

Following the [failed proposition](#) of April 5, 2022, the Communications Office worked with the Utilities Department to garner voter/citizen feedback through [an online survey open to all](#). The survey was accessible for 14 days; it was comprised of 15 questions with input from the City of Norman Management Team. The first several questions (pages 2-4 in this report) pertained to the water rate election. The last several questions (5-8) were general questions and posed to gain further insight on the community issues, city operations and municipal communication.

Open-ended questions were intentional so as not to influence opinion or responses. There were six open-ended questions or questions that had elements of open-ended structure – meaning they could not only be answered via multiple choice, rating or box checking. In 100-300 characters, depending on the question, residents were requested to leave raw, honest feedback. As each answer was unique and individual, responses were often categorized by popular opinion in terms of reoccurring words, descriptors or sentiment. Some, though incredibly few, were not tallied if responses were considered irrelevant. Those reviewing results of the survey should be aware that all responses are open to interpretation and that the general purpose of the survey was to observe substantial reoccurring themes for a snapshot of general, public opinion. Those reviewing the results should also be aware that nearly all open-ended responses that are categorized in this report are rounded to the nearest whole number. Open-ended questions are indicated by an asterisk in the report. Note that the bulk answer percentages in categories may equate to more than “100%” due to multiple answers given per respondent.

The survey saw 510 responses. According to responses, 99.6% of respondents are registered voters and residents of Norman. (Two people completing the survey indicated they were neither residents nor voters in the City of Norman.) According to responses, 50% of respondents voted for the proposition and 50% did not vote for the proposition.

Key takeaways of the responses include:

- **More than 60% of respondents indicate learning about the water rate election through City of Norman mailers.**
- **Nearly 90% of respondents indicate they were aware of projects that would be funded by the passage of the water rate proposition.**
- **The primary reason behind the “NO” vote centered around cost/affordability and timing.**
- **The primary reason behind the “YES” vote centered around a belief of importance of infrastructure and city maintenance.**
- **In general, the primary ways that respondents indicated receiving news about the City of Norman was through The Norman Transcript newspaper (57%) and the City of Norman (City-managed) Facebook page (53%).**
- **The majority of respondents answering a question about building trust and communication with residents offered responses that cited elected official issue/political matters or leadership conduct.**
- **The top 3 areas or issues needing immediate addressing from city government, according to survey respondents, are: Homelessness (45%), Infrastructure & Maintenance (32%), Public Safety Needs/Emergency Management & Crime (32%).**
- **More than 50% of respondents indicated some level of trust in city government.**
- **The Utilities Department sees the most interaction with residents, according to survey responses.**

Results of a similar, statistically valid survey conducted through a contractor that is separate from this report and data compiled in this report should be prepared for City of Norman staff in Mid-May 2022.

VIEW RESULTS/BREAKDOWN OF COMMUNITY ONLINE SURVEY IN PAGES 2-8.

Are you at least 18 years of age and a resident of the City of Norman, OK?

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510 responses



Are you a registered voter in the City of Norman, OK?

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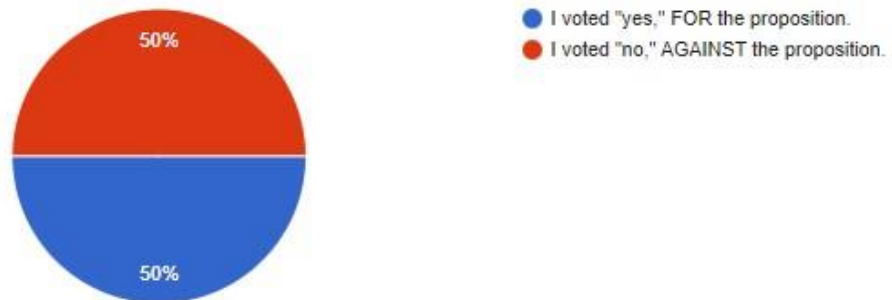
510 responses



Did you vote FOR the proposition or AGAINST the proposition?

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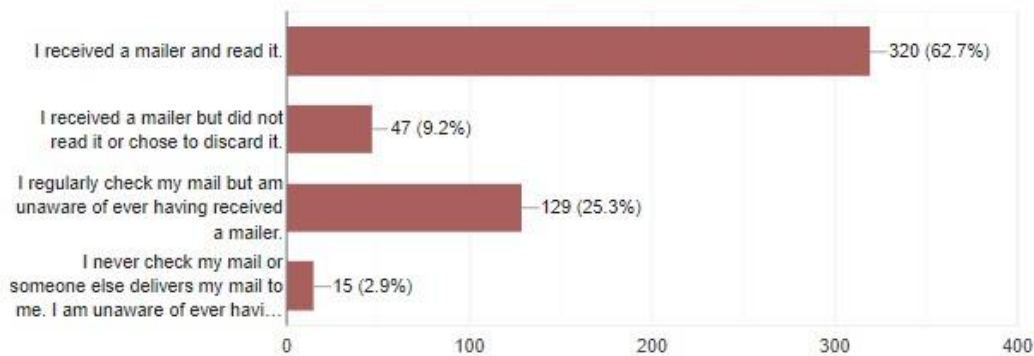
510 responses



An informational election mailer about the Water Rate Proposition was sent from the City of Norman. Which of the below is true for you?

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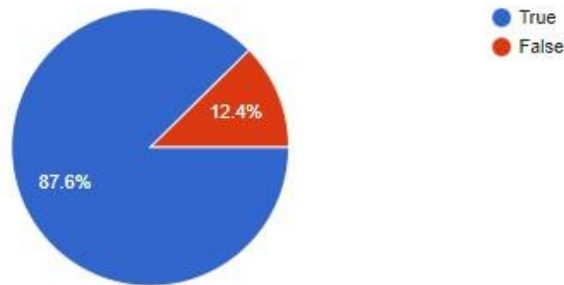
510 responses



I was aware that passage of the water rate proposition would include funding for Advanced Water Metering, Groundwater Treatment and Pipe Replacement.

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510 responses



Tables and graphs above on this page indicate that, cumulatively, more than 70% of respondents are aware of receiving a water rate election mailer; and, cumulatively, 28.2% are not aware of having received a mailer.

****AGAINST Proposition (255): Why did you vote against the proposition?***

- 23.4% - Low income/Cost or Timing Issue
- 22.6% - Developers/Commercial Builders should pay more
- 18% - Distrust of council, mayor or government
- 17% - Fiscal irresponsibility or transparency issue
- 9% - Nonsensical ballot items or ballot split on items
- 4% - N/A
- 3% - "Unneeded"
- 2% - Proposition Language
- 2% - "Bond Vote" or "Reserves" funding preference
- OTHERS (less than 1%) – Overbuilding, Political Issue, Business-Friendly Community Issue, OTA.

***FOR Proposition (255):**

- 53% - Infrastructure/Maintenance Importance
- 12% - “Needed”
- 10% - Future Preparation/City Betterment
- 7% - AMI/Increased Efficiencies
- 6.6% - Upgrades aren’t free
- 5.4 % - *Voted Yes but Developers should pay more*
- 4.7% - DEQ Compliance/Clean & Safe Water
- 3% - Trusted Expert Opinions
- 2% - Sensible Plan
- OTHERS (1% or less) – Mailer Appeal, Low Comparison Rates, Conservation/Sustainability, Voted Yes but Mistrust Issue, Voted Yes but Tier/Rate Issue, Voted Yes but Ballot Language Issue, Cost Home Nothing, Water Management Necessity, Voted Yes but Smart Meters not Necessary, Voted Yes but Too Many Fees on Bill, City Needs Central Planning, Voted Yes but Rates Should be Set Administratively.

How did you receive information about the water rate proposition?

- 68% - Mailer
 - 60% - Website or Social Media
 - 36% - Media News Story
 - 23% - “Norman News” Email
 - 20% - Friends/Family/Neighbors
 - 16% - City Council Meeting
 - 11% - Flyer
 - 9% - City of Norman Speaking Engagement
 - 7% - None
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Indicate your level of trust in City government:

- **30 % - LEVEL 4: "I mostly trust."**
- **22% - LEVEL 2: "I somewhat distrust."**
- **21% - LEVEL 3: "I trust."**
- **19% - LEVEL 1: "I distrust."**
- **8% - LEVEL 5: "I very much trust."**

***How do you keep up with information from the City of Norman?**

- 57% - Norman Transcript
- 53% - City of Norman Facebook Page
- 47% - Community Social Media Pages
- 41% - "Norman News" Emails
- 39% - Broadcast Media (TV/Radio)
- 31% - AlertNorman Emergency Alerts
- 26% - City Council Meetings
- 24% - OU Daily/OU Nightly
- 11% - City of Norman Twitter
- 6.3% - City of Norman Instagram
- OTHERS (less than 1%) - Elected Officials Communication/Social Media; Friends/Family/Neighbors; The Oklahoman; Mailers/Norman Utility Inserts; City of Norman Staff; Norman Businesses/Civic Clubs.


***How can the City of Norman best build trust & communication with residents?**

- **22% - Cites elected official issue/political matters or leadership conduct**
 - Negative mentions of partisan politics, ideology, left/leftist, right/right-wing, etc., particularly in regard to Council.
 - Responses may cite confidence or no confidence in certain elected officials.
 - Responses may cite lack of professionalism or personal instances/preferences regarding actions of elected officials.
- **19% - Desire for more *Transparency, Openness, Consistency or Honesty* or in general terms.**
 - Responses in this category may also indicate a desire to keep words or promises to voters.
- **13% - Cites communication or messaging preferences**
 - Included 1 to 2-word responses, ideas such as billboard messaging, additional mailers, "phonetree," "info truck," condensed meeting Minutes on social media and misinformation fighting online.
- **12% - Cites specific project or issue to be addressed, fixed or evaluated, to include Charter preferences.**
- **9% - More "Listening"**
 - Attend/host outreach events, listening sessions.
 - Fair/Equitable policies/practices to hear all.
 - Abiding by Citizen Committee recommendations.
 - Citizen Involvement encouragement.
 - More attention to recent election results, more survey opportunities.
- **9% - Frustration with Special Interest Groups**
 - Responses may have mentioned catering to: Business Community/Developers, the "wealthy," public safety groups, special project groups, OU, "vocal minority" or alluded to such groups.

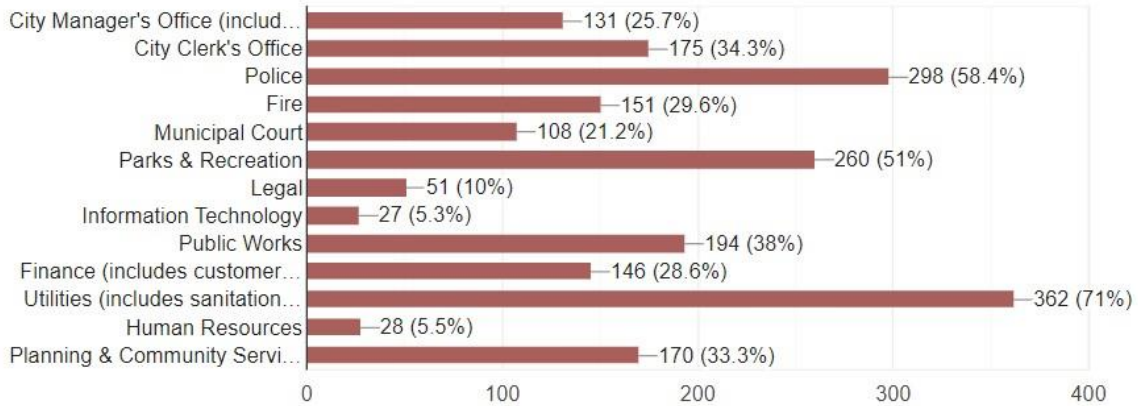
- 9% - Response indicated satisfaction of practice, continuation or current practice or no input.
- 4% - Desire for more focus on local issues & essential services
- 4% - Desire for improved financial diligence/transparency
- 3% - Desire for more unity/collaboration/compromise
- 3% - Cites City staff issue
 - Responses may include lack of efficiency or customer service matters.
- 2% - Cites concerns of Unite Norman
- OTHERS (1% or less): Responses may have cited growth opposition, OTA matter, most recent ballot language, government overreach.

****What are the top 3 areas or issues that should be immediately addressed by city government?***

- 45% - Homelessness
 - Included opinions ranging from complete removal to additional resource allocation and treatment services.
- 32% - Infrastructure & Maintenance (Roads & Water)
- 32% - Public Safety Needs, Crime, Emergency Management
 - Separate tally at 5% of respondents for responses blatantly critical (negative) of Public Safety and citing needs of “decreasing” staff or budget, or providing additional “oversight” or departments.
- 19% - Sustainability/Environmental protection & concern/Stormwater/“Quality” or “Treatment” of utility
- 13% - Traffic Issues and Public Transit
 - To include traffic signal concerns.
- 11% - Planning & Community Development
 - To include: Over-development, zoning recommendations, general growth responses, comments on districts and proposed “Arena.”
- 11% - Council Matters/Issues
 - To include: Perceived agendas, climate attributed to or by, special interest group influence concerns, specific council member concerns, “developer fees” set by council, action taken by Council.
- 11% - Citizen Health/Welfare/Social Issues
 - To include: Mental health, crisis response & training, equity matters, affordable housing, drug abuse, COVID response, childcare and family credits, veteran care, poverty, hunger.
- 9% - Economic Development/Adoption of business-friendly policies & practices
- 9% - OTA/Turnpike
- 6% - Quality of Life Issues
 - To include Norman Forward projects, specific and general; to include trails and parks.
- 5% - Desire for *unity, engagement, increase in trust, ethics, promise/word-keeping*
- 4% - City Management/Administrative Affairs
 - To include: Preference on department structuring or elimination, staff concerns/complaints.
- 3% - Fiscal Responsibility and “City Budget”
 - Many responses in this category had no additional explanation or particulars.
- 3% - Improved communication, transparency
- 3% - Beautification/Abatement issues
- OTHERS – Some, thought few, responses included items not controlled by local government, such as: Abortion, Inflation, specific private business expansion, Education/Curriculum preferences, Marijuana growth, USPS, general comments of “taxes,” housing market, Native Sovereignty, railroad concern, voter registration/election concerns. These, coupled with others listed below, generally equaled 1 percent or less of responses:
 - Norman identity concern, Partnership advancement preferences, ADA compliance, city utility rates (opposed), government overreach, specific dam repair, “right wing militia” concern, tech upgrades, sanitation/recycling concerns (negative), and calls for additional attention or service to specific wards.

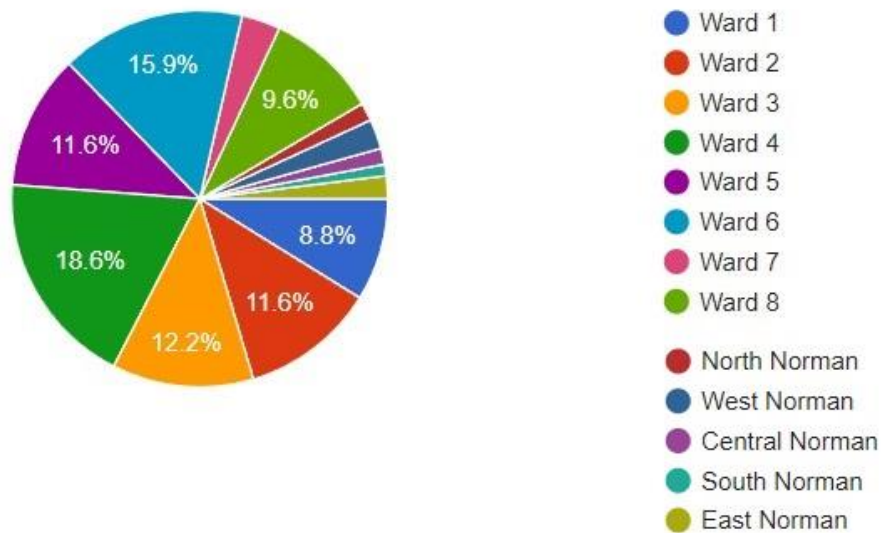
Please indicate the departments you have had interaction with at the City of Norman.  [Copy](#)

510 responses



What Ward or area of Norman do you reside in?

510 responses



***What do you like most about the Norman Community?**

- 26% - Quality of Life
 - Responses included general quality of life items – arts, entertainment, dining, parks, community events, etc.
- 19% - Diversity & Equity, Inclusive/Welcoming Community
- 14% - People/Neighbors (to include “friendly” descriptors)
- 11% - OU, OU Athletics, “College/University Town”
- 9% - Small town feel
- 9% - *Response indicated former liking of community but changed feelings*
- 6% - Nature/Green Environment & Priorities
- 6% - Progressiveness/Liberal or forward-thinking
- 5% - Community Safety/Public Safety
- 5% - N/A
- 4% - Family/Friends/Career in Norman
- 4% - Educational entities (other than OU or not specified as OU)
- 3% - General Compliments of Norman
 - Responses included vague answers such as “nice town.”
- 3% - Size of city
- 2% - City Staff/General City Departments
- 2% - Location of city
- 2% - Uniqueness
- 2% - Affordability
- 2% - Educated community