

CLOSING THE LOOP

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2026 Community Budget Input Process

Background

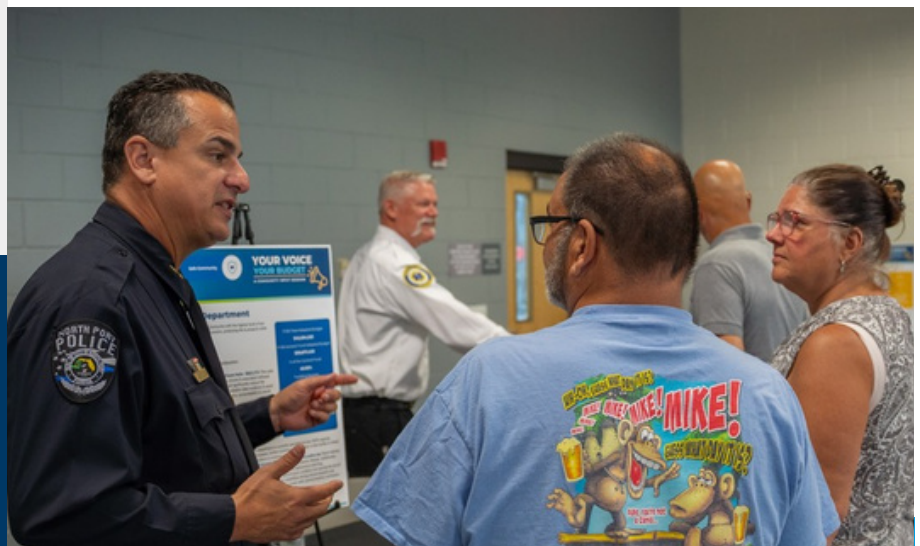
The Finance Department in the City of North Port prepares the budget for the City annually on behalf of the City Manager and in cooperation with all departments. The mission of the Finance Department is to achieve community outcomes by preserving the financial integrity and fiscal management of the organization, while assuring the availability of funds to accomplish the City's goals.

The final millage rate and the budgets, including non-district, three districts, and capital improvement budget, are adopted by City Commission approved resolutions (via public hearings in September).

Gathering community input during city budgeting is crucial. It ensures residents' priorities are heard, leading to a budget that better reflects community needs. This two-way street fosters trust and transparency, while residents gain a deeper understanding of financial constraints.

How is the budget developed prior to adoption?

1. The City Commission establishes budget priorities and goals based on the community's needs and desires.
2. Revenues are estimated to determine the approximate amount of financial resources that will be available to fund City operations.
3. Expenditure requests and forecasts are prepared by the various City departments and submitted to the City Manager for review.
4. The City Manager submits a recommended budget that reflects the City Commission's established priorities and goals.
5. The City Commission seeks additional public input and discusses the City Manager's Recommended Budget. Changes are proposed and approved at the budget workshops.
6. Changes are made according to the City Commission's recommendations and the Commission Tentative Budget is prepared for presentation at the public hearings in September.



COMMUNITY >>>> BUDGET INPUT FISCAL YEAR 2027

How to Get Involved



5 Public Commission Workshops



2 Special Commission Public Meetings



1 Public Meeting



2 Public Hearings



1 Community Budget "Eat & Greet"

Statistics



70 Completed Surveys



17 In-Person Budget Community Prioritizations



11 Divisions & Departments Rated by the Community

Initiative: community Budget input

The City of North Port collects feedback annually through the Community Budget Input process. Community Conversations typically begin in the Spring, with the Assumptions, Projections and Priorities workshop immediately following. Feedback collected during that time is provided to City leadership and City Commissioners prior to the budget workshops beginning in June. For more information, please visit NorthPortFL.gov/BudgetInput

At any time of the year, citizens can view the City's budget online or at the City Clerk's office in City Hall. The public is a critical part of the City's budget process and is encouraged to attend meetings when the budget is discussed. If unable to attend in person, citizens can watch the budget workshops live or on the archived videos located on the City's website. The public is also invited to write, call, e-mail and visit with the City Commissioners during the fiscal year to discuss the budget.



Commissioners@NorthPortFL.gov

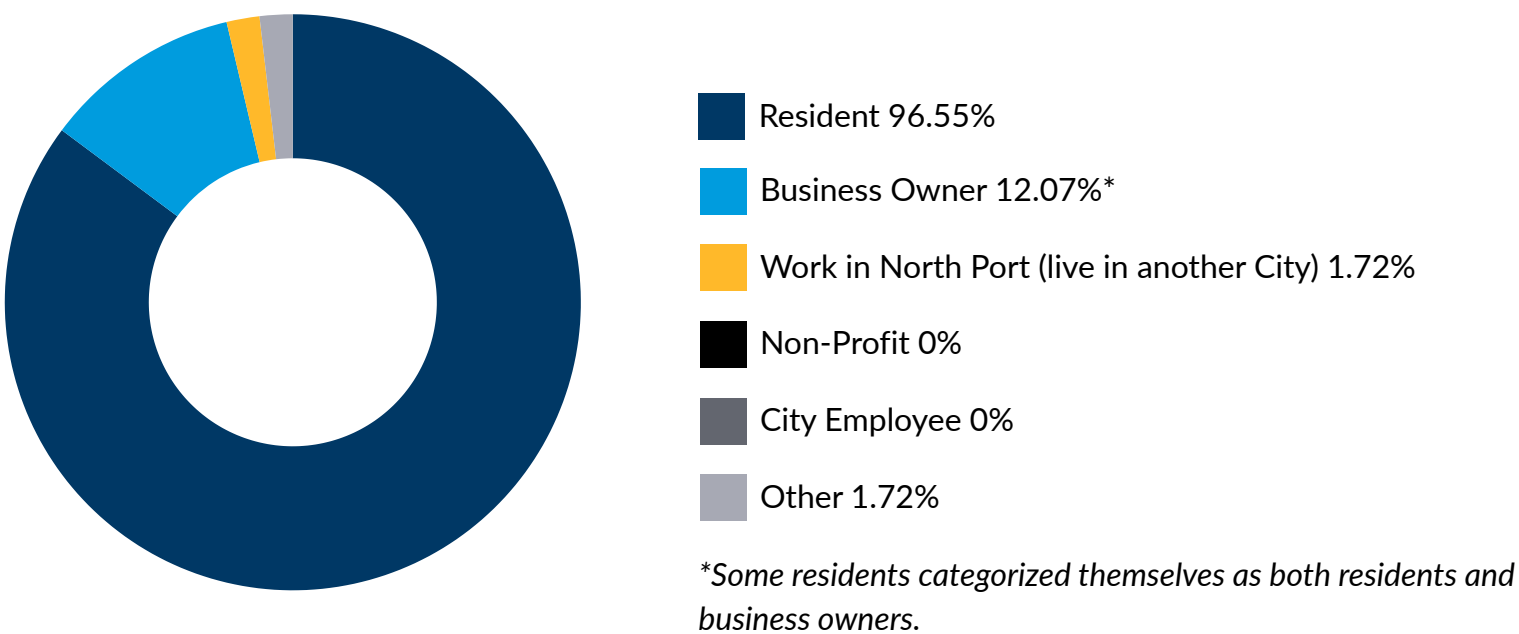


Survey Participation

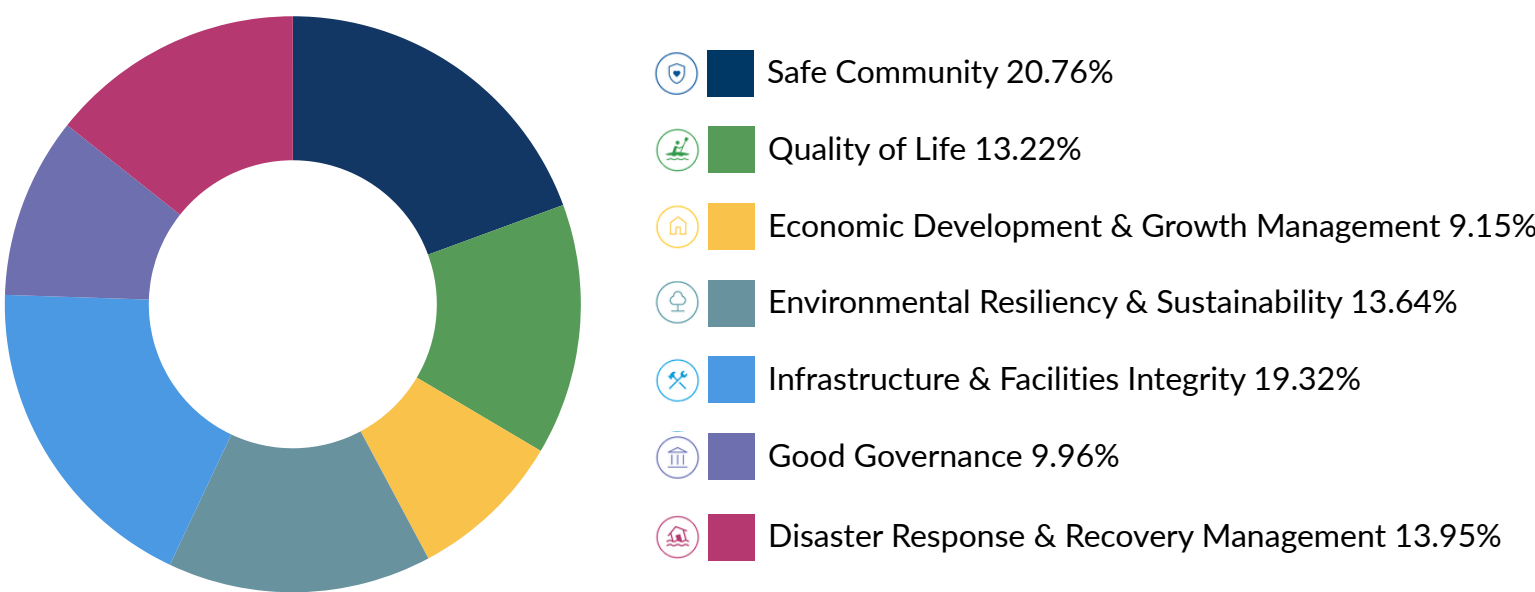
Each year the City opens an online survey for community members to provide feedback on how they would prioritize the budget. We ask residents to show us how they would spend \$100 between the City's strategic pillars. City Commission set the pillars as part of strategic planning. They include Safe Community, Quality of Life, Economic Development & Growth Management, Environmental Resiliency & Sustainability, Infrastructure & Facilities Integrity, Good Governance and Disaster Response & Recovery Management.

Results

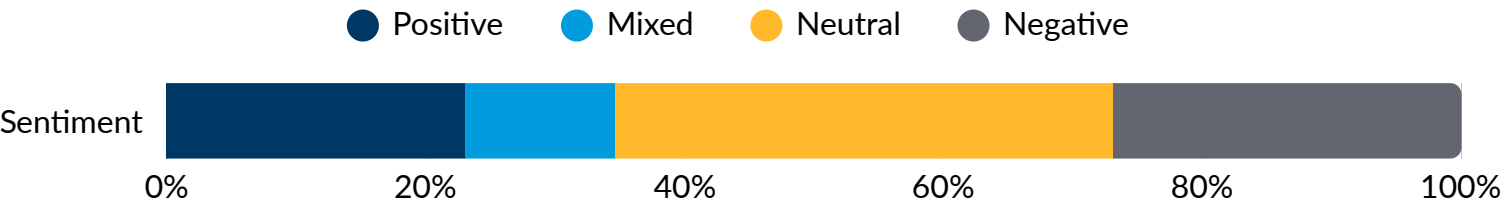
Demographics



How would you spend \$100 between the City's strategic priorities?



Sentiment Analysis



Community sentiment reflected a broad range of perspectives, with residents expressing both concerns and appreciation for the direction of the City and the services being provided. A significant portion of the feedback focused on growth, development and infrastructure, with many residents emphasizing the importance of ensuring roads, utilities and public services keep pace with the City's growth. Residents also voiced a strong desire to preserve North Port's environment, tree canopy and overall quality of life while continuing to invest in the community's future. Several comments encouraged the City to focus on balanced, sustainable growth and ensure that development contributes fairly toward infrastructure improvements.

Fiscal responsibility was also a recurring theme throughout the feedback. Residents expressed interest in keeping taxes and spending manageable while prioritizing essential services and long-term needs. Some comments questioned spending priorities and called for focus on efficiency, modest government growth and practical investments that directly benefit residents. At the same time, there were suggestions provided by community members, including operational efficiencies, alternative fleet solutions and ideas for supporting local businesses and economic development.

Alongside these concerns, there was also positive and supportive feedback recognizing the City's efforts, management and community engagement initiatives. Several residents noted that North Port is a good place to live and acknowledged that the City is generally well managed. Others expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the budget discussion process itself, describing the exercise as valuable and encouraging continued community involvement. Feedback also reflected optimism about North Port's future potential, with residents expressing interest in seeing continued investment in amenities, recreation, local businesses and attractions that enhance the community's identity and livability.

Overall, the feedback demonstrated that residents are highly invested in the future of North Port and care deeply about how the City grows and allocates resources. While there are differing opinions regarding priorities and spending, the responses consistently reflected a shared desire for thoughtful planning, transparency, fiscal responsibility and continued investment in maintaining North Port as a safe, attractive and welcoming community for residents both now and in the future.

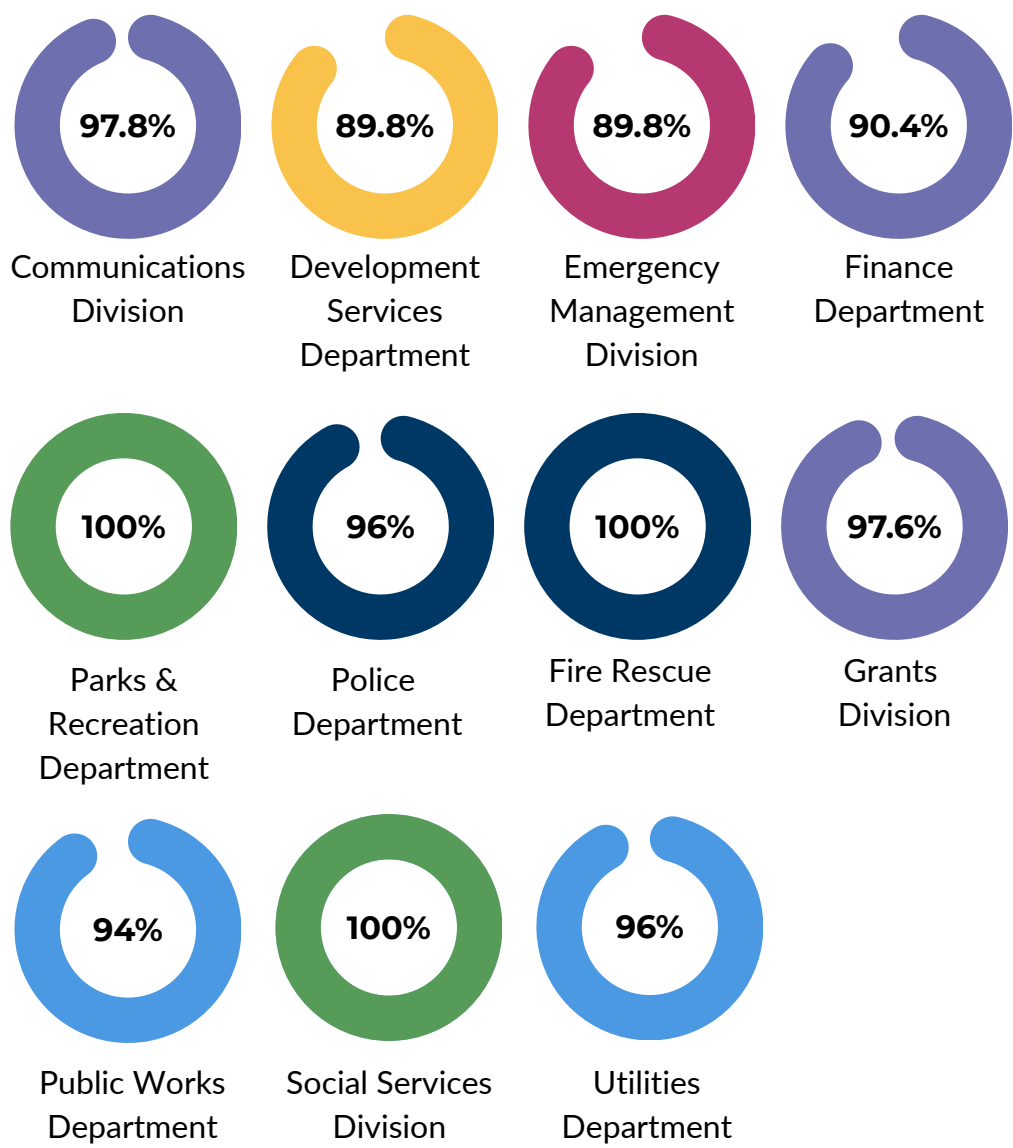


Budget Eat and Greet

Each year the City offers residents the opportunity to meet department and division leaders at an in-person Budget Eat and Greet event. The event is designed to create an open and approachable environment where community members can learn more about City services, priorities, projects and budget considerations directly from the teams who deliver them. Residents are encouraged to ask questions, provide feedback and better understand how taxpayer dollars support the programs, infrastructure and daily operations that serve the North Port community.

This year’s event brought together departments and divisions from across the organization, each providing interactive displays, informational boards and opportunities for one-on-one conversation with residents. Attendees were also able to share feedback on City priorities, service delivery and areas of community interest or concern. Residents also had the opportunity to rate departments and divisions based on their services, activities and spending levels, helping provide valuable insight into community perceptions and priorities as part of the budget engagement process.

Community Ratings for Departments and Divisions



The “Eat and Greet” is supported by a number of local businesses:

Zio's Twelve 21 Pizzeria
Blue Tequila
Vice Tea
Anna Maria Oyster Bar

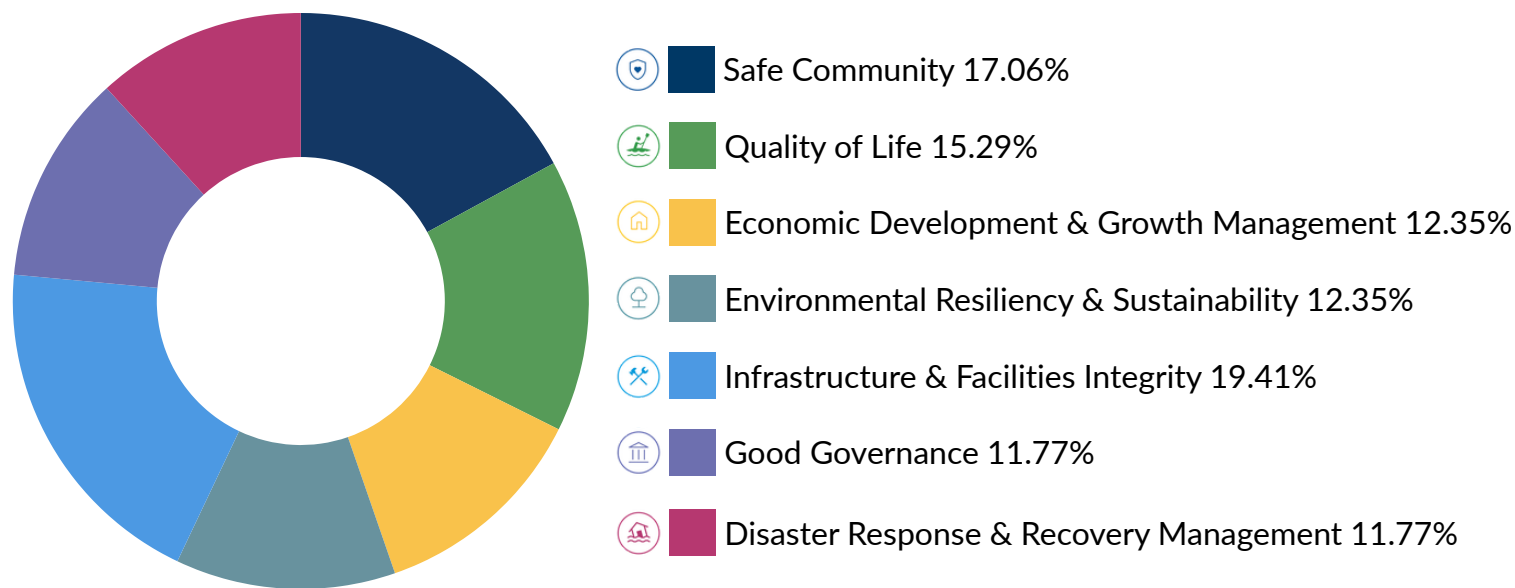
Thank you!

Budget Eat and Greet

At the Budget Eat and Greet event, residents are also provided with the opportunity to participate in the same budget prioritization exercise offered through the City’s online survey. Community members are asked to allocate a total of \$100, in \$10 increments, across the City’s seven strategic pillars by placing tokens into corresponding boxes representing each priority area.

This interactive activity provides residents with a hands-on way to demonstrate which areas they believe should receive the greatest level of investment and helps the City better understand community priorities as part of the annual budget process.

How would you spend \$100 between the City's strategic priorities?



Therefore across both the survey and in-person exercise the communities budget priorities are:

