



Awards for Excellence

IN GOVERNMENT FINANCE

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Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Awards for Excellence in Government Finance recognize innovative programs and contributions to the practice of government finance that exemplify outstanding financial management. The awards stress practical, documented work that offers leadership to the profession and promotes improved public finance.

2019 Winner for Exceptionally Well Implemented GFOA Best Practice:



CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

THE PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON KANSAS CITY'S CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

The City of Kansas City, Missouri has been producing a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) with a five-year time horizon since 1997. The City has long recognized the need for public input in its CIP process with the City's Public Improvements Advisory Committee (PIAC) overseeing the capital improvements program and reviewing neighborhood recommendations since 1983.

The PIAC consists of 13 people, two from each of the six council districts and a chairperson, appointed by the mayor and City council, with each member serving a two-year term. The primary responsibility of PIAC is to include as much public input as possible into the CIP process. The PIAC accomplishes this through two key mechanisms, public hearings and capital project requests. Sixteen public hearings are held by the PIAC every year throughout the summer. These hearings provide residents with an opportunity to express their opinions, concerns, and project requests, with the input playing a critical role in the PIAC's decision-making processes.

Project proposals can be introduced at the public hearings or also submitted via paper or online forms. The formalized process for proposed projects ensures residents can provide project recommendations, guarantees all proposals are reviewed and considered, and increases transparency of the review process.

To further encourage and legitimize the public input process, 35% of the City's one-percent sales tax for capital improvements is reserved for and equally distributed across the City's six council districts to fund neighborhood specific capital projects.

The PIAC and City staff meet weekly from July to December to review each project request in detail. City department staff also make presentations on department specific plans, goals, and policies relevant to the capital planning process. After all capital proposals are reviewed and prioritized, PIAC develops an appropriations plan for projects funded through the one-percent sales tax and a comprehensive recommendation for the City's five-year CIP. The City Manager then works with the Mayor and City Council to include the PIAC recommendations into the submitted budget. Any deviations from the PIAC's original recommendation must be included in the budget's transmittal letter along with justifications and reasoning for any changes to ensure transparency and accountability to City residents.

The value of engaging the public through the PIAC has been more even more apparent with the City's most recent budget. Residents expressed greater need for road repairs following a severe winter, allowing the City to be more proactive in its response. The PIAC's long-standing presence has made it routine for individuals and neighborhoods to notify the City of their capital priorities well in advance of emergency repair or replacement. In addition, community support for the City's capital improvement process was reinforced with residents approving an \$800 million capital improvement program and a 20 year renewal of the one-percent sales tax in April 2018.



GFOA BEST PRACTICE:
Communicating Capital Improvement Strategies

GFOA recommends that organizations develop a communications plan for public participation focused on explaining capital needs, options, and strategies and facilitating feedback in advance of any major capital program. Capital programs gain from the support of the community. Community support ensures that capital projects will deliver expected and desired outcomes as well as guarantee there is adequate support for the investment.

