on formal probation per day
Libraries	Libraries provide books, media, and cultural and educational programs to the community. Multnomah County's libraries have the highest circulation rates per person in the country.
Mental Health and Addictions Services (MHASD)	Provides a comprehensive system of care to prevent, intervene in, and treat mental illness and addiction in adults, youth and children. MHASD serves low-income, uninsured, and homeless individuals and families, as well as anyone who is in crisis. MHASD's addiction outpatient providers serve 5,000 non-Medicaid eligible adults each year.
Parole and Probation Services	Supervision of approximately 8,150 probationers and post-prison adult offenders in the community who have been convicted of felony and misdemeanor crimes.
Property Assessment and Taxation	Assesses, collects, and distributes over $1.2 billion in property taxes for local governments within Multnomah County, while ensuring that all property is valued and taxed fairly and accurately.
Roads and Bridges	Responsible for building and maintaining six major Willamette River bridges and over 800 miles of roads that are located primarily in unincorporated Multnomah County.
Sheriff's Office Patrol	Patrols unincorporated areas of Multnomah County, some East County cities, and the Willamette and Columbia rivers. Patrol deputies make approximately 3,000 arrests and respond to 6,000 calls for service annually.
SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services	Provides extra-curricular and enrichment activities at 67 local elementary, middle and high schools. Early childhood provides health, nutrition services, and parent education in homes and schools.

Office of
Citizen
Involvement

Multnomah County