



# Evanston Civic Center Engagement Preliminary Findings

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Key themes and considerations based on preliminary findings of the Community Poll and  
Listening Sessions conducted as part of the City of Evanston Civic Center Study

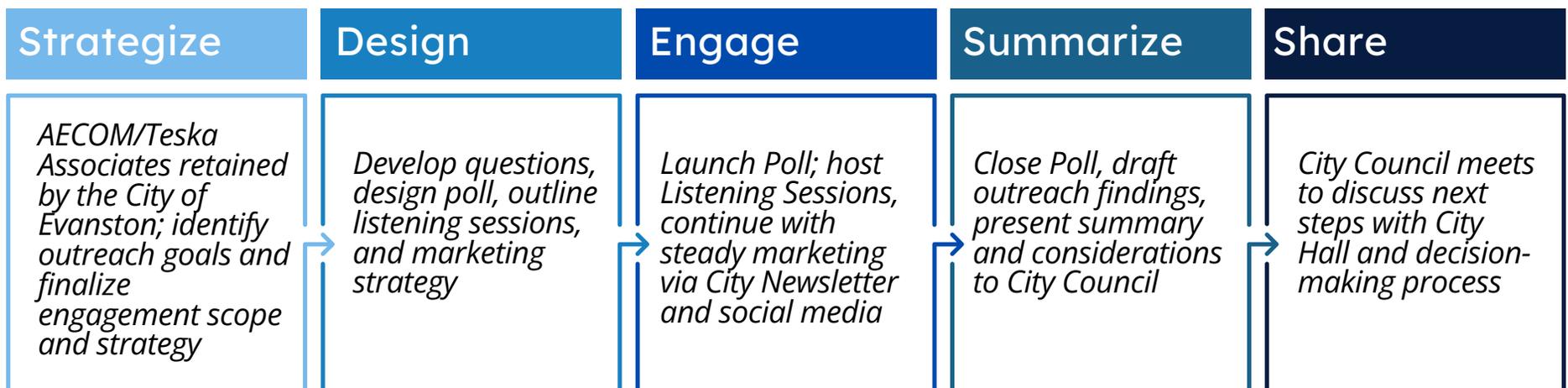
Report Prepared by Teska Associates, Inc.

# Engagement Overview

## Purpose of the Engagement

- **The City of Evanston is evaluating the future of its civic facilities,** including City Hall, the Police Department, and the Fire Department following a recent study that examined the feasibility and costs of various options, such as renovating existing buildings or relocating.
- **A Community Poll and series of Listening Sessions** were facilitated by Teska Associates, Inc. to better understand the community's use of and priorities relating to City facilities and services.

## Engagement Tasks

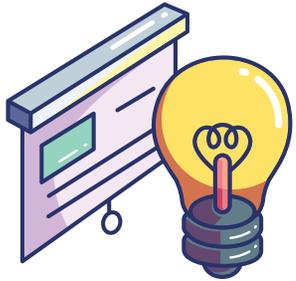


# Engagement Overview

## Community Poll & Listening Sessions



- The Civic Center **Community Poll** was open for seven weeks, from October 7 to November 25, 2024, receiving **755 responses**. Question formats included open-ended, multiple-choice, ranking, and rating.



- Four **Community Listening Sessions** were hosted in various formats, languages, and locations. In total, **79 community members participated**. All sessions included large and small group discussion and an optional interactive budgeting exercise.

# Engagement Overview

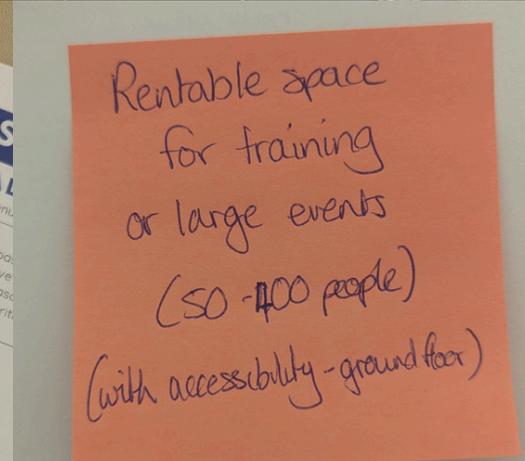
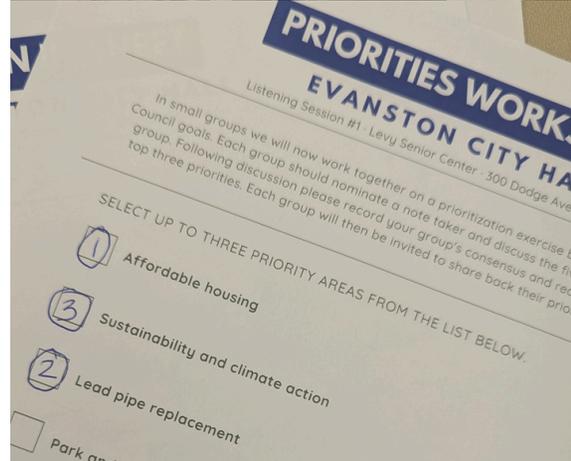
## Listening Sessions

**1. Tuesday, October 29**  
Hybrid Session at Levy Center

**2. Thursday, November 14**  
In-Person Session at Crown Center

**3. Wednesday, November 20**  
Hybrid Spanish-Language Session at Levy Center

**4. Thursday, November 21**  
Virtual Session

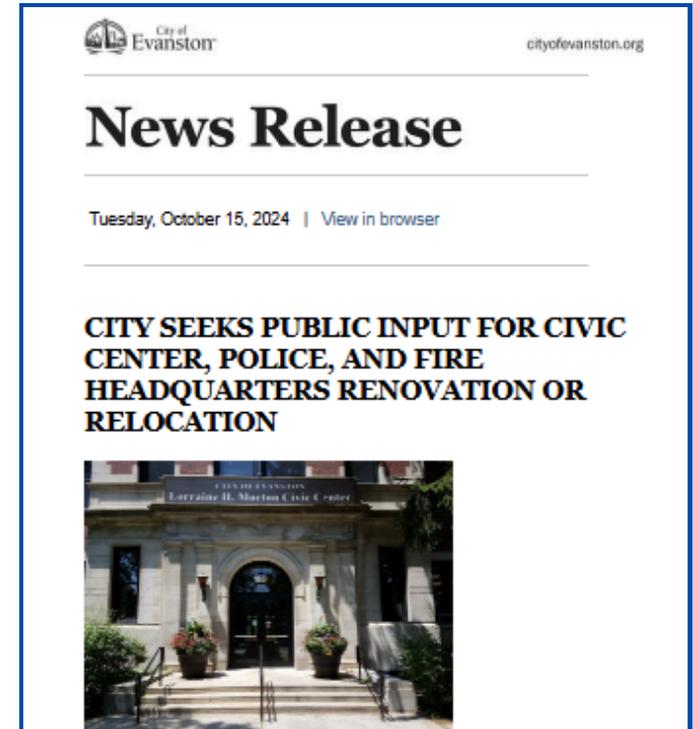


# Engagement Overview

## Marketing the Engagement

The online poll and listening sessions were regularly advertised in the City of Evanston's newsletter and...

- City of Evanston Press Release: Oct 15, 2024
- Website News Story: Oct 15, 2024
- Facebook Post: Oct 22, 2024
- Twitter Post: Oct 23, 2024
- Instagram Story: Oct 23
- City E-Newsletter: Oct 24 & 31, 2024
- 8th Ward Newsletter: Oct 28, 2024
- Meeting Reminder Email sent to all 9 City Ward Newsletter Lists: Oct 28, 2024
- Instagram Story: Nov 6, 2024
- 4th Ward Newsletter: Nov 12, 2024





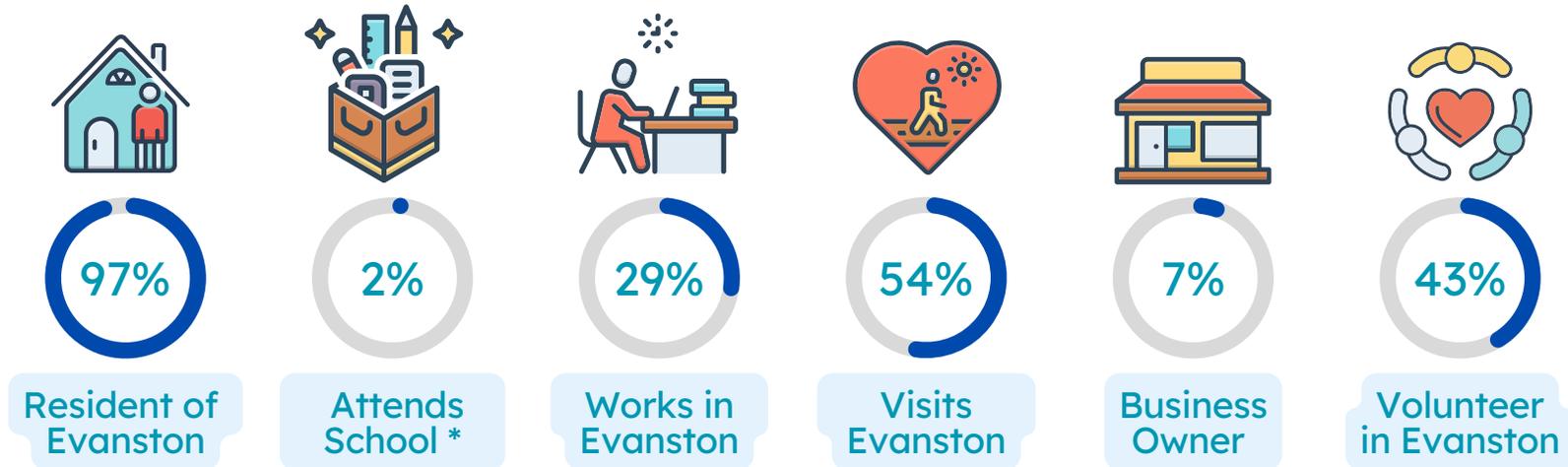
## Who did we hear from?

**POLL PARTICIPANT PROFILE**

# Poll Participant Profile

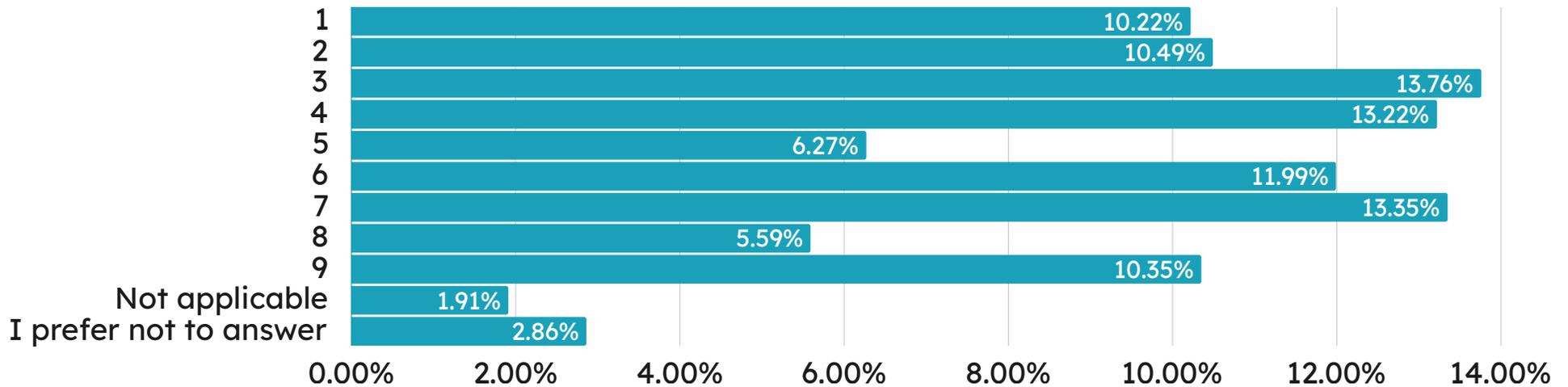
## Affiliation with Evanston

Respondents were allowed to choose all applicable options.



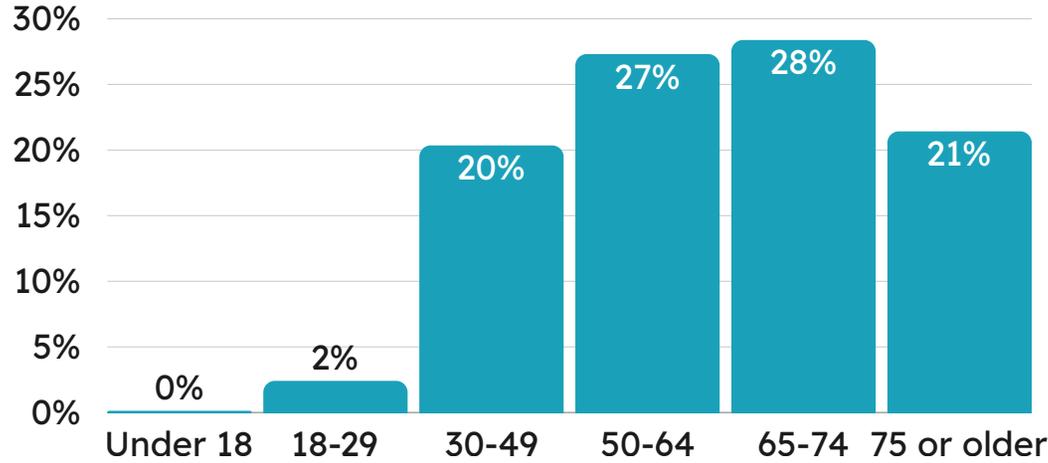
\* Includes respondents whose have household member or child that attends school in Evanston

## What ward of the city do you live in?

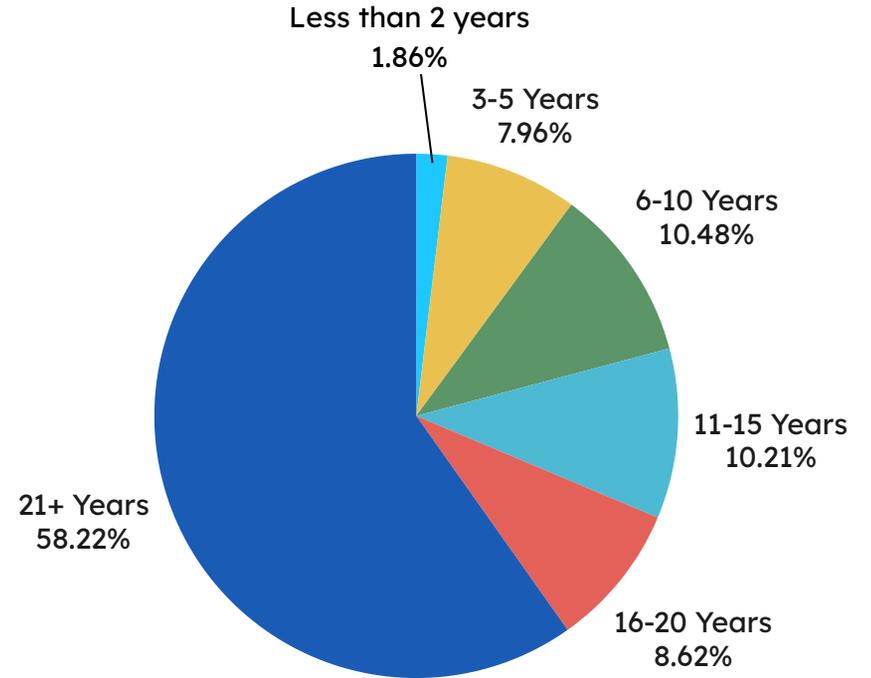


# Poll Participant Profile

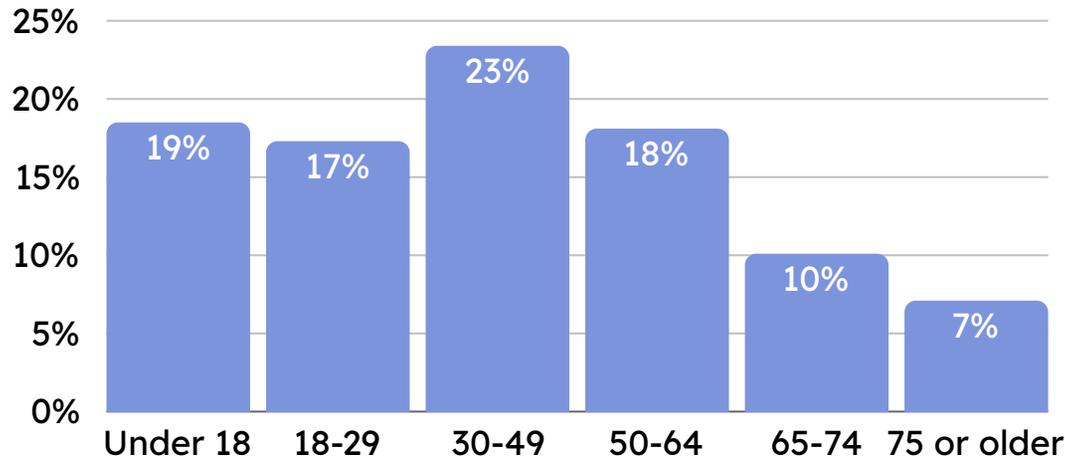
## Participant Age Breakdown



## Participant Residency Tenure



## Evanston Age Breakdown



Source: 2022 US Census American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

# Top Engagement Themes



## Smart Spending

Promote responsible spending and options that strike a balance of cost and overall value.

### Accessibility

Refers to the ease by which an audience is able to receive, understand and act upon communications and services from businesses, big corporations, agencies, local and central government.

## Enhance Accessibility

Accessibility, both in services and physical features, should be prioritized.



## Inclusive Services

Prioritize maintenance of existing city services and explore the potential of adding additional available services in the future.



## Foster Community Connectivity

Design areas where neighbors can connect with each other in civic groups and informally.



## Multi-Modal Mobility

Include options to safely drive, walk, bike, or take public transit to the civic center.



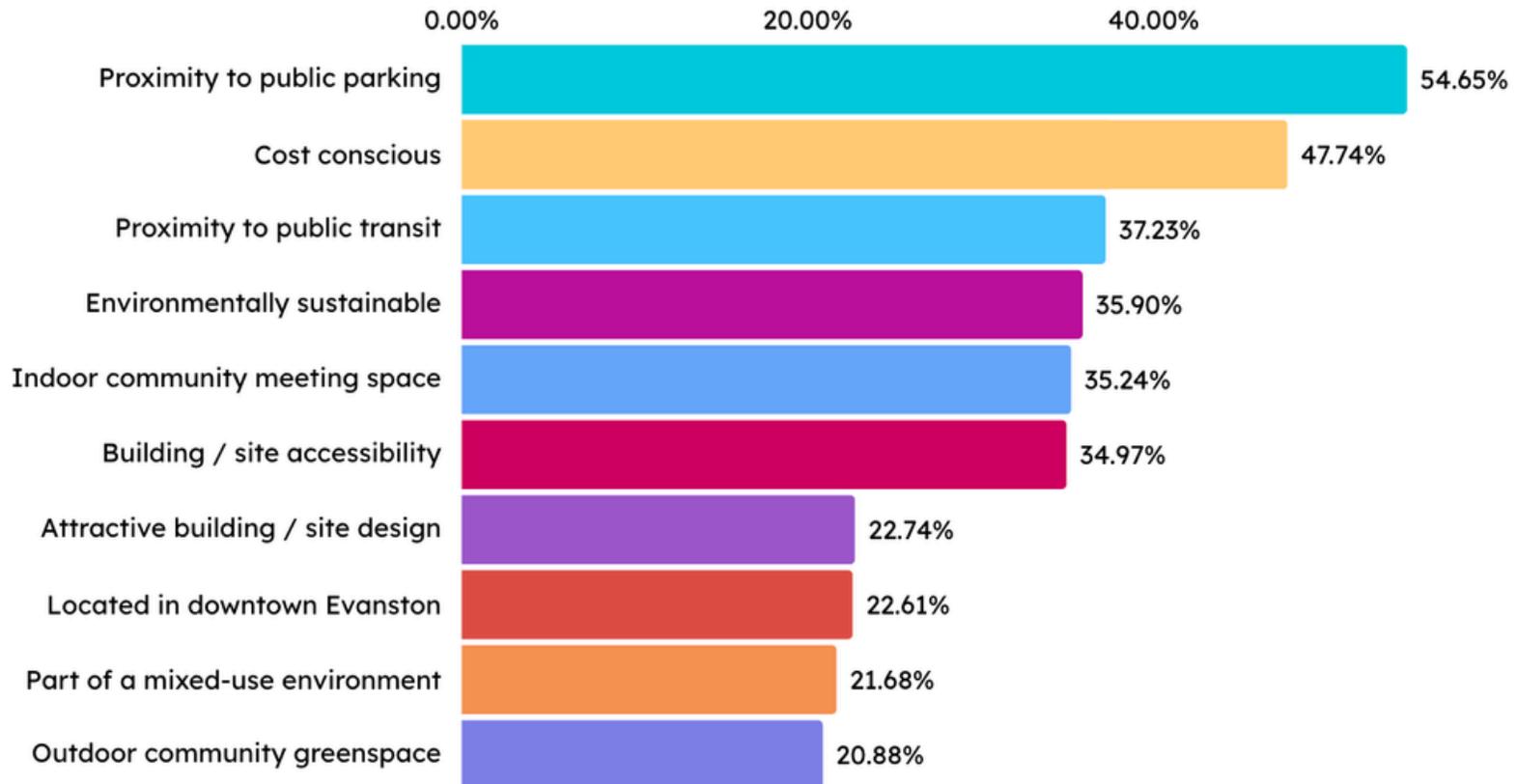
## Smart Spending

# Top Engagement Themes | Smart Spending

## Key Findings

- **“Cost conscious”** was the second-most common priority
- **42%** answered that the City should try to balance cost and quality when asked to prioritize cost in relation to the importance and potential added benefits of a civic center project

### Online Poll Results • Participants were asked to select their top four or fewer priorities for City Hall



# Top Engagement Themes | Smart Spending

## Key Findings

- In open-ended responses to the Poll, participants mentioned **cost as a key consideration** for not only the creation of a new civic center and its amenities, but also the **cost to the user for those amenities** (i.e., affordable or free meeting spaces, free parking, etc.).
- **Civic center amenities ranked last** when compared with other community priorities such as affordable housing and lead pipe replacement.

### Realtime Responses from Listening Session #2

**What other types of amenities or services are important to you in a City Hall that are not captured on that list?**

free parking	Free parking	Universal design
Free parking	Free parking	Free meeting space
Plentiful free parking.	central location	Child care
Free meeting space	dmv	Bike friendly
Safe Marketplace exchange location	Free and plentiful meeting space	Close to public transit



## Enhance Accessibility

# Top Engagement Themes | Enhance Accessibility

## Key Findings

- 'Access to Public Parking' was the top-ranked priority regarding civic facilities, receiving **55%** of votes.
- Participants in the Spanish-language Listening Session noted that conducting business at the existing civic center can be difficult as there are few or no employees who speak basic Spanish. **A desire for bilingual assistance was expressed by this group.**
- When asked whether participants would access civic center services online if that was an option, **4 out of 5 (82%) said they would.**



**Online interfacing wins. 4 out of 5 participants (82%) prefer taking care of city business online vs. in-person if it were an option**



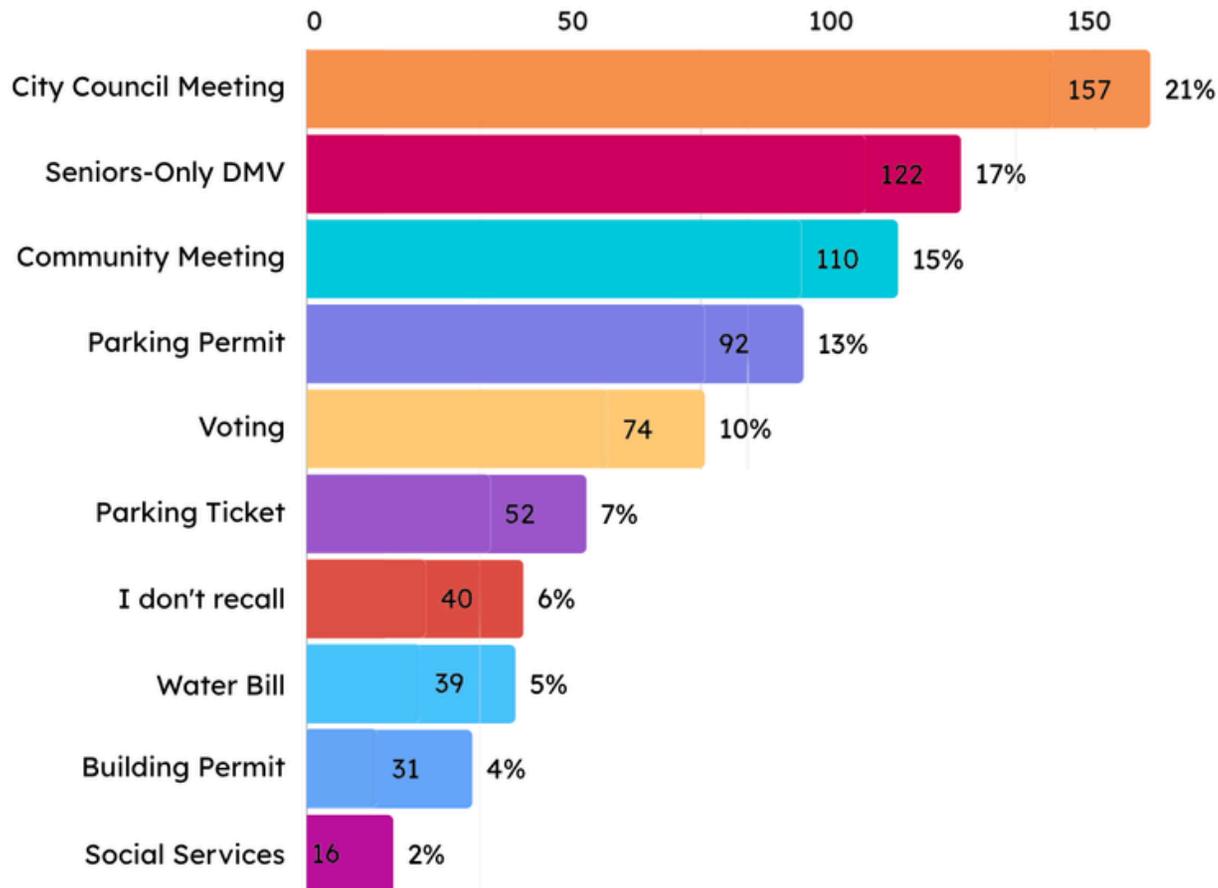
# Inclusive Services

# Top Engagement Themes | Inclusive Services

## Key Findings

- Most respondents who have been to the civic center in the last six months visited in order to: attend a **City Council meeting** (21%), use **seniors-only DMV** services (17%), attend a **community meeting** (15%), **obtain a parking permit** (13%), or to **vote** (10%).

**What was the reason for your visit to City Hall? (online poll)**



# Top Engagement Themes | Inclusive Services

## Key Findings

- Open-ended responses favored use of the civic center for standard City services, with some extension of currently offered services
- Some responses in the Community Poll and Listening Sessions noted that Evanston **currently has public facilities that host some amenities**, such as meeting and event spaces.

**What other types of services or amenities are important to you in a City Hall?  
(online poll; open response)**

“ Free parking is essential for citizens who are conducting city business

“ None of those options is cost efficient. Focus on what it needs to do.

“ Most of the city services to be in a single place

“ Keep it basic - the ability to conduct interactions with citizens, and provide a workplace for city employees. Evanston has plenty of parks, meeting spaces, etc., without building new ones.



## Foster Community Connectivity

# Top Engagement Themes | Foster Community Connectivity

## Key Findings

- The top ranked potential civic center amenity in the Community Poll was meeting space for civic groups (received a vote from **60%** of participants).
- Meeting space was mentioned in the interactive voting activity at **every Listening Session**.
- Asked if they generally see value in civic centers including space for other uses, such as cafes, childcare, and more, **47%** of participants said yes.

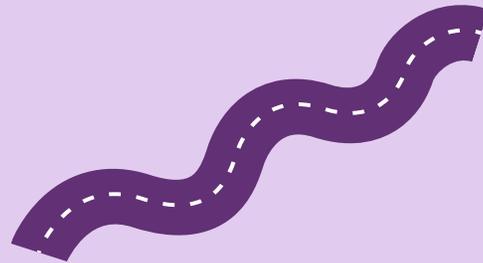
**What other types of services or amenities are important to you in a City Hall?  
(online poll; open response)**



I often run into friends or old neighbors at the civic center, would love a place to sit & chat incorporated in the civic center



A large, community-friendly city council room where people can easily participate in meetings



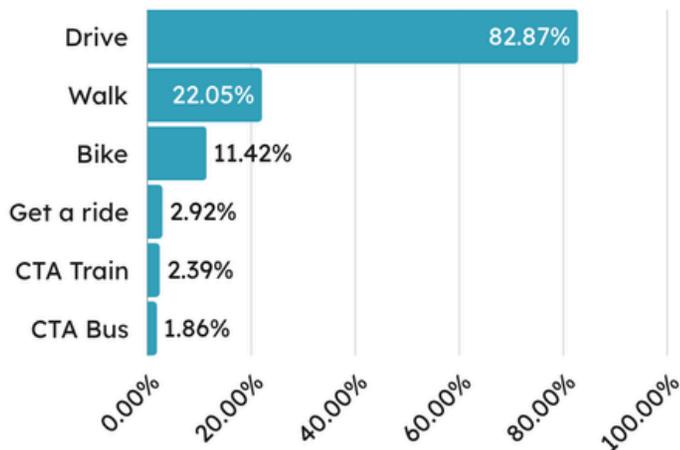
## Multi-Modal Mobility

# Top Engagement Themes | Multi-Modal Mobility

## Key Findings

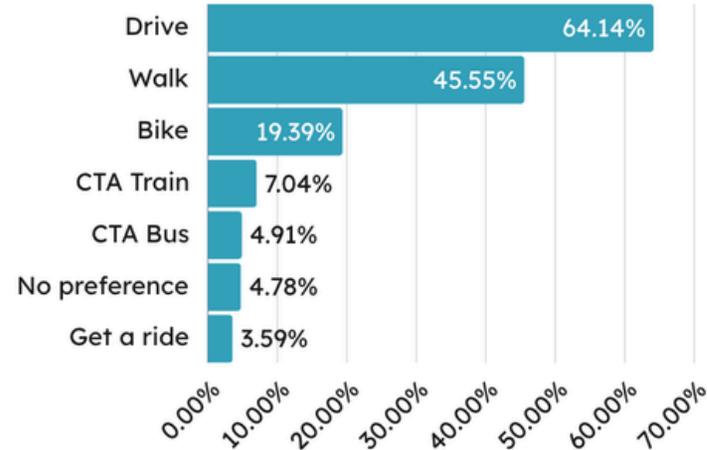
- While the vast majority of participants typically drive to city hall (83%), **18% of that 83% would prefer to use another mode of transportation**, such as transit or walking.
- “Proximity to public transit” is **ranked third** in the Community Poll as a priority for city hall, just after “proximity to public parking” and “cost consciousness.”

How do you usually get to City Hall?



The remaining 2.79% of responses noted either a taxi, car service, other mode, they don't recall, or don't go to City Hall.

How would you prefer to get to City Hall?



The remaining 3.32% of responses noted either a taxi, car service, other mode, or they don't go to City Hall.



# Additional Considerations

# City-Initiated Survey I Conducted by Impact Research

## Targeted Survey Methodology

Impact Research conducted a survey of 400 registered voters in Evanston from October 18-21, 2024.

- 79% of these surveys were conducted via cell phone, and 21% were conducted via landline.
- The results of this survey were largely consistent with the online Community Poll and Listening Sessions.

Two elements from the Impact survey findings were different from the online poll:

- The desired amenity of free Wi-Fi ranked higher among participants in the Impact survey.
- The Impact survey asked about an additional community priority not included in the online Community Poll: “Reducing taxes, fines, and fees.” This priority was ranked highly in the Impact survey, second only to affordable housing.



# Additional Considerations

## Topics from Engagement

While not part of this outreach, the in-person and online engagement yielded additional topics for consideration:

- City inclusion of Spanish and other language translations for future engagement meetings and surveys
- Range of factors related to location and cost of the civic center project
- Future of the current civic center building
- Convenience of non-City services (voting; DMV)



# Takeaways

## 5 Key Findings from Outreach

1. Participants generally wanted the City to be **cost conscious** and focus on providing **core services**, but did not prefer the option to focus on cost above all else.
2. Participants wanted enhanced accessibility with nearby **access to free public parking and transit**.
3. From the Spanish session, the most-stated need was to have **more people providing services that can speak Spanish** to improve accessibility of city services.
4. Community members want **free or low-cost access to community meeting spaces**, especially for non-profit groups.
5. Community members would like city hall to be **well-connected to the rest of the City through location and access to transit**. They would also prioritize ADA accessibility.