

User Research Insights

— *Public Engagement with the Boston City Budget* —

Karyn Bruggeman, Isabel Schünemann, & Jan Geffert

Agenda

1. Introduction
2. User Journey & Budget Process
3. Research Methods
4. Personas
5. Key Insights
6. What's Next?

Imagine you live in Boston and want to **advocate** for something you care about.

How would you reach out to the city?

You

attend a public hearing

attend a neighborhood meeting

(e)mail, call, Twitter, FB

(e)mail, call, 311, Twitter, FB

attend city event or
department hearing

(e)mail, call



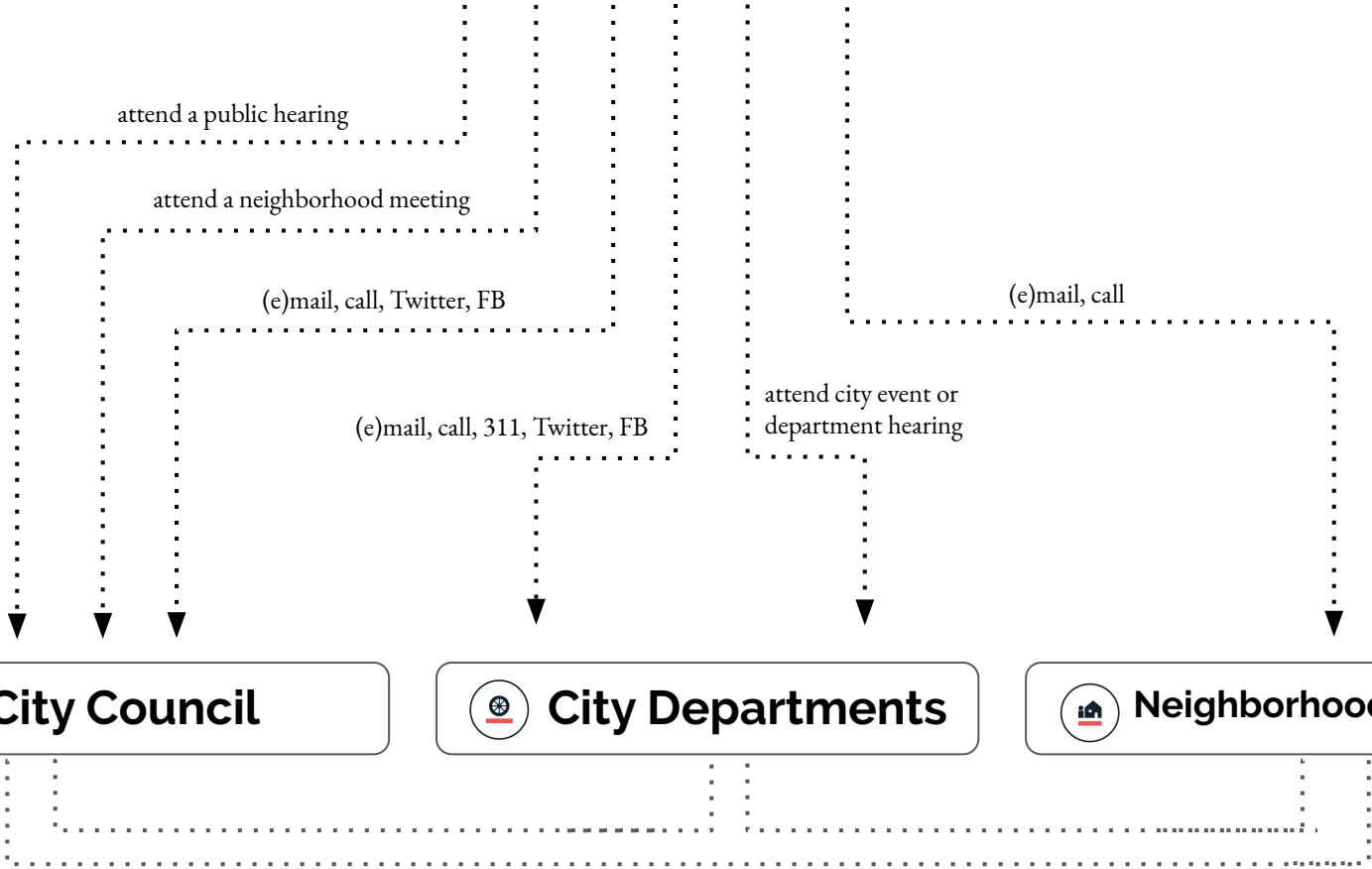
City Council



City Departments



Neighborhood Services



Everything the city does
is attached to a

\$

amount in the budget.

How might we offer Bostonians an
easy & equal opportunity to have their
voices reflected in the City's budget decisions?

	FY16 Actual	FY17 Actual	FY18 Budget	FY19 Budget
REVENUES ⁽¹⁾				
Property Tax	1,963.09	2,092.14	2,216.49	2,327.02
Property Tax Overlay	(38.05)	(38.74)	(30.60)	(23.04)
Excises	223.82	190.55	188.09	197.29
Fines	61.05	63.25	63.85	69.08
Interest On Investments	0.18	2.33	2.00	5.00
Payments in Lieu of Taxes	51.20	53.57	45.00	46.02
Urban Redev Chapter 121A	48.11	47.51	33.50	27.50
Department Revenue	63.09	66.37	60.70	62.03
Licenses & Permits	74.44	84.09	67.06	66.26
Penalties & Interest	14.48	10.81	7.51	9.01
Available Funds	0.00	0.00	23.45	23.45
State Aid	421.58	424.93	440.58	446.48
Total Recurring Revenue	2,883.01	2,996.81	3,117.62	3,256.08
Budgetary Fund Balance	0.00	0.00	40.00	40.00
Total Revenues	2,883.01	2,996.81	3,157.62	3,296.08
EXPENDITURES				
City Appropriations ⁽²⁾	1,158.96	1,200.51	1,262.83	1,300.35
Boston Public Health Commission ⁽²⁾	76.16	77.27	79.56	84.98
Boston School Department ⁽²⁾	1,016.28	1,031.63	1,092.31	1,112.25
Reserve for Collective Bargaining	0.02	28.00	10.09	38.39
Other Post Employment Benefits	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00
Total Appropriations	2,291.41	2,377.41	2,485.79	2,575.97
Pensions	196.55	199.28	221.30	238.71
Debt Service	157.69	165.31	182.21	190.18
Charter School Tuition	142.79	151.82	173.78	194.24
MBTA	83.00	83.82	85.81	88.21
Other State Assessments	4.79	4.81	4.86	4.90
Suffolk County Sheriff Dept	3.87	3.87	3.87	3.87
Reserve	0.99	3.81	0.00	0.00
Total Fixed Costs	589.68	612.72	671.83	720.11
Total Expenditures	2,881.09	2,990.13	3,157.62	3,296.08
Surplus (Deficit)	1.92	6.69	0.00	0.00

(1) All revenues displayed are part of the City's general fund that support expenditures displayed in the bottom half of the table.

(2) See General Fund Appropriations by Cabinet & Department table for breakdown by cabinet and functional unit. Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Table 1

FISCAL YEAR 2019 BUDGET

Beginning July 1, 2018 and ending June 30, 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FEATURED ANALYSIS

CAPITAL PROJECTS

OPERATING BUDGET

[HOME](#) > [EXECUTIVE SUMMARY](#)

Last updated: 7/1/18

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"This budget represents an investment in our values as a city, and will allow us to build upon the strong foundations we've set in supporting all of Boston neighborhoods" - Mayor Martin J. Walsh

[1](#) HOW DOES THE BUDGET WORK?

[\\$](#) LEARN ABOUT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

[📖](#) GLOSSARY OF TERMS

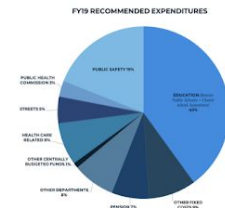
[📄](#) VIEW PDFS OF THE BUDGET BOOK

CONTACT THE BUDGET OFFICE:

[✉️ BUDGET@BOSTON.GOV](mailto:budget@boston.gov)

INTRODUCTION

Mayor Martin J. Walsh's Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) budget affirms a commitment to progress, opportunity and innovation by investing in Boston's neighborhoods while maintaining the Mayor's strong record of financial management. The \$3.29 billion plan is balanced, sustainable, and accelerates progress across public policy areas. The budget contains historic levels of funding for public education, new investments in public safety, continued efforts to create affordable and middle income housing, expanded services for residents struggling with substance use disorders and addiction, and new initiatives that will transform the future of transportation in Boston.





CITY BUDGET PRIORITIES



Public Safety for a Growing City

Boston is investing in initiatives to meet the public safety needs of a growing City.



Housing a Changing City

The City leverages variety of resources to meet 2030 housing goals.



Transformational Investments in Streets and Transportation

The FY19 budget invests in making sure city streets are clean and safe.



Supporting our Youth



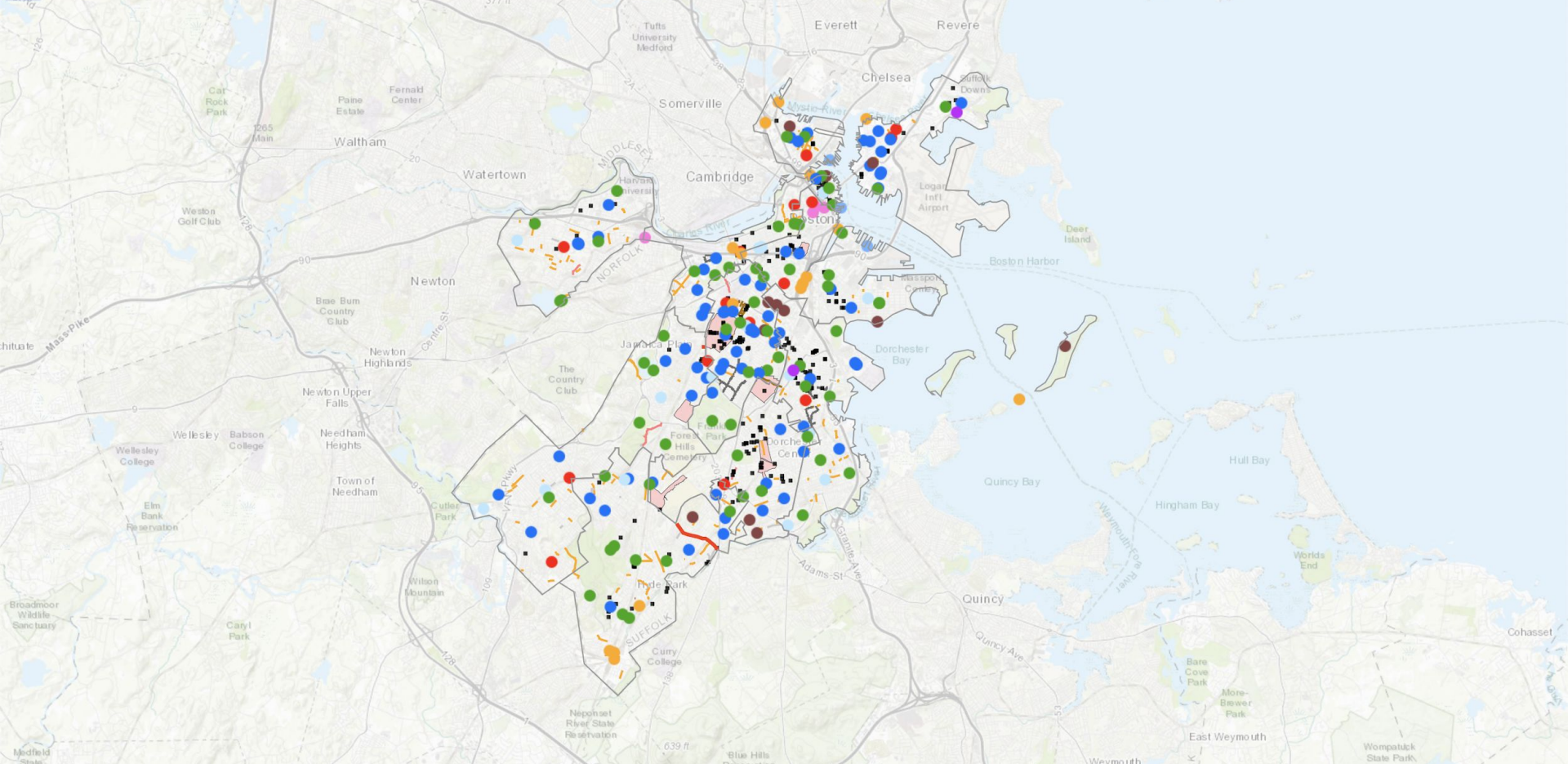
Improving and Expanding



Equity, Diversity, and

City of Boston FY2019 - FY2023 Capital Plan

Map navigation and tool icons: home, layers, info, scale, print, search.



The Process

FALL

Departments Submit
Budget Requests

WINTER

Review Spending
& Revenue

EARLY SPRING

Mayor Submits
Recommended Budget

LATE SPRING

City Council
Holds Public Hearings

JULY 1st

First Day of
New Fiscal Year



CITY OF BOSTON
THRIVE HEALTHY INNOVATIVE

The Process

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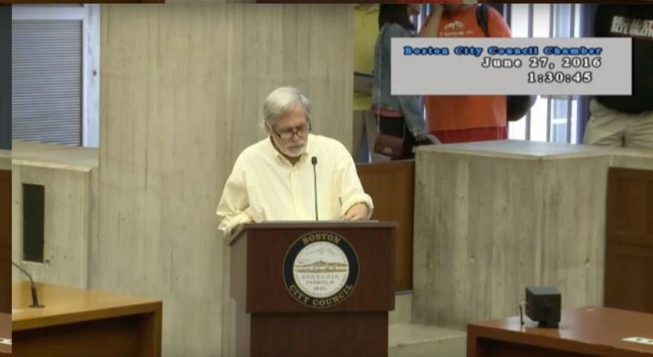
LATE SPRING

City Council
Holds Public Hearings

JULY 1st

First Day of
New Fiscal Year

↑
You



Currently, you have to both
know a lot & **do** a lot
to engage with the budget.

How do **Bostonians** feel about it?

Research Methods

29

User Interviews
conducted

*Brighton · Dorchester · East Boston
Fenway · Jamaica Plain · Mattapan
North End · Roxbury · South End*

9

Interviews with
City Staff

*Budget Office · Public Records · Boston
Public Schools · City Council & Staff
Department of Innovation &
Technology · Mayor's Office of New
Urban Mechanics · Mayor's Office of
Health & Human Services*

5

Public Events
attended

*City Life Vida Urbana · BuildBPS
Hearing · School Funding Youth Town
Hall · Councilor Wu's Civic
Engagement Training · The Smart
Enough City Talk*



City Life Vida Urbana

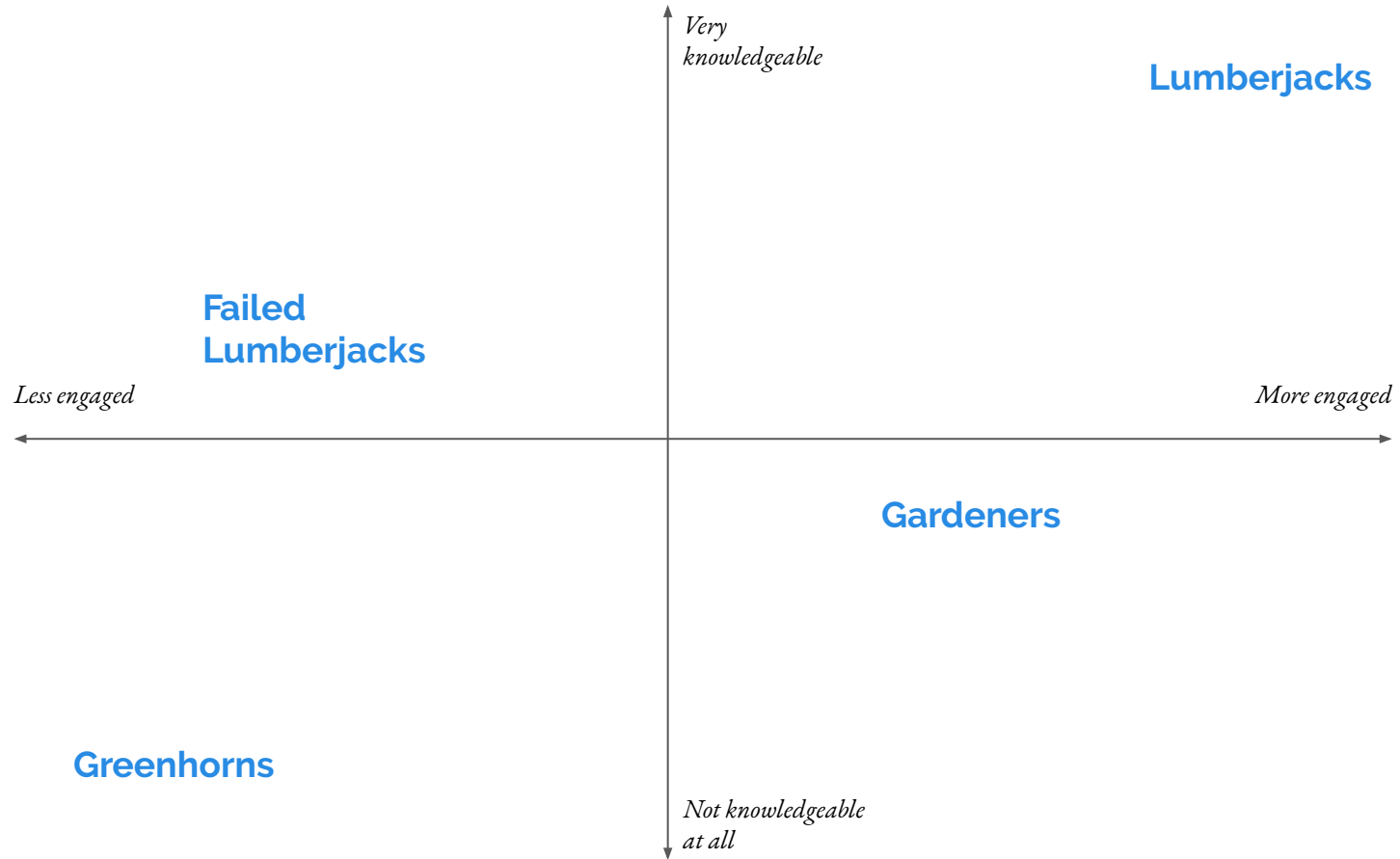


Boston Public Schools Hearing



Civic Engagement Training

Personas





Lumberjack

- Power user who **knows who to talk to**, how to get things done
- Speaks **on behalf of others**
- Has **testified** at a public hearing
- Doesn't think the city is perfect, but believes **long-term progress** is possible and worth working toward

Engagement 🙋🙋🙋🙋🙋

Knowledge 🧐🧐🧐🧐🧐

Faith 🙌🙌🙌🙌

“We decided that rather than going to City Hall and saying “we want body cameras,” we would go in and produce everything related to that. We were going to say here’s what the policy should look like and here’s where the money should come from. As opposed to working in the reverse, which was saying “we want this” and then letting elected officials tell us what was going to happen.”

Segun, Hyde Park

Walsh commits \$2 million to police body camera program



ASSOCIATED PRESS/FILE

"I think it's important we take the next step, as far as making the investment," Mayor Walsh said of funding a body camera program for the Boston Police Department.

By [Milton J. Valencia](#) | GLOBE STAFF APRIL 07, 2018

Top 10 Trending Articles

Viewed

Commented

Shared

People in open-concept homes are realizing the walls were there for a reason

Witness says he saw 'dead people everywhere' after New Zealand mosque shooting

Boston investigators had different case, then college bribery scandal came up

Guidance counselor flagged Lori Loughlin's daughters' applications in college admissions bribery scheme

Here's how the Patriots are filling out their receiving corps

Six USC student applicants linked to college admissions bribery scheme denied acceptance

Celtics rally to get past Kings

College bribery plot: A list of names of those charged in the nationwide scheme

Opinion | McGreggor Crowley: Confessions of a former MIT admissions director, amid college bribery scandal

Could simply listening to this sound help cure Alzheimer's disease? MIT researchers are investigating



Gardener

- **Cares** about their community and tends to local issues
- Weighs in **if given the opportunity**
- Thinks Boston is **improving**
- Usually **older** and has lived in Boston for a while

Engagement 🙋🙋🙋

Knowledge 🧐🧐

Faith 🙌🙌🙌🙌

“I’ve emailed Michelle Wu a few times about street parking. I got another \$250 ticket the other day for parking a rental car on my street. Residents who don’t own cars should be able to get temporary parking permits when they rent cars.”

Tom, South End (pictured)

“The city’s a lot better than it was in 1975. It’s more diverse and it’s more inclusive.”

Sharlene, Jamaica Plain



Failed Lumberjack

Engagement 🧑🏻

Knowledge 🧐🧐🧐

Faith 🙏

- **Used to be** very **involved** in civic life and aspired to make a difference
- Thinks city outreach attempts are **superficial**
- Feels **betrayed** by the city
- Cares about **social justice** and **equality**

“My brother used to work for the city. It’s all corrupt. If you have money you can get whatever you want...”

Joe, East Boston

“City meetings? Two words. Lip. Service.”

Valerie, Mattapan



Greenhorn*

- **Never had a reason to interact** with the city
- Young or **new** to the city
- Doesn't follow local news
- Thinks things are mostly **going well**

Engagement 🧐

Knowledge 🧐

Faith 🙌🙌🙌🙌

“I don't know.”

Evan, Fenway (pictured)

* Green · horn

1 a newcomer (as to a country) unacquainted with local manners and customs

Key Insights

- Residents care about **issues**, not the budget
- Even the most engaged, politically aware citizens **don't engage with** the **budget** process
- **City Council** is the main point of contact
- **Modes of interaction** with the city are numerous
- Attending **in-person meetings** is challenging for many Bostonians
- **Digital** communication **does not play a substantial role**
- A **lack of trust** exists among some communities
- A noticeable **lack of feedback** from the city

What's next?

- Continue to help client **step into user's shoes**
- Identify and prioritize where to **intervene**
- **More user research** and city interviews
- **Prototype** and test solutions to improve communications with Boston residents

Ensure that Bostonians have an
easy & equal opportunity to have their
voices reflected in the City's budget decisions!

Thank you

Questions?