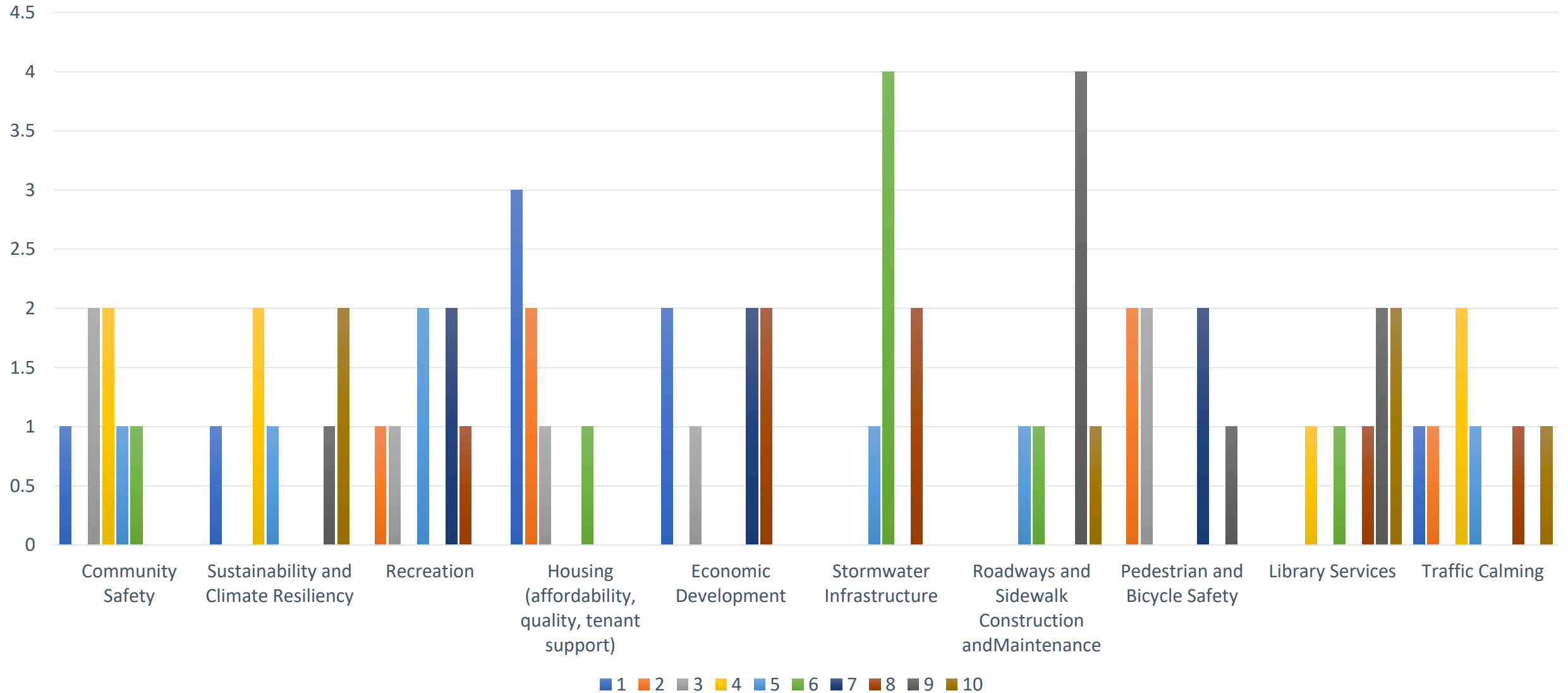
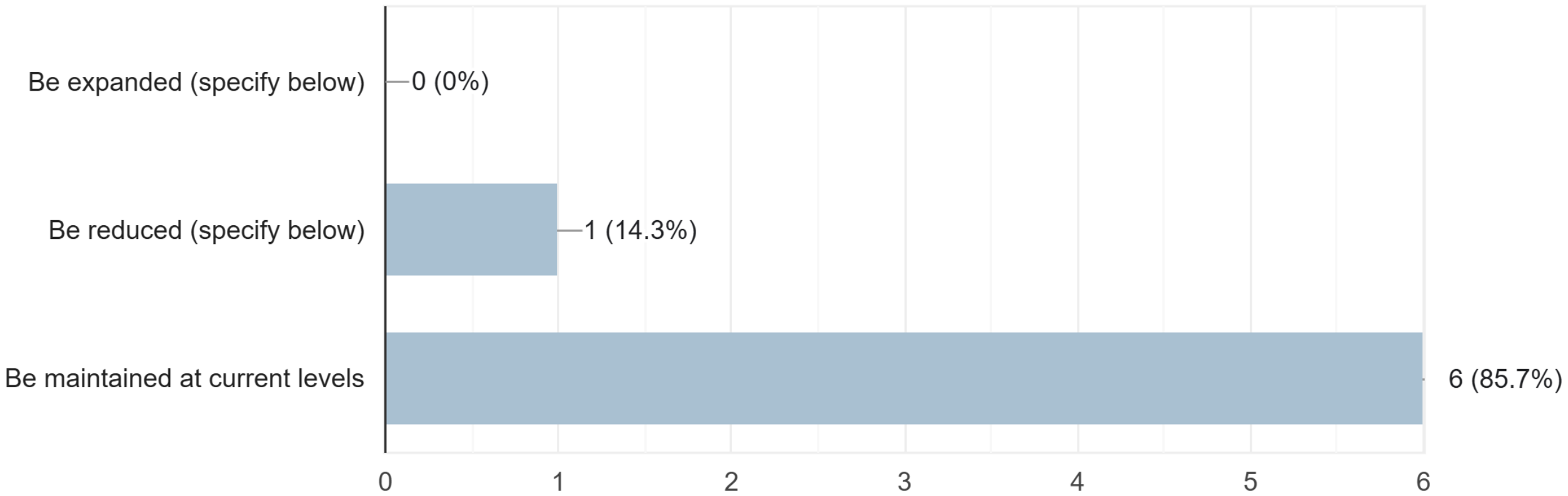


The Mayor and Council are tasked with working with city management to oversee a wide array of City functions, activities, and initiatives. Please rank the functions below from 1 to 10 in their order of importance for staff to address in FY 2026 (1 being the highest priority, 10 being the lowest priority).

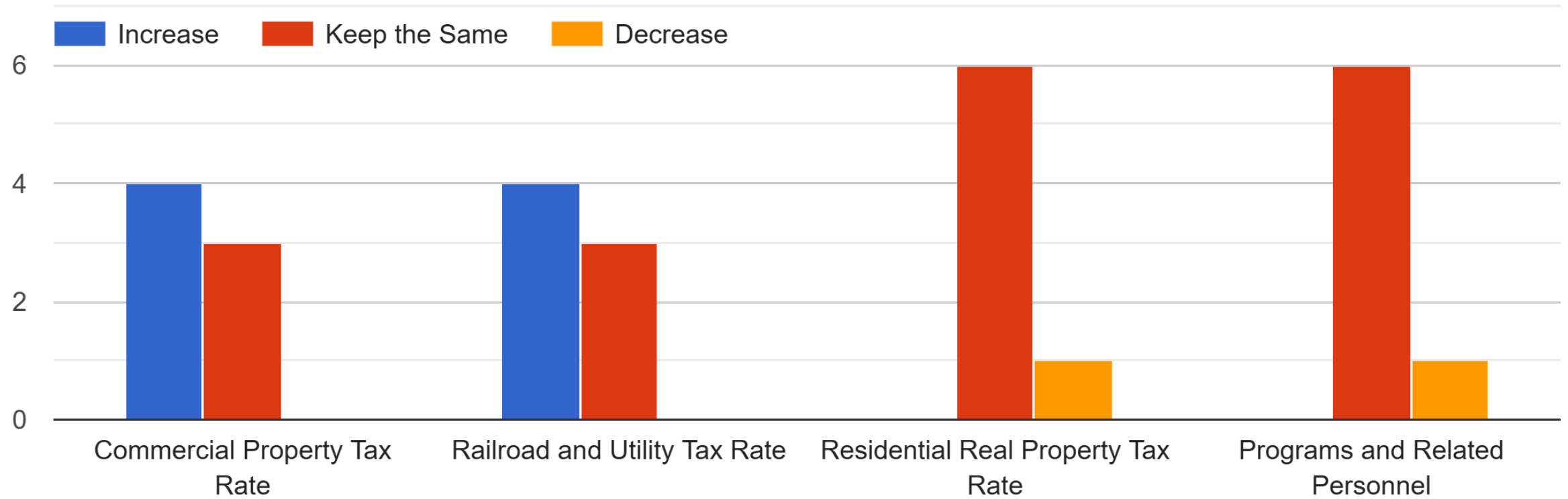


I believe that existing operating programs and services should... (select one):

7 responses

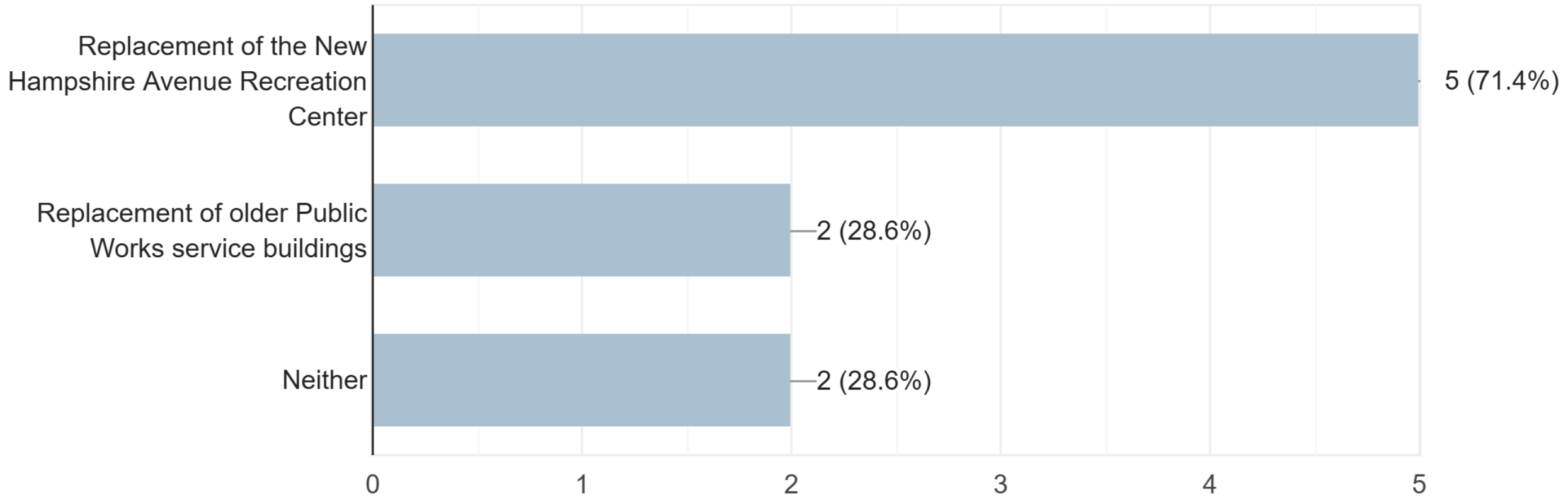


In order to maintain a balanced budget and prioritize City initiatives, we should consider these measures to promote adequate funding (select all that apply):



Listed are two proposed Capital Improvement Projects that do not currently have a funding source. Please select the projects for which you would like...creation Center Redevelopment Project, click here.

7 responses



Council Survey Question Responses

Q1. The Mayor and Council are tasked with working with city management to oversee a wide array of City functions, activities, and initiatives. Please rank the functions below from 1 to 10 in their order of importance for staff to address in FY 2026 (1 being the highest priority, 10 being the lowest priority).

Please provide any additional comments and/or details related to the previous question here (enter n/a if not applicable):

Many of these choices overlap. Climate resilience overall includes meeting our emission reduction commitments plus stormwater infrastructure management, and retrofitting affordable housing, for example. Road and sidewalk construction/maintenance also affects ped safety and stormwater management. And it will impact traffic calming. So these simplistic categories shouldn't be relied upon over-much.

I recognize the value of economic development for quality of life in our community and (potentially) for expanding the tax base. With new tax incentives in place for multifamily housing, I would like to see the City step back now and see what effect these incentives have. In terms of encouraging other kinds of economic development, I see City direct efforts as less important than other priorities now, as there seems to be a waiting game played along the New Hampshire Avenue corridor until Purple Line stations and BRT are closer to completion. Quiet relationship-building across jurisdictional boundaries has value now, and this can be pursued via many different channels, not just through staff. The survey does not ask, understandably, about prioritization of cost reductions since cost reductions themselves are not program areas. I do place high priority on the City making difficult decisions for FY26 in terms of protecting affordability with taxes and pursuing responsible spending habits.

Community safety should always be of the highest priority.

I ranked these in order of additional budget dollars and/or staff attention needed this coming year. I imagined, if I had an extra dollar or staff hour, where would I put it? I also thought about what more we might need to do (example local climate action) due to changes at the federal level. I found the categories confusing and to some degree overlapping (such as traffic calming, sidewalks, pedestrian/bike safety, or housing and climate). In particular, I don't recognize the distinction between traffic calming and pedestrian/bike safety. To me, we do traffic calming in order to protect pedestrians and bikes. So I defined ped/bike safety as separate bike lanes, and assumed that crosswalks and other road adjustments are in the traffic calming process. I think we must provide all these functions, and I do not support significant cuts to any of these programs. Programs that to my knowledge are operating smoothly and don't need extra funds or policy attention I ranked lower, example roads and sidewalks maintenance, library services (not construction, recreation (not the rec center) and community safety by (which I mean policing). Programs like climate and economic development that

need a jump start I ranked higher. Also important to me is to adequately support the internal functions--IT, human resources, finance etc--that make all these programs possible.

For recreation and library services, these are ranked high only for prioritizing replacing the current Rec Center and for keeping some level of library services on New Hampshire Ave after the new library reopens.

n/a

This year is a critical moment to seize economic opportunities to secure our City's long term economic well being, funding for our housing stock and infrastructure, & in relation to areas surrounding Purple Line development plus any remaining climate resilience funds. Also, we may need additional funds to take care of any current or incoming populations that need our City's help.

Q2. I believe that existing operating programs and services should... (select one):

Please provide any additional comments and/or details related to the previous question here (enter n/a if not applicable):

There is no one answer and if given the choice I would have selected all 3 buttons: it depends on the program! For example, (1) road maintenance expenditures in some respects could be reduced without impacting quality of life; (2) library services might be maintained at a level that serves the same number of people, but at two locations. Staff may be able to be re-assigned from one program to another if programs in one area are reduced, which might mean a flat budget impact even as changes are made in programs.

If there haven't been major complaints about the quality of service in program areas where there have been vacancies, then in effect there is reason to evaluate those de facto reductions in service as acceptable for an austerity budget.

I know we have discussed already the pros and cons of the current street and sidewalk maintenance schedule, but not knowing the criteria for the current protocols, I would favor a more careful evaluation of the need for resurfacing, etc. in an austere year for the budget.

I do not favor a reduction in the quality of benefits for employees, but if better rates for insurance can be obtained, that could be a cost savings.

I believe overall that in the absence of outcome measures and performance metrics, the Council is going to have to rely increasingly on best estimates of the kinds of program/services cuts that can be done with least harmful impacts.

The current city services provided to our community members are what makes this city special and highly sought after for housing, small business ownership and consumer ship.

I think we must provide all these functions, and I do not support significant cuts to any of these programs. Given compensation agreements, maintaining programs could mean increasing funding somewhat. I do not see any major programs that will save money by being significantly reduced. I would consider small adjustments or program delays that save significant funds in the short term. And I think we cannot afford stormwater program expansion without an additional funding source.

I will be on the look out for where programs and services could be reduced to better balance the budget, but do not have any in mind at the moment.

I think that we have a number of programs/efforts on staff's plates right now. Given current staffing levels and capacity, I do not think that we should expand our programs and instead focus on optimizing the efficiency and effectiveness of the programs that are currently provided.

n/a

Q3. In order to maintain a balanced budget and prioritize City initiatives, we should consider these measures to promote adequate funding (select all that apply):

Please provide any additional comments and/or details related to the previous question here (enter n/a if not applicable):

There are specific commercial tax/fee increases that merit further exploration. For example, (1) establishment of a higher tax rate on properties that are vacant, or contain derelict buildings; (2) raising sq ft rental rates for City-owned streetery sites (possibly with a higher rate for sites where alcohol is served, given that these sites will have higher revenues); (3) raising (or establishing) parking fees for the Junction and any other City-owned parking lots.

I've just finished an intensive outreach effort in one ward, over 3-4 months, in which voters of many ages and from a wide range of years-lived in Takoma Park, were calling for the City to live within its means more and pursue more modest objectives so that property tax increases, including those occurring simply because of rising assessments, can be kept at bay. There is a broad feeling that residents are falling behind and paying a larger and larger proportion of their income for the City property taxes.

I would love nothing more than to have the city budget stabilize to the point that we could provide some tax breaks to our homeowners. In my review of the FY2025 Budget, it appears that our projected spending is in concert with our projected revenue. That is encouraging.

We should consider the commercial property tax rate with input from business property owners and businesses, and in conjunction with programs we offer small businesses (that might reduce some of the impact on them).

We should also consider increasing the stormwater fee to raise some funds for LIDC-recommended projects. On programs and personnel, I mean to keep about the same level of service

n/a

While I am interested in learning more about the railroad and utility tax rate process, I am not sure if this can be done in time for the FY 26 budget formulation process.

I am prepared to consider any measures that the City would like to advise to help balance our budget, knowing that this may mean a residential and commercial tax increase simultaneously and that most of my constituents do not think they want this. I realize it may be necessary unless we have a good idea of other things to cut.

Q4. Listed are two proposed Capital Improvement Projects that do not currently have a funding source. Please select the projects for which you would like staff to begin identifying funding sources (select all that apply)

Please provide any additional comments and/or details related to the previous question here (enter n/a if not applicable)

We should wait to begin raising money to pursue the NH Ave rec center replacement construction project-- although I do strongly support figuring out how to accomplish the goal of having space for better recreational services in that neighborhood -- until we have had a chance as a Council to explore alternatives that do not involve the City taking on another construction project for itself.

Possible alternatives to explore could include (1) a public/private partnership to achieve new building construction (revising the original RFP to attract better offers), and (2) continuing to lease and further adapt the space where the temporary library is now, to accommodate some satellite library services and some more recreational programs, without significant capital outlays to build new real estate.

As for the Public Works service buildings, I need more information about this before answering because I have not heard the case for replacement of these buildings.

I believe that the Public Works renovations were completed about ten or twelve years ago and that the needs for that facility were carefully considered at that time.

I do not want to see staff relying on taxes or fees for replacement of the New Hampshire Avenue Recreation Center at this time. It is fine to explore/seek grant possibilities. I would like to see evidence that the facility needs complete replacement.

I took a trip to Public Works to take a look at which was the older service building but no one I spoke to could identify which building it was. Does the building in question go by another name?

Recreation Center funding options should already be on the to-do list, based on recent council discussions. I don't know enough about the older public works service buildings to know how urgent that may be.

I am strongly in favor of improving our Rec Center as the next capitol project for the City.

I think it is important to keep the pace on understanding the cost associated with each of the noted capital improvement projects. In many cases, it is important to be able to clearly communicate the costs associated with a shovel ready project.

n/a