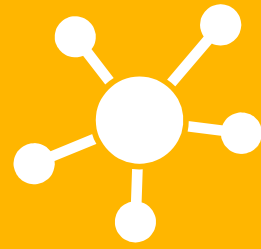




Special City Commission Meeting
Monday, April 29, 2019
Commission Chambers 5:30 PM

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Presentation of the results of the Special Assessment Community Forums – **Melissa Richard**
3. Adjourn



City of West Fargo

special assessment forums

Agenda

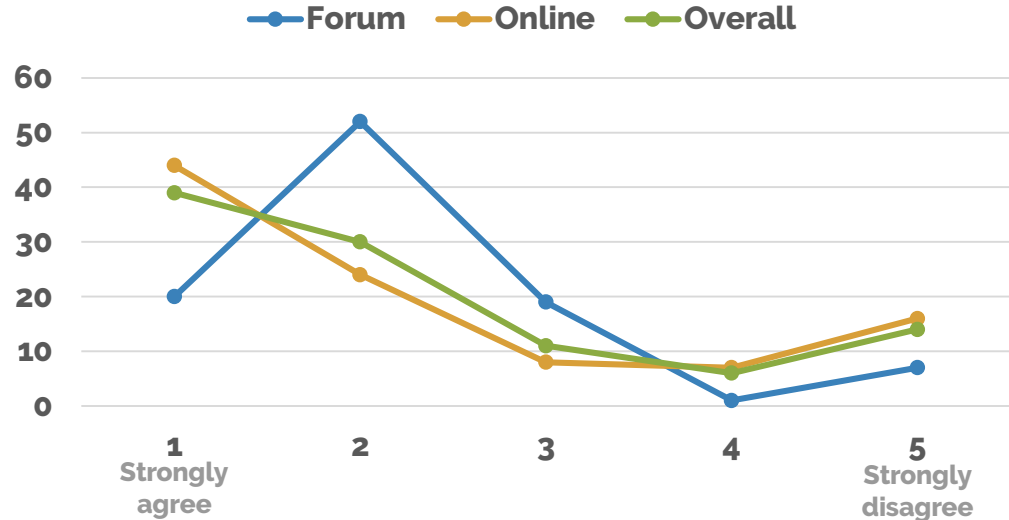
- Survey results
- Recommendation #1
- Questions
- Recommendation #2
- Questions
- Next steps

I would be willing to pay higher sales taxes to fund infrastructure projects instead of special assessments.

Average Response

Community Forum	2.2
Online Survey	2.3
Overall	2.3

Response Distribution



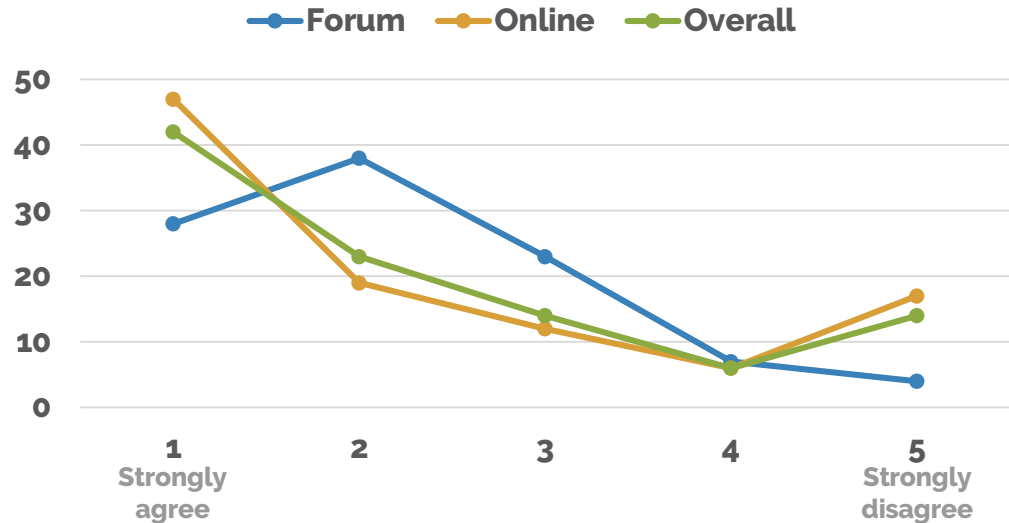


I would be willing to pay a higher lot price for a new home to fund the development's infrastructure instead of special assessments.

Average Response

Community Forum	2.2
Online Survey	2.3
Overall	2.3

Response Distribution



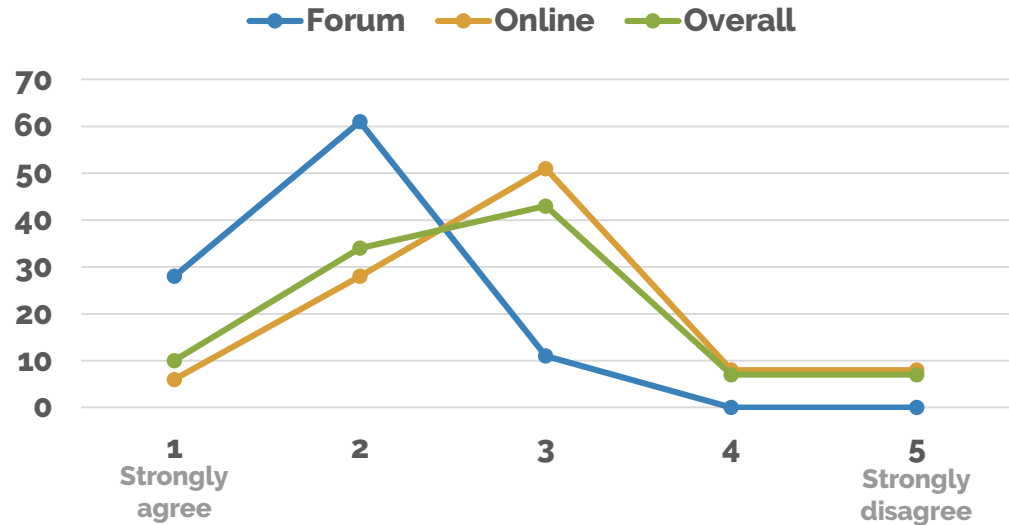


My knowledge of special assessments has increased because of this event/presentation.

Average Response

Community Forum	1.8
Online Survey	2.9
Overall	2.7

Response Distribution



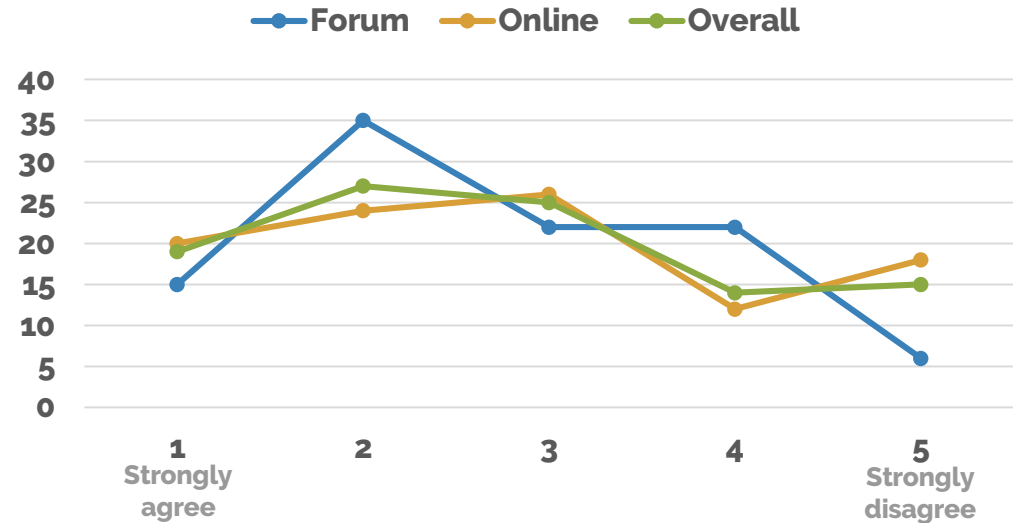


I can easily find information about my property's current special assessments.

Average Response

Community Forum	2.7
Online Survey	2.8
Overall	2.8

Response Distribution



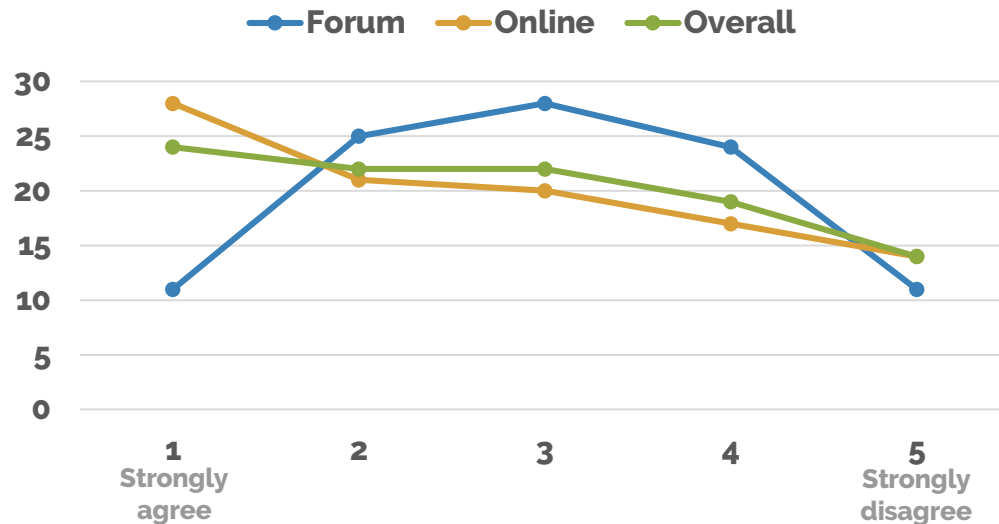


I would be willing to have the City of West Fargo forego infrastructure projects, even if it means decreased services, to avoid special assessments.

Average Response

Community Forum	3.0
Online Survey	2.7
Overall	2.8

Response Distribution



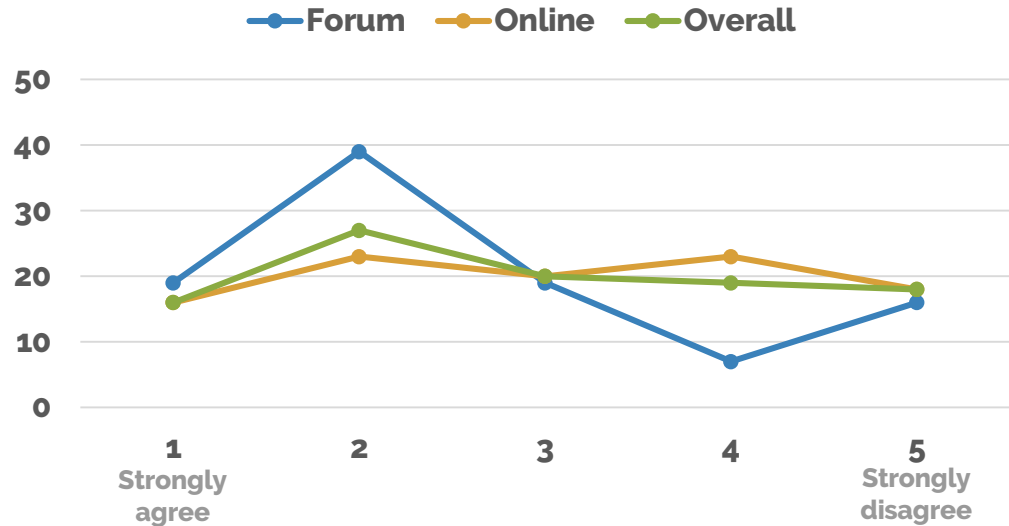


I understand how the City of West Fargo utilizes special assessments to fund infrastructure projects.

Average Response

Community Forum	2.6
Online Survey	3.0
Overall	2.9

Response Distribution



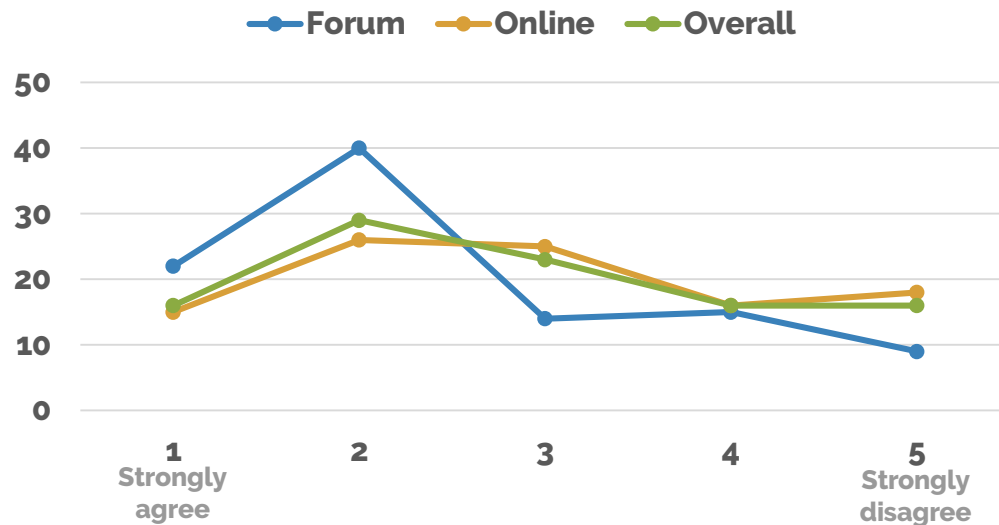


As a property owner, I feel I have a responsibility to seek out information about future infrastructure projects that could result in special assessments for my property.

Average Response

Community Forum	2.5
Online Survey	3.0
Overall	2.9

Response Distribution



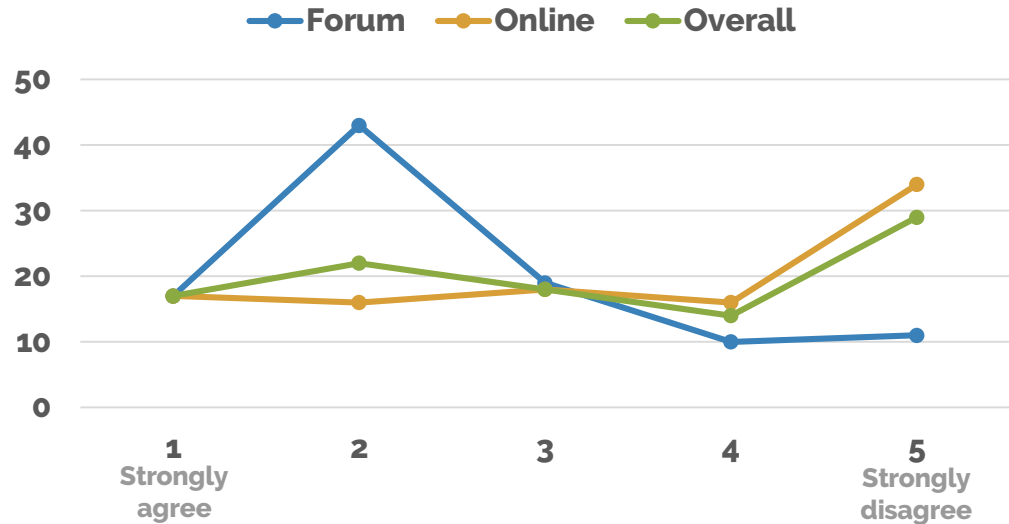


I would be willing to pay higher utility fees to fund infrastructure projects instead of special assessments.

Average Response

Community Forum	2.6
Online Survey	3.3
Overall	3.2

Response Distribution



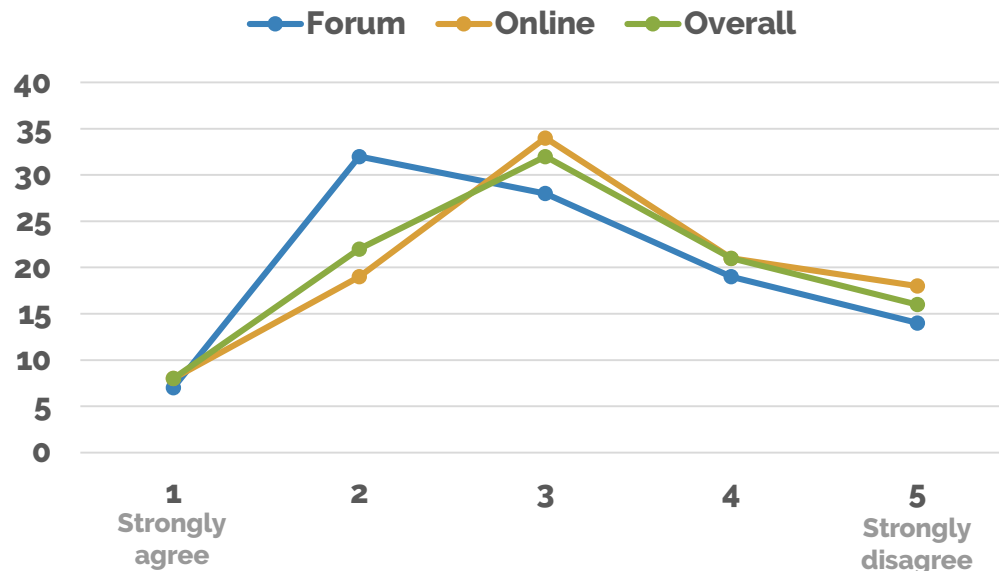


Generally, I feel like the City of West Fargo only completes infrastructure projects that are necessary.

Average Response

Community Forum	3.0
Online Survey	3.2
Overall	3.2

Response Distribution



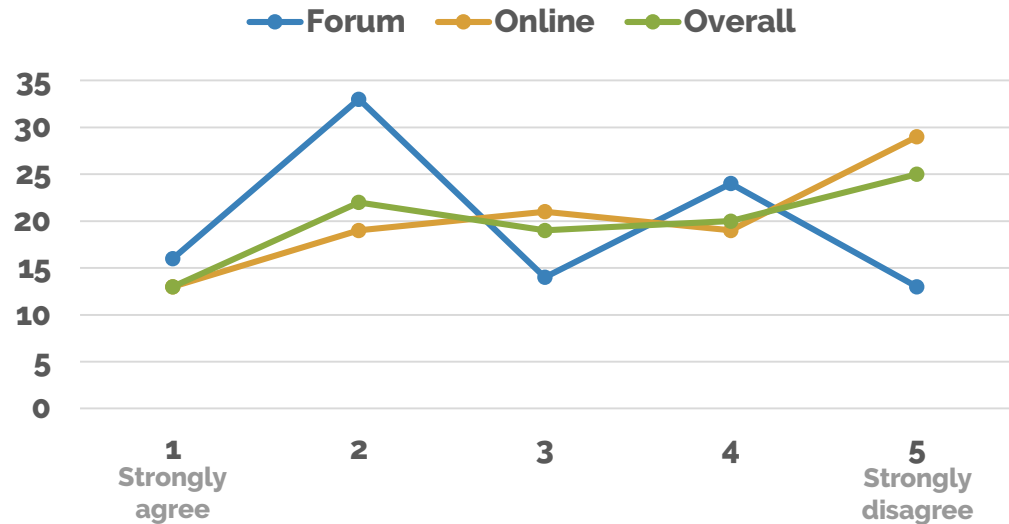


I understand how to file a protest against a special assessment.

Average Response

Community Forum	2.9
Online Survey	3.3
Overall	3.2

Response Distribution



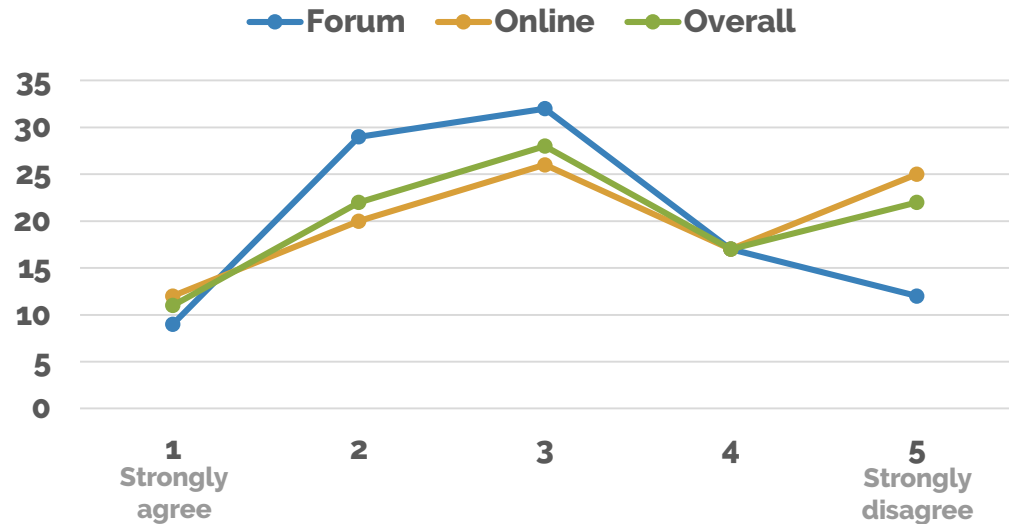


I can easily find information about my property's pending special assessments.

Average Response

Community Forum	2.9
Online Survey	3.2
Overall	3.2

Response Distribution



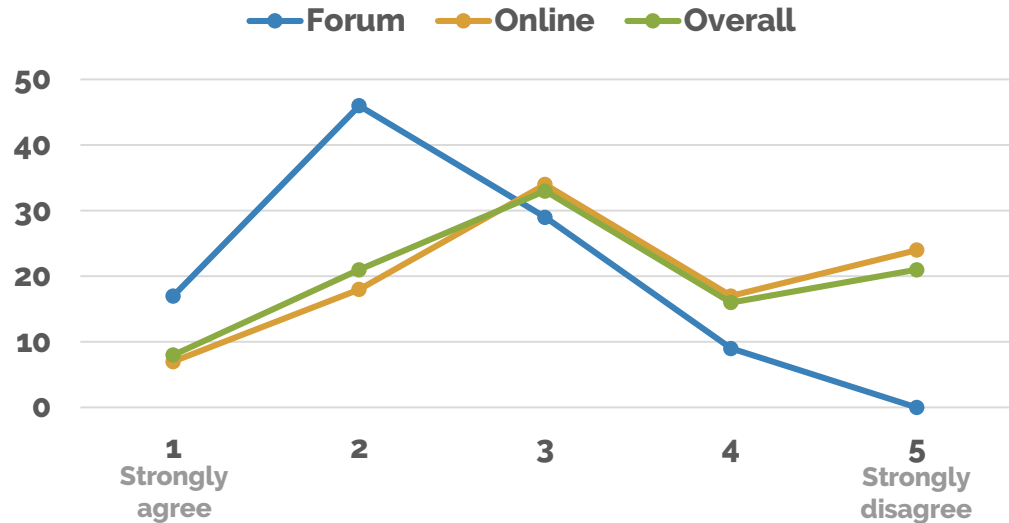


I feel my input regarding special assessments is valued because of this event/survey.

Average Response

Community Forum	2.3
Online Survey	3.3
Overall	3.2

Response Distribution



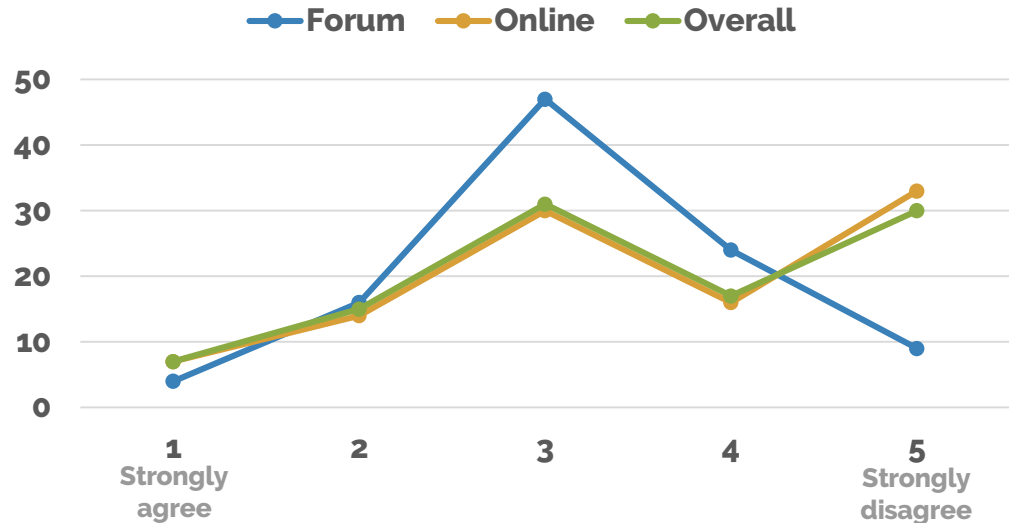


I feel I benefit from the lower interest rate special assessment bonds receive.

Average Response

Community Forum	3.2
Online Survey	3.6
Overall	3.5

Response Distribution



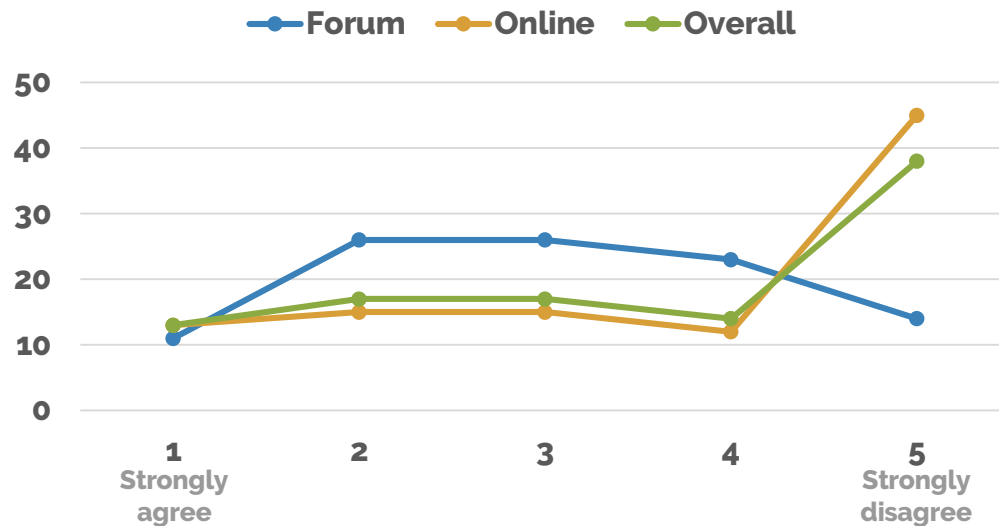


I would be willing to pay higher property taxes to fund infrastructure projects instead of special assessments.

Average Response

Community Forum	3.0
Online Survey	3.6
Overall	3.5

Response Distribution



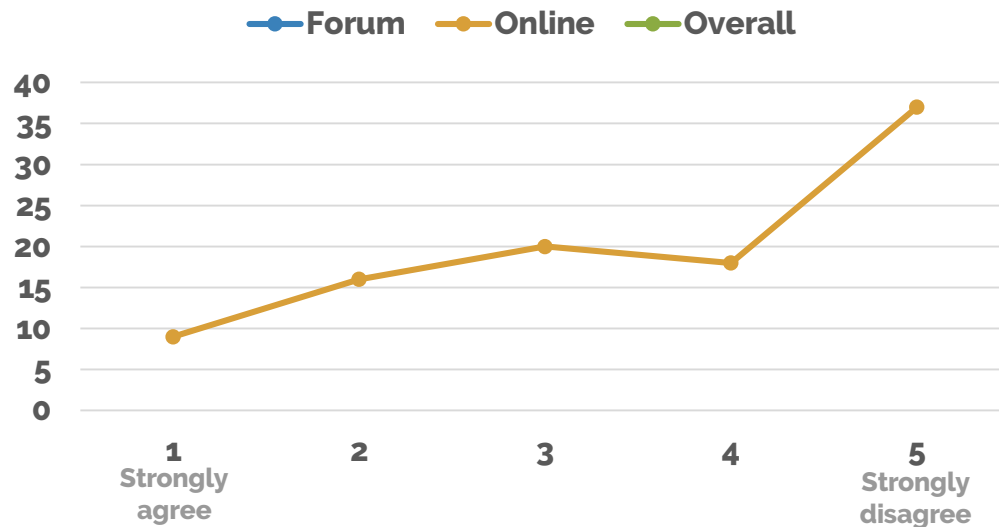


I would be willing to pay additional fees, such as street utility fees or impact fees, to fund infrastructure projects instead of special assessments.

Average Response

Community Forum	
Online Survey	3.6
Overall	

Response Distribution



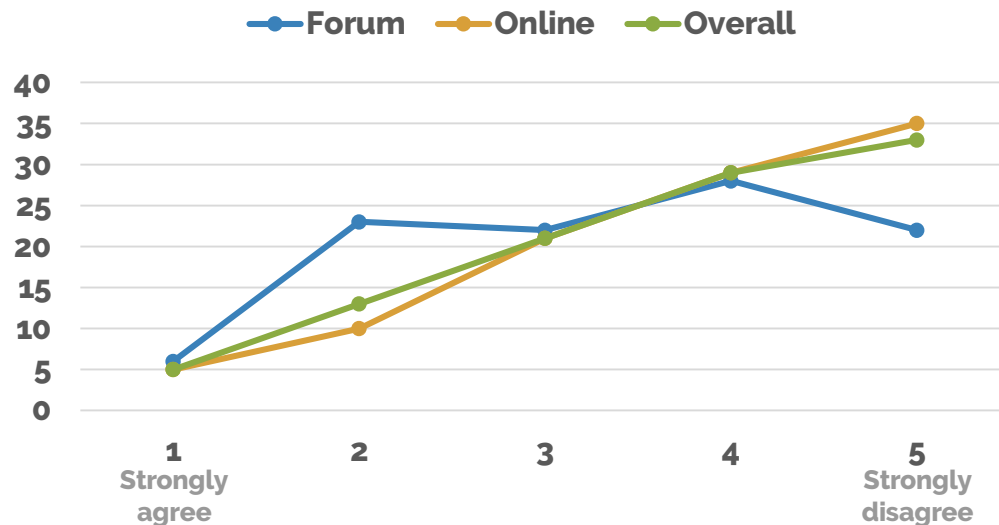


I feel the City of West Fargo is using special assessments appropriately to fund infrastructure projects.

Average Response

Community Forum	3.4
Online Survey	3.8
Overall	3.7

Response Distribution



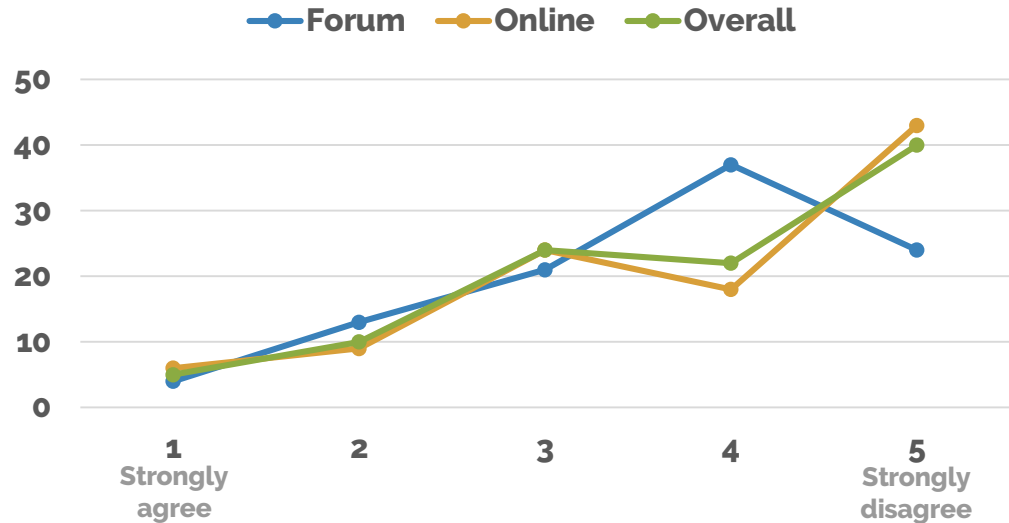


I feel special assessment districts are fairly created by the City of West Fargo.

Average Response

Community Forum	3.6
Online Survey	3.8
Overall	3.8

Response Distribution



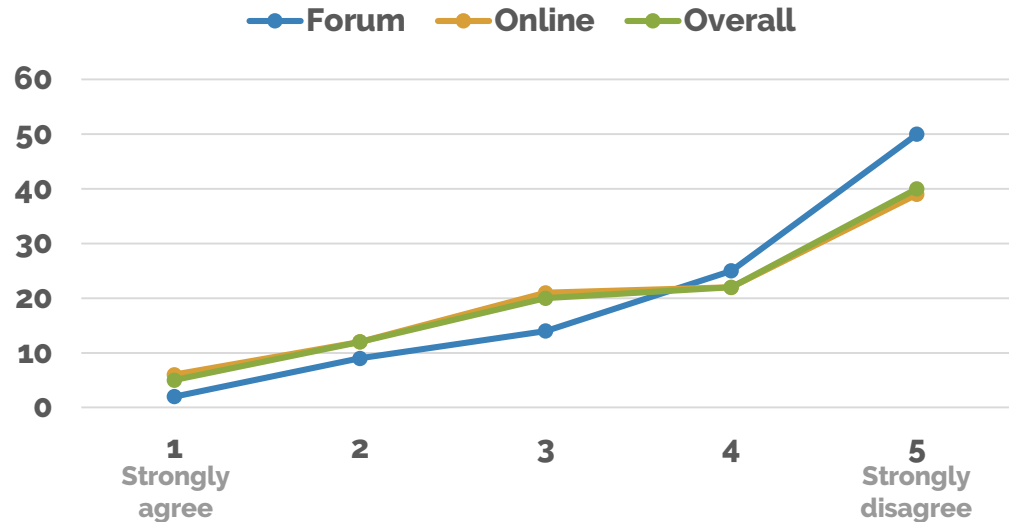


I feel the special assessment notification process used by the city is sufficient in getting information to property owners.

Average Response

Community Forum	4.1
Online Survey	3.8
Overall	3.8

Response Distribution



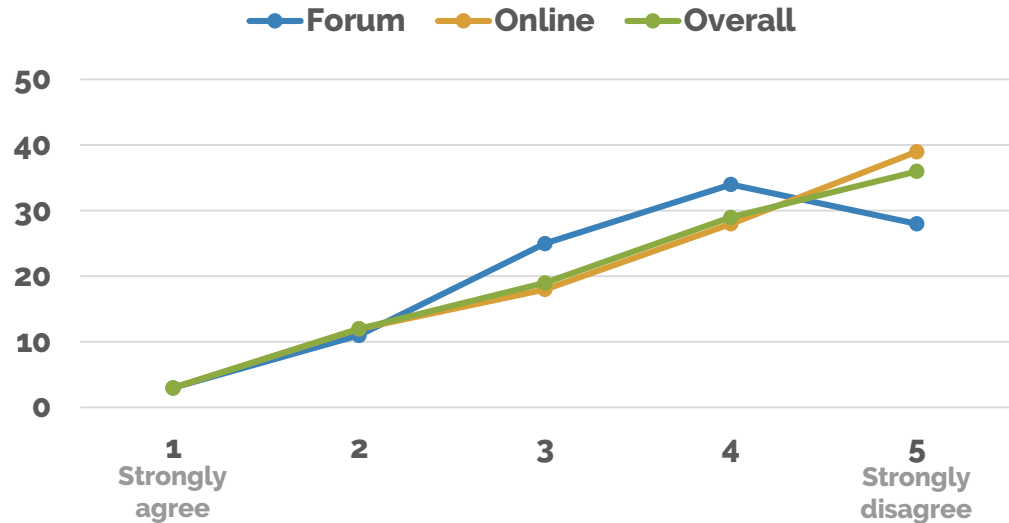


I can easily find information about future infrastructure projects that may result in special assessments to my property.

Average Response

Community Forum	3.7
Online Survey	3.9
Overall	3.8

Response Distribution



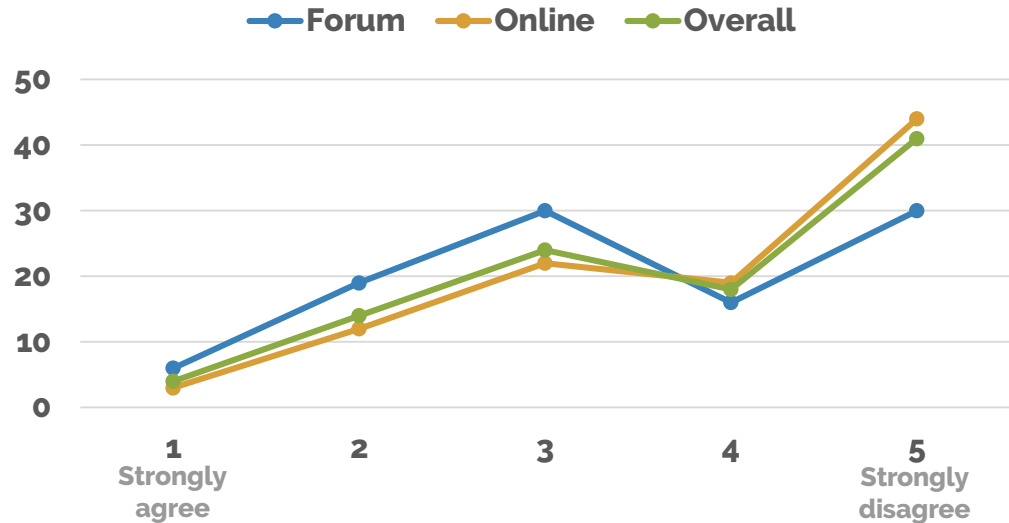


I feel like my concerns about special assessments are considered by the City of West Fargo.

Average Response

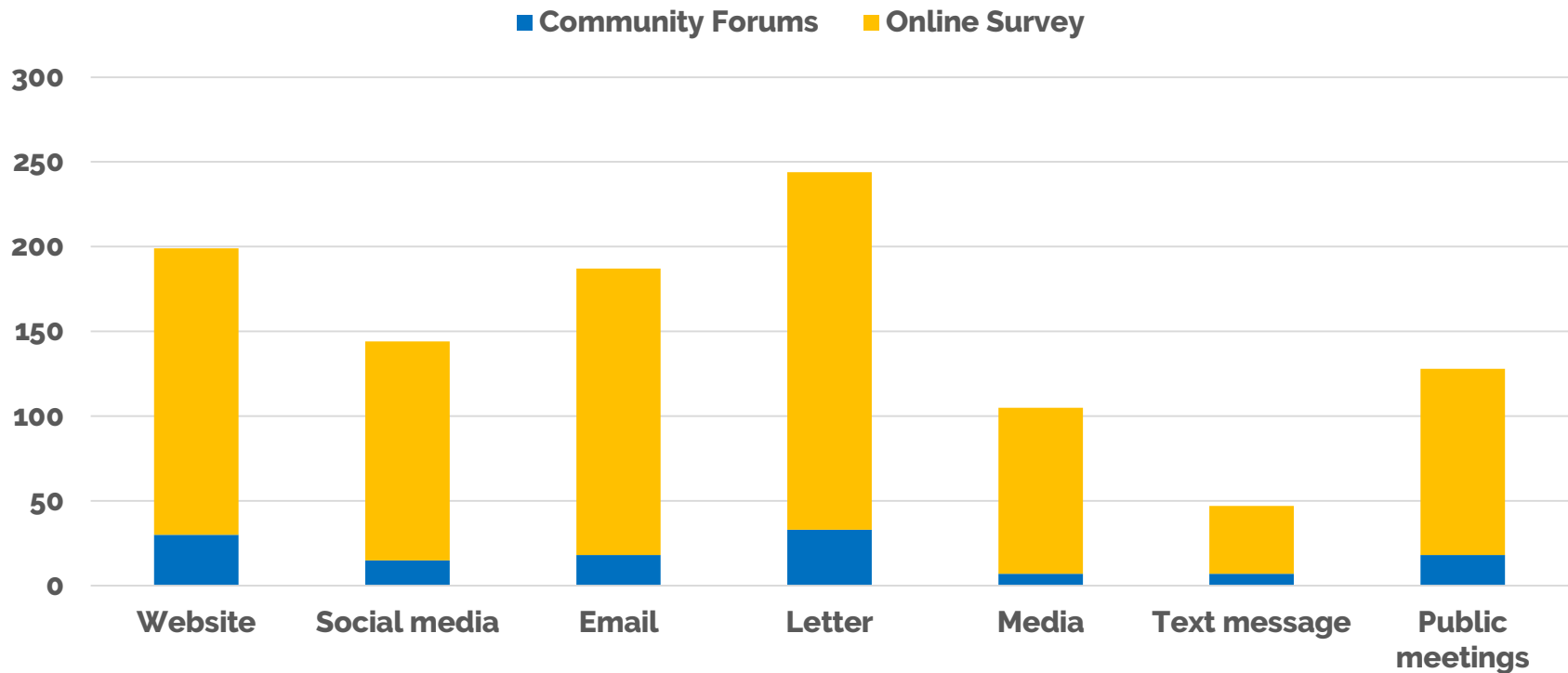
Community Forum	3.4
Online Survey	3.9
Overall	3.8

Response Distribution





How would you prefer the City of West Fargo communicates with you regarding special assessments?





Small Group Feedback Themes

- Property owners don't know when a special assessment is coming and when they have a chance to protest the assessment.
- Communication needs to be increased and improved.
- The city uses special assessments as a blank check and doesn't properly plan for or fund projects.
- Developer should have to pay for more.
- Residents would like to see more sales tax collected for infrastructure projects.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1

Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

- City will reach built -out stage in the next five years, allowing the focus to switch to the ongoing maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure.
- Provides opportunity to further develop a managed growth policy to organize future growth, especially as we look to land development after the completion of the Fargo -Moorhead Diversion.
- Expanded policy would serve as a comprehensive guide to decisions about development and public investments and would be a partner to West Fargo 2.0, the city's current comprehensive plan and capital improvement plan.

Recommendation #1

Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

WF 2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLE

- **Fiscally responsible:**
 - As a city dedicated to delivering excellent municipal services in a fiscally responsible manner that reduces the impacts of special assessments on the local population.

WF 2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLE

- **Proactive:**
 - Plans for the future success rather than react to today's concerns.

Recommendation #1

Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

WF 2.0 BIG IDEAS

- Promote transportation and choice mobility
- Recommendations:
 - Improve network design

WF 2.0 BIG IDEAS

- Provide reliable services and municipal transparency
- Recommendations :
 - Formally adopt an infrastructure investment strategy and capital improvements plan following adoption of comprehensive plan
 - Formally adopt a policy that categorizes infrastructure saving and spending dollars in the city

Recommendation #1

Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

WF 2.0 BIG IDEAS

- Strengthen neighborhoods and expand housing choice
- Recommendation :
 - Explore ways to improve design while keeping infrastructure and housing costs down

WF 2.0 BIG IDEAS

- Provide reliable services and municipal transparency
- Recommendations :
 - Formally adopt an infrastructure investment strategy and capital improvements plan following adoption of comprehensive plan
 - Formally adopt a policy that categorizes infrastructure saving and spending dollars in the city

Recommendation #1

Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

- Infrastructure planning policies:
 - Infrastructure growth plan for new development that dictates location and timing of the city's infrastructure network
 - City to adopt a transportation plan for developed and undeveloped areas, to include future collector and arterial roadways and other important or efficient transportation connections
 - Capital improvements plan coupled with economic development goals to better identify areas of growth

Recommendation #1

Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

- Funding policies:
 - Infrastructure investment strategy that identifies funding amounts from special assessments, city funds, sales tax, state and federal funds for categories of projects.
 - Setting utility rates at levels that will allow the city to create reserves for repair and replacements

Recommendation #1

Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

- Special assessment policies
 - New development will be paid by special assessments according to city standards
 - Any infrastructure beyond city standards will be paid for by developer
 - City-ran redevelopment has a policy for sales tax, water and sewer revenues and Prairie Dog funding to help bring cost down, but special assessments could still be used
 - Developer -ran redevelopments follows the special assessment guidelines for new development
 - Redevelopment over \$5 million would be reviewed on a case -by-case basis to determine if additional investment would benefit the greater community
 - Developer requested improvements that don't require more than \$500,000 worth of work cannot be funded through special assessments

Recommendation #1

Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

- New development policies:
 - Requirement of master planning for new developments, covering preliminary engineering for all public infrastructure that adheres to the infrastructure growth plan
 - Design standards that have the potential to reduce the overall tax burden for property owners – particularly that of special assessments.
 - Developers must adhere to city's adopted transportation plan

Recommendation #1

Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

- A well -developed capital improvement plan is key to the success of the City of West Fargo's future managed growth, financial forecasting and transparent communication with the property owners.
- City staff recommends investing in resources to strengthen the process of planning and managing the capital improvement plan so it can become a public resource.

Recommendation #1

Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth

- City staff recommends the development of a staff committee to create infrastructure financing best practices.
- This committee would research, implement and monitor the funding policies of the managed growth plan, as well as explore new best management practices for the City.
- Some of these practices could include:
 - Requiring developers to fund all or more of new development
 - Increasing rate of sales tax
 - Developing new economic tools to increase sales tax collected
 - Annual subsidies for income-based special assessment breaks, similar to the City of Fargo's Special Assessment Assistance Program.

Questions

Recommendation #2

Implement a comprehensive communication process

WF 2.0 BIG IDEAS

- Provide reliable services and municipal transparency
- Recommendation :
 - Become a 'Digital City' and provide greater access to information and analysis via the internet

Recommendation #2

Implement a comprehensive communication process

- Survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they would like the City of West Fargo to broaden its current notification process, which currently follows the requirements of the North Dakota Century Code.
- Although survey responses were directly tied to special assessments, specials are a part of the complex system of infrastructure construction and maintenance.
- Further diving into the survey results demonstrates that a comprehensive communication process needs to include the broad scope of infrastructure construction and maintenance.

Recommendation #2

Implement a comprehensive communication process

- Staff recommends increasing communication to property owners to deliver information regarding future, pending and current infrastructure projects – from the identification of the project to final notice for payment of the specials
- This campaign needs to be an ongoing system that:
 - Increases information about the use, process and procedures related to special assessments
 - Build awareness of City of West Fargo infrastructure planning and execution
 - Easily presents capital improvement plan to property owners
 - Delivers information regarding pending and current special assessments; as well as the opportunity to pay special assessments

Questions

Recommendations

- Further develop our managed growth policy to realize cost of growth
 - Infrastructure planning policies
 - Funding policies
 - Special assessment policies
 - New development policies
 - Capital improvement plan investment
 - Infrastructure financing best practices committee
- Implement a comprehensive communication process
 - Increasing communication to property owners
 - Invest in tools and resources to easily deliver information