



2021/2022 Budget Engagement Commission Annual Report

Budget Engagement Commission
September 8, 2022

RiversideCA.gov

1

RIVERSIDE CITY CHARTER

City Municipal Code/Charter

https://library.municode.com/ca/riverside/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTICICH_ARTIIIGEPOCI

Article II. - General Powers of City

Sec. 201. - Access to public meetings and public records.

City agencies, boards, commissions, committees, officials, staff and officers, including the Mayor and members of the City Council, exist to conduct the people's business. It is fundamental that the people have full access to information, not to just what decisions have been made in their name but how those decisions were reached and how they were deliberated. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created. The people do not give their agencies or public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know.

Our values lie in government that helps its citizens in a timely way to obtain information. Our values lie in a broadening base of public participation, involvement and interest, providing new ideas and energy.

Our values lie not in hiding embarrassment and unpleasant occurrences. Our values lie not in preventing dissent.



2

RiversideCA.gov

2

BUDGET ENGAGEMENT COMMISSION PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

City of Riverside Municipal Code

Title 2 – Administration and Personnel

Chapter 2.90 - BUDGET ENGAGEMENT COMMISSION

2.90.020 – Purpose and function.

It is the purpose of the Budget Engagement Commission to advise the City Council on spending and policy priorities based on the information received through quarterly financial and performance reports, including revenues from transaction and use tax, to work with City staff to maximize public engagement on municipal budgetary issues and to provide input on performance measures and reporting programs. The Commission's advice shall in no way conflict with or supersede the powers of the Council or the budgetary and advisory powers of the City Charter created Boards and Commissions. (Ord. 7363 § 1, 2017)



3

RiversideCA.gov

3

BEC OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

- The Budget Engagement Commission (BEC) was created to serve as a budget spending, performance, reporting, and policy advisor to the City Council
- Since the last BEC presentation to Council in April 2019, the BEC has remained active working to meet monthly, over the last 2 years in a virtual or hybrid capacity primarily through the use of Microsoft Teams application. Being the largest Riverside City commission, the BEC has experienced challenges with commissioner attendance and turnover often making it difficult to meet quorum requirements. The BEC has worked with City staff on multiple budget reviews during this period, as well as addressing other issues added to BEC agenda
- In this presentation we hope to summarize BEC challenges, concerns, and recommendations.



4

RiversideCA.gov

4

BEC MAKEUP AND ATTENDANCE

- The BEC has experienced challenges in recent years in meeting quorum requirements.
- We believe timely commissioner opening review and vacancy resolution are critical to the success of BEC operation. The BEC has had numerous open positions for extended periods, that has impacted the ability of the commission to hold meetings in a timely fashion.
- Being the largest commission at 18 members, meeting quorum requirements is difficult when down one-third of commissioners.
- We believe the City Clerk, Mayor, Council, and BEC Chair, should continue to review on a quarterly basis at minimum, the open positions and potential candidates for the BEC. If no candidates exist, Councilmembers, the City Clerk, and Chair need to remain active in their search to fill such positions.
- With the difficulty in filling business commissioner positions, could it be time to consider reducing the size of the budget engagement commission? It is our opinion, that City business members add critical value to the commission but are inadequately represented today.



5

RiversideCA.gov

5

BEC MAKEUP AND ATTENDANCE CONT.

- We believe commission Chair should be notified of all position applications and appointments.
- Recent changes by the Clerk's office have made it impossible now for Chair to contact new commissioners to introduce themselves and welcome them to the commission. This change seems counterproductive effective commission operations. At minimum, the commission Chair and Vice Chair should have access to commissioner phone and email information, by whatever means the Clerk's office may want to communicate such.



6

RiversideCA.gov

6

BUDGET PROCESS

The budgetary process for an entity the size of the City of Riverside is very complex. The integration of City commissions is integral piece of this process, and we feel that the BEC has not been an integral part of the process.

Below are our recommendations to fully integrate the BEC into the City's budget process:

- Involve the BEC in all Measure Z spending decisions and review. The commission often hears of Measure Z related spending decisions after the fact that the BEC was not consulted on beforehand.
- Continue to implement the priority-based budgeting process and define a role for the BEC in that process.
- During the budget process, review and prioritize all proposed additions not just new unfunded items. In the most recent process, a new "critical unfunded" list was presented to the BEC that ignored or gave higher priority to previously (some long-standing) approved items.
- Institute an annual review of Measure Z spending priorities and status.



7

RiversideCA.gov

7

BUDGET PROCESS CONT.

- Improve the communication process and transparency on large contingency items such as Measure C and the GFT that impact the BEC's ability to provide reasoned guidance on budget priorities and recommendations (the lack thereof could result in imprudent recommendations)
- Provide regular status updates on Council final decisions for which the BEC provided recommendations, and that are budget related
- Because City compensation settlements have such a significant impact on budgets, the BEC needs to have some visibility, if only estimates as to the dollar magnitude. If each party's reopeners and goals are public information, such information should be provided to the BEC.
- At a minimum, these compensation settlement impacts should be fully disclosed to the BEC before Council's final approval so that the BEC may weigh in on the budget implications. This is an example of "fully integrate the BEC in the budget process."



8

RiversideCA.gov

8

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

As a commission, the BEC strives to align its goals with City of Riverside strategic initiatives.



Community Trust



Fiscal Responsibility



Sustainability & Resiliency



Equity



Innovation



9

RiversideCA.gov

9

CONCLUSION

GDO

The BEC, like other commissions, was created for the purpose outlined in the Municipal Code and was intended to play important advisory **and accountability** roles that remains critical to the City's goal of transparency and maximizing public engagement and participation.

We will leave you with some questions that need to be considered as a Council. What is the goal and purpose of the BEC? Is it still serving that purpose? Is the BEC still valued?

If the answer to the last question is no, you should consider dissolving the commission. If it is still valued, then we ask that the Mayor and Council support the commission by ensuring the commission is at full capacity and directing staff to fully integrate the commission in the City's budget process.



10

RiversideCA.gov

10

Slide 10

GDO

According to the RMC 2.90 - The Budget Engagement Commission is an advisory body. To my knowledge the only accountability board/body is the Board of Ethics.

Gause, Donesia, 2022-08-11T16:50:43.425