

Civic Engagement during Social Distancing in Ann Arbor

A User Experience Research Report

Prepared for the City of Ann Arbor

By the students of SI350: UX Field Research in the Public Sector

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This report was created as part of an undergraduate course at the UM School of Information, SI350- UX Field Research in the Public Sector. In the course, students apply user experience research to explore opportunities to enhance civic engagement. Students engage with residents and city staff in Ann Arbor. This session of the course was exceptional in that students met remotely, and were not able to meet physically with the community, due to social distancing requirements. Inquiries about this report can be directed to the course instructor, Scott TenBrink, at dstb@umich.edu.

We would like to appreciate the effort, contributions, and resources provided by staff at the City of Ann Arbor. Thanks, especially to Kayla Coleman and Galen Hardy for sharing their knowledge, experience and time with our class. Thanks also to the many Ann Arbor residents who responded to our survey and met with us for interviews about their experience.

Introduction

How can the people of Ann Arbor connect with their community, while following social distancing protocols and utilizing alternative virtual discussion resources? As the world adjusts to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, civic engagement remains essential in order for city governments to make informed decisions and relay those decisions to their constituents. Many civic engagement opportunities are no longer possible due to restrictions on physical gathering. However, city government can certainly involve residents by leveraging technology.

This report describes citizens' use of information technology, personal desires for engagement, and current perceptions of civic interaction based on their past experiences. Secondary research, surveys, and interviews provided data, which was analyzed to identify major trends in Ann Arbor residents' experiences and motivations.

Compiling evidence through secondary research, surveys, and interviews helps synthesize user experience (UX) trends and how to improve virtual connections for Ann Arbor citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. UX research helps reveal the previous civic engagement experience of Ann Arbor occupants, and how to best reach them during these troublesome times.

That research informs our recommendations to replace or reduce in-person meetings in two specific contexts:

- maintaining resident's access to information and services at City Hall, and
- providing useful information about neighborhood construction projects.

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Part 1: Data Collection Methods

Three methods were applied to collect data on the citizen experience.

Secondary Research

Secondary research sets the foundation for understanding resident perspectives and sheds light on gaps to be filled by further research in surveys and interviews. A list of facts about Ann Arbor residents and civic engagement was compiled using city websites, community forums, and local publications. These resources allow a range of observations highlighting different aspects of residents' experiences. The observations gathered through secondary research were then synthesized into larger themes that shaped survey and interview questions. A complete list of sources is provided in [Appendix A](#).

There are some limitations to collecting data this way. The closing of the Ann Arbor City Hall due to COVID-19 is an unprecedented event, so finding direct correlations to past experiences presents unique challenges. Secondary research requires considerations to the recency of the information found. Examples of civic engagement are only as recent as before the stay-at-home order was issued. Interviews and surveys then answer questions unique to the present situation. Analyzing previous experiences and opinions of citizens allows researchers to be informed of how to improve interfaces and services for local benefit.

Surveys

A survey was used as a cost-effective way to gather a large amount of data. Their ease of distribution allows for a large sample size, which helps to mitigate bias. The survey asks who the users are, their experiences with City Hall and neighborhood construction, and the methods they use to stay informed on these topics. A mix of open and close-ended questions are included to capture both quantitative and qualitative data.

It's key to counteract bias in surveying by carefully wording each question in order to collect respondents' true opinions. For example, in a question about the challenges users experience when visiting City Hall, we used a free response question as opposed to a multiple choice question which could have pigeonholed users into selecting options that didn't apply to them. The complete survey can be found in [Appendix B](#).

It is assumed that our topics primarily affect adult Ann Arbor residents. As such, the survey was targeted towards Ann Arbor residents over the age of 18 (Figure 1). Also, the survey was only available online. This means that individuals who lack access to the internet and technology do not have a voice in the survey.

The survey was implemented through Google Forms and distributed in three main ways: Public Listserv (City Communications Department), personal connections (Individual emails to Ann Arbor residents, personal group chats), and social media (Ann Arbor related Facebook groups, r/AnnArbor Subreddit). As of May 21st, 2020, the survey has received 383 responses.

How old are you?

381 responses

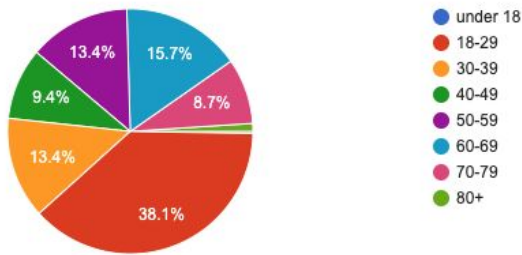


Figure 1: The ages of survey participants broken down into percentages.

Interviews

Interviews helped gauge how the residents feel about the current and future city hall/neighborhood construction engagement. With a combination of building rapport, engagement, and follow ups, interviews guide a conversation while allowing the interviewee to do most of the talking.

Interviews were beneficial in collecting more details about an experience that might provide different, unexpected insights to the user's experience in both City Hall and neighborhood construction projects. We spoke directly with residents about their lives in AA, experiences with engagements with the government, and their desires for improvement. We asked users to elaborate and generate their own responses about their experiences rather than limiting them to a set of predicted responses, and in these responses, there is additional feedback through tone and nonverbal cues such as body language.

Each student recruited an Ann Arbor citizen through their own social networks or by contacting people who indicated in the survey that they would be willing to participate in an interview. Students collectively wrote an interview script that probes the City Council and neighborhood construction experiences of the resident, while also encouraging participants to elaborate on their experiences. Each interview was recorded and conducted remotely on Zoom, led by a student proctor with another student as the scribe. This allowed for a smooth, efficient, and valuable interview process.

[Appendix C](#) is our set of questions asked to guide discussions with both City Hall and Neighborhood Construction teams. We conducted around 20 interviews for each topic (40+ total). These 30 minute or less interviews were used to help address our research goals. The results of the interview were coded into categories with similar overarching themes in order to form relevant insights from the data.

Part 2: Insights

Based on the data collected, the student teams identified the following insights to the citizen perspective on doing business at City Hall and understanding neighborhood construction.

City Hall

Understanding how modern technology can be used to deliver information and services will help City Hall learn how to reach its citizens during social distancing. This understanding can be developed by becoming familiar with the transactional services and information that City Hall already provides to citizens.

This research and analysis reveal the citizens' perspectives of visits to City Hall. The citizens' perspectives present insights on the experiences surrounding access to information that City Hall would typically provide in person, as well as information that is accessible online. The insights into the citizens' perspectives will help accomplish the research goal, which is to determine how modern technology can help the City provide information and service to a broader audience as City Hall begins to reopen.

We identify three user insights relevant to this effort.

Insight 1: Residents without much prior interaction with or stake in City Hall don't have a complete understanding of its services.

Indifference to Local Government

Many participants, mostly students, expressed that they did not feel connected to the Ann Arbor government. One interviewee said, "As a student, I'm not a real Ann Arbor resident" as well as "my concerns are more at a University level." Others voiced their confusion, asking why they should go to City Hall if they're just students. Full-time residents as well as students reported similar behaviors. According to the 2015 National Citizen Survey, amongst its 121,890 residents, 86% of them only participated in matters directly impacting themselves. Additionally, 21.5% of surveyed residents have not been to City Hall. This accounts for a large percentage of Ann Arbor residents, which could be a contributing factor to the overall unclear understanding many residents have.

Government Efforts Not Visible to Ann Arbor Residents

"You can be visible at a time when you normally wouldn't be visible. Like people who aren't caring about what's going on might just have time and attention to care now or hear a message... So I feel like the city is missing out on the opportunity to build relationships with citizens."

Research revealed that residents felt as though City Hall was not doing anything significant during the crisis, despite government efforts. One resident recalled the feelings she experienced when she saw brand new signs around the city leading to the big house, juxtaposed with the

unplowed neighborhood streets in the winter. Both the survey and interview data revealed that citizens felt a disconnect between what they are seeing being done and where they think their money should be going.

Unclear Understanding of City Hall’s Responsibilities



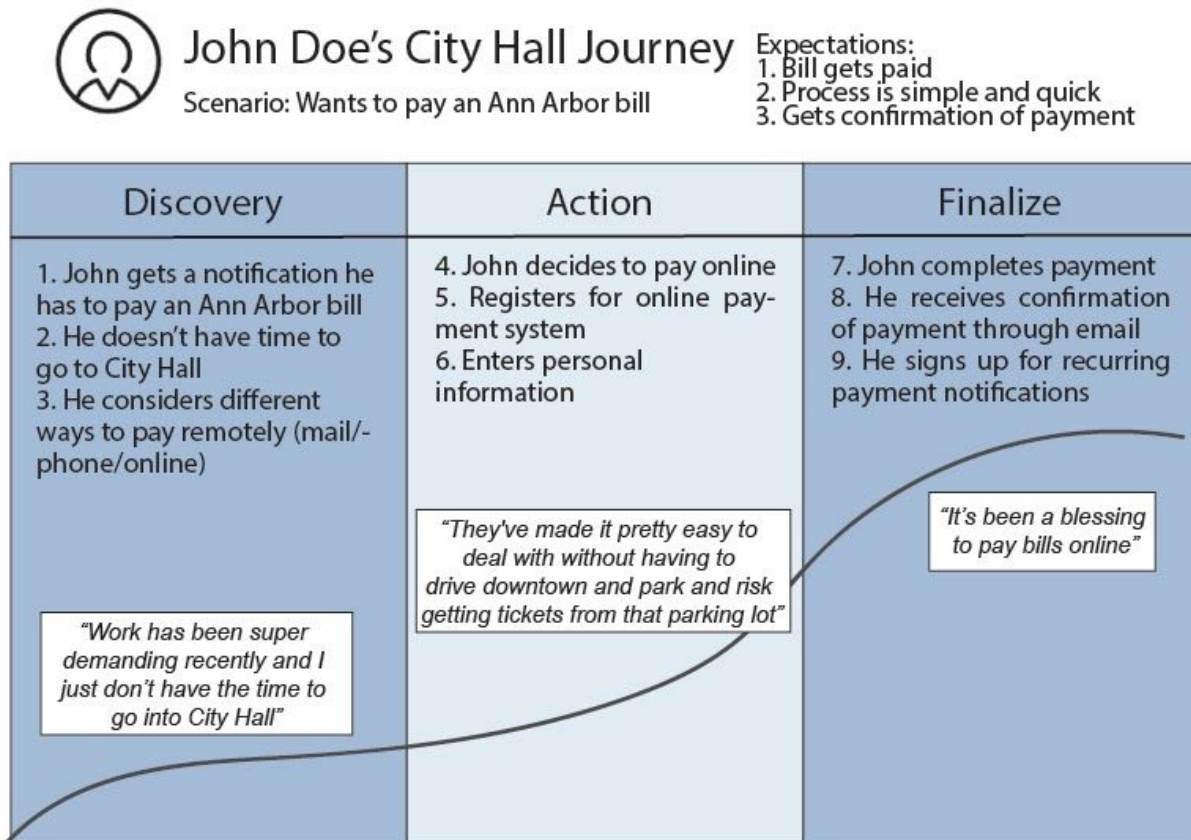
Affinity Diagram

As displayed in diagram above, findings from interviewees’ responses indicated an unclear understanding of City Hall’s responsibilities. In responding to the interview protocol, interviewees connected City Hall with the “court system” and “Ann Arbor politics”. This confusion around City Hall as a separate entity captures the idea that Ann Arbor residents lack a clear picture of City Hall in the first place. One interviewee captured this sentiment best when they mentioned, “this may sound really stupid...what would bring somebody to City Hall...?” Many residents are unsure whether their needs can be met by City Hall and what resources to use to complete services at City Hall. In fact, 24.2% of survey participants indicated that knowing whether my business can be completed at City Hall and/or directions/ finding the right place to go as aspects of visiting City Hall most important to them. Ultimately, these results convey that Ann Arbor residents are missing fundamental and basic information about City Hall, and at the same time they find such information important to them.

All in all, Ann Arbor residents feel they don’t have a stake in using City Hall services. On top of this, residents feel that City Hall related efforts are not visible to them. Without clear motivations and impressions about outreach, there becomes a deficit in residents' knowledge of City Hall. In other words, residents without much prior interaction or stake in City Hall don’t have a complete understanding of its services. Additional efforts to make fundamental services and projects visible to all residents would broaden their understanding of City Hall.

Insight 2: Many residents believe that online services are more efficient than in person.

The sampled residents believe that when services are provided online they are more efficient than when they are provided in person.



This figure depicts the experience one user had with paying bills online when he was in a time crunch. He found that the experience of an online payment process was more efficient and accessible for his needs.

Transaction Efficiency

Efficiency of transactions between citizens and City Hall is important for creating a more satisfied community of residents. The most frequent reason people need to interact with City Hall should be the most efficient experience. The survey responses show that 70% of residents consider "efficiency in completing their business" to be one of the most important aspects of visiting City Hall. Additionally, we found that from the people that answered the question "what are some reasons you have visited city hall in the past," 80% of survey respondents mentioned one of the reasons being a transactional purpose. An interviewee expressed their appreciation for City Hall's efficiency, "They were back to me in less than five minutes with an answer and had everything all taken care of". The above findings clearly imply that citizens crave quick and meaningful transactions associated with City Hall.

Online Interactions

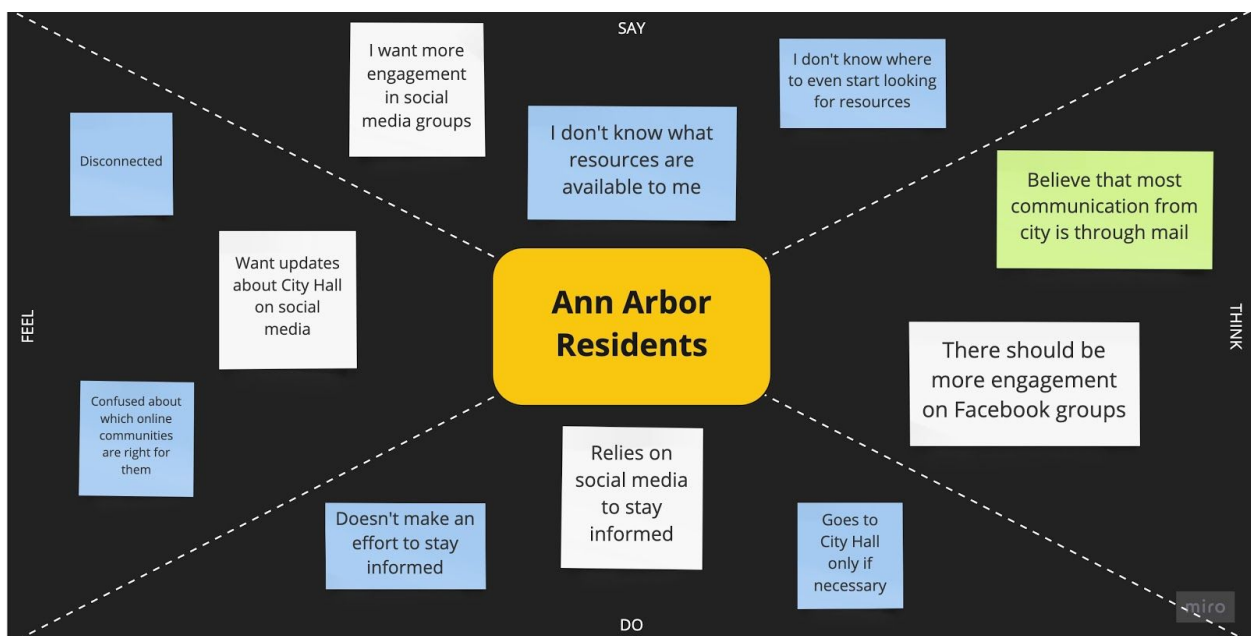
Residents prefer to have online interactions with City Hall. A majority of surveyed residents stated that they prefer online methods for both communication and business. Also, of the two

people interviewed, both had agreed that online outlets were more efficient for various reasons. Jane D. stated that the ease of use and time were important to her when processing bills. She also conveyed her positive view on technology, “Technology is key because you can, you know, get on my phone. Now that’s just old technology, but they have so many things online now and everybody’s working remotely...I go online on a regular basis.”

John D. enjoyed the feedback process as well as the simplicity involved with online payment. The online method allowed him to avoid wasted time going to City Hall. He said, “But basically, they’ve made it [paying bills online] pretty easy, you know, to deal with them without having to drive downtown and park and risk getting tickets from that parking lot, which is all metered”. Technology has played a large role in the satisfaction of citizens’ interactions.

The combination of the aforementioned examples shows how accessibility of technology, as well as the desire for efficiency in their most frequent services, can provide residents with a more satisfactory City Hall experience because they prefer online over in-person methods.

Insight 3: Residents value online engagement, but are unaware of where these communities exist.



The Empathy Map above shows the emotions and behaviors of Ann Arbor residents regarding the use of information technology about online engagement. The light blue sticky notes represent the indifferent responses, highlighted so that it’s clear what needs to be changed to help residents become more engaged and aware about online resources. It is clear that a majority of residents frequently interact on social media platforms to receive information regarding Ann Arbor, while there are an influx of online communities as is, including Facebook, Reddit, and Twitter. One respondent mentioned that they wished there was a form of a

community discussion group on social media. They were aware that this was a trend in other cities, however did not know of the existing online Ann Arbor groups. Based on the Empathy Map and interview data, many residents are not aware of online services available to them and if they are, they are unsure which services will provide them with the most effective and credible information.

A common theme derived from these findings is social media usage (shown with white sticky notes). Drawn from survey data, residents heavily rely on social media to stay updated on City Hall issues, and prefer that method of communication for updates from City Hall. Due to the finding of the influx of online communities, themes of confusion and lack of awareness from residents arise. From opinion-based subreddits and Facebook community discussions to the City Twitter account, it is difficult for residents to navigate reliable sources and credible updates. These themes raise an opportunity for the City to create a clear direction and raise awareness for online communities so residents can engage with Ann Arbor.

Neighborhood Construction

UX research plays a crucial role in identifying the obstacles that the City of Ann Arbor must overcome to continue to inform residents of neighborhood construction projects, and field complaints that people might have. It is paramount to understand that not all feedback about neighborhood construction is positive. The research focused on both positive and negative experiences with neighborhood construction. The aim was to utilize UX research to understand the ways in which Ann Arbor residents hope to engage with local construction projects.

Collected data was used to derive three key insights about user experience regarding neighborhood construction projects: residents have a strong desire for personalization of information, they only care about construction projects if it will affect them, and they don't want to be pestered with emails. Through the use of secondary research, virtually-distributed surveys, and interviews with carefully selected participants from varying age, race, socioeconomic, and neighborhood groups, the goal was to understand how Ann Arbor citizens learn about construction projects in their neighborhood and improve the existing approach of sharing that information with citizens.

Insight 1: Residents have a strong desire for personalization of information.

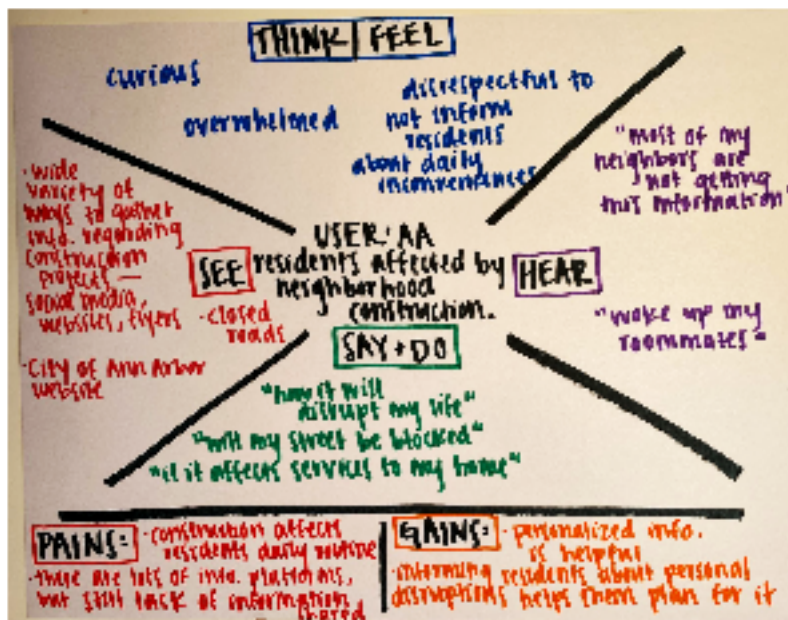
Nearly all users that participated in the survey or an interview indicated they want to stay informed on neighborhood construction projects. However, each user has different ideas of the ideal way that the City of Ann Arbor should inform residents. Moreover, each user also desires to receive different information, ranging from all updates regarding any construction in Ann Arbor to just the critical emergency information that only affects the individual user. Therefore, users desire personalization of information in both how they receive information and the specific information they receive regarding neighborhood construction.

The civic engagement survey asked each user what their ideal way to receive information from the City of Ann Arbor is. Answers included social media, the government website, email, text

messaging, and postal mail, which displays the differences in opinion on how users would like to receive their information. Users also indicated how the information platform utilized should be dependent on the type of update. One user stated the preference of “internet websites” for less critical information because he/she “can browse” as they please, but for “critical issues [the city] should put flyers in our mailboxes.” This brings up a theme about users preferring different means of communication based on what they are comfortable with, as well as what is most appropriate depending on the importance of the update.

Another question in the survey inquired how often people would like to receive information; responses included never, daily, weekly, only when a new project begins, 10 days before a project begins, 90 days in advance before construction begins, and only when there are critical updates. Users responded with a 91.5% majority split between critical updates only and weekly updates, which highlights a theme about frequency of updates. The split opinion on frequency of updates demonstrates how users value if the city tailors the distribution of information to their wants and needs.

When it came to the specific information residents wanted to know regarding city construction projects, there was also a pretty wide range of desires for specific information. However, the common theme between these responses is that users seek to have information that addresses them personally. The empathy map below illustrates this idea, as users say it is important to know “how it will disrupt *my* life” and “if it will affect services to *my* home.” Additionally, an interviewee addressed that she is “curious about what exactly [the city is] doing right outside *my* building every day.” The emphasis on personalized information is apparent in this map and throughout the research conducted. User’s feelings toward personalization illustrates that they will feel more respect if they are informed of daily inconveniences.



Empathy Map

Many of the responses concerned the timeline of construction. Responses indicated Ann Arbor residents want to know when a project is starting, when the project will end, and the daily schedule of the construction. Users also indicated they wanted to know the exact place of the construction, the resulting roadblocking and restrictions, and knowing how traffic patterns will change as a result. Some responses were more general; people said they wanted to know “how it affects [the user] and neighbors.” The diversified responses demonstrate that residents all have personal preferences on what information they receive from the City of Ann Arbor. Overall, residents seek personalized information regarding the means and frequency of communication in addition to the type of information shared by the City of Ann Arbor.

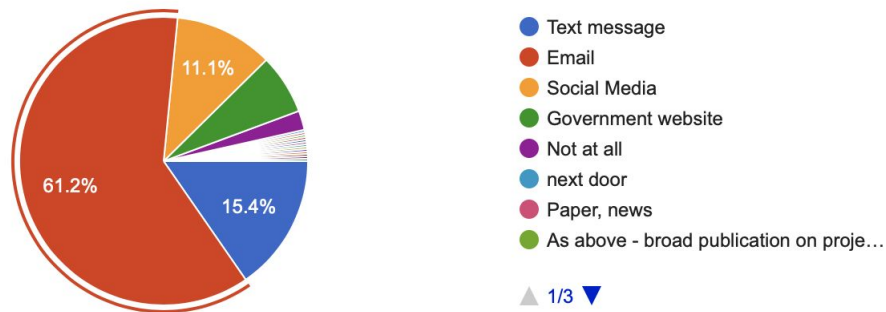
Insight 2: Residents most important desire is to be notified about construction if it will directly affect them

Information Distribution

After analyzing the findings presented by the data, some patterns emerged. There appeared to be a series of themes derived from common codes for the data. The first theme that emerged from the data was the value of information distribution. Residents' responses indicated a clear desire to receive information directly, rather than search for it themselves. The survey data provides statistical insight into the methods of information distribution that the citizens value.

What is your preferred way to receive updates about neighborhood construction?

371 responses



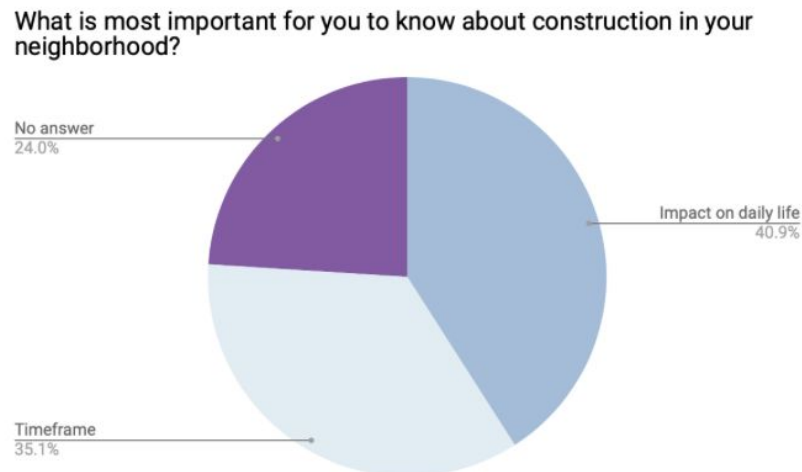
This pie chart is representative of citizens' desire for direct communication. Of the 371 responses, 76.6% of people said they would prefer to receive updates about neighborhood construction through text message or email. This preference towards direct information distribution, available at all times, indicates the desire to have the ability to stay informed when a situation seems to have personal impact on the individual.

Lack of Awareness

Another theme that arose from analyzing the data collected was a general lack of awareness amongst citizens. They are unaware of the resources available to them, timeframes of neighborhood construction projects, and how to get involved. When asked how she would react if she had a neighborhood construction issue she did not know how to solve, an interviewee shared “I’m not really sure what I’d do if I had an issue, but I would probably check the city website first and find a point of contact.” This sense of not knowing where to start was common amongst our data. However, a more civically engaged interviewee responded to the same question with “The A2.Gov.org. That’s an awesome site. All the information’s there. A2 fix it sometimes has information on what’s going to go on.” This indicates that the small portion of residents who are aware of the resources available are extremely satisfied with them, but the problem arises with residents’ unwillingness to take the first step and go out of their way to stay aware, unless they are directly impacted.

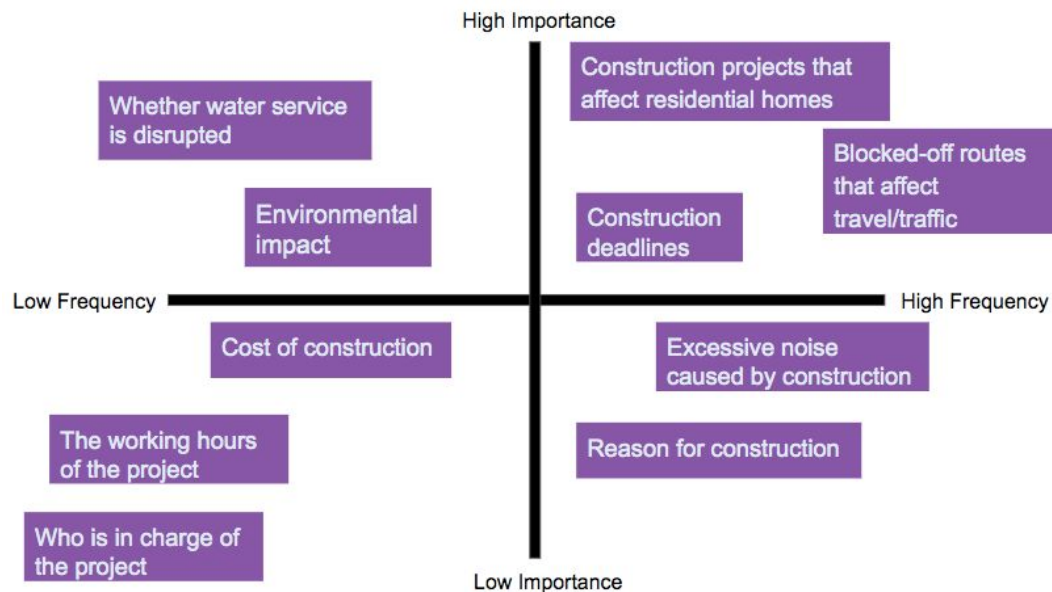
Inconveniences

The last theme the data conveys is how residents are most concerned with how neighborhood construction will inconvenience their lives. Inconvenience comes in many forms for residents of Ann Arbor, whether it be traffic obstruction, impact on transportation, noise pollution, or causing daily inconvenience, the majority of residents think that the most important information regarding construction in their neighborhood is how it affects them. The interview data highlights residents’ desire for critical updates that impacts them in the form of an inconvenience. In addition to only wanting critical updates on construction, when notified about construction residents answers centered around the personal effect of the update.



This finding shows what the residents value in neighborhood construction updates. In addition to the responses that were categorized as an impact on daily life, many responses to this survey question fell under the category of timeframe, or citizens wanting to know when construction would happen. Of the responses that gave an answer to this question, the majority of responses

placed importance on how the construction would affect the respondent personally. This framework highlights the prioritization of ideas concerning neighborhood construction projects in Ann Arbor based on citizen responses from the survey and interviews.



Based on this framework, two of the most common and important answers were blocked off traffic routes and construction that affects residential homes. A lot of the time these inconveniences can not be avoided. Knowing construction deadlines is also a common and important response. This shows that knowing when the project will end is extremely valuable information for citizens, especially if the physical conditions are not avoidable.

These themes reveal that the best way to engage citizens on neighborhood construction projects is to make it as convenient as possible and send direct messages to citizens with important updates. Making information to these projects much more accessible is important to giving citizens the best experience. Residents' frequent mention of desiring more communication and their current lack of awareness indicate that they are willing to get more involved in neighborhood construction projects and are simply unaware of them, but the importance of information distribution and frequent mention of inconveniences highlight that they will not go out of their way to be informed and get involved.

Insight 3: Residents might not want to be informed all the time, but want the ability to inform themselves if needed.

The numerous interviews conducted by the student group have provided multiple insights into the wants and needs of outspoken citizens. These insights concisely describe the troubles and wishes citizens have with finding information and contacting city hall. *Residents might not want to be informed all the time, but want the ability to inform themselves if desired.* This brings

attention to the fact that citizens often want to go looking for information they need, but end up overwhelmed by the amount of unrelated information they have to parse through. This makes it difficult for citizens to find the data from projects they're actually interested in, and impedes them from locating information they actually need.

Supporting Findings

The findings in the research that relate to the insight of residents wanting to have the ability to inform themselves when needed comes from various sources. First, according to the survey results, 90% of the respondents wanted updates on neighborhood construction for critical updates only or weekly updates with critical updates more frequent than weekly. Hence, this shows that it is more common for citizens to prefer less updates and information on construction projects compared to daily updates and other options. Furthermore, another finding from the survey was that there were participants who were more concerned with which stage the construction projects were in while they were happening. As there are many possible stages and information revolving around this issue, one preferred method to find out would be looking for this information for themselves rather than wait for updates and notifications.

According to the data, a common finding was that there were many participants who are just not concerned with construction projects. This shows the importance of personalized updates and having a localized source for people to seek out information. Having one easily accessible point for information access is able to ease the tension with having to update everyone on the projects when not every person cares and wants this information. Through research, this is obviously a lacking resource for the citizens. During an Ann Arbor resident interview, the participant stated her frustration with trying to seek out information on the Ann Arbor website and other sites, saying "I find it very difficult to pinpoint an answer to a specific question that I have about a specific construction project". This is one example of citizens stating their inability to find specific information themselves.

Additionally, another finding found through research is that the data catalog on the Ann Arbor website has a large number of files that are inaccessible to the majority of users. Construction Permits, Petitions Under Review, and Planning and Development Projects files are only offered in XML and RSS and must be parsed to get to understandable data. As most people are not familiar with these types of files, this shows another way citizens are unable to seek all the information they may be looking for regarding neighborhood construction projects.

Personalized accessibility

Three main themes found in secondary research, surveys, and interviews that align with this insight are **personalization**, **accessibility**, and **localization**. The theme of personalization stemmed from residents seeking updates that fit their interests and their preferred frequency of receiving information from the city. In addition, accessibility issues could be seen with residents finding it difficult to find information on their own. Lastly, localization expresses the wish for one unified place to find details about neighborhood projects, so as to simplify the navigation

process. These themes convey that each resident has subjective desires and challenges when looking for information on construction projects.

Scoping outwards, personalization improves the civic engagement experience by fulfilling residents' desires for engagement. For residents who perceive neighborhood construction as unimportant to them, receiving information about projects can clutter their online environment, which frustrates them and creates repulsion between the local government and these residents. To compensate for limiting engagement, promoting accessibility on online platforms enhances residents' perception of neighborhood construction by empowering them with technology to easily find details about a specific project; after all, when a construction project comes around to affect these residents, they will desire learning more about the project's stages and corresponding disruptions. When this time comes, localization simplifies the use of information technology for these residents, which gives them a straightforward introduction to navigating City resources for useful information.

How Might the City

Altogether, this insight represents the population of residents generally uninterested in neighborhood construction. This sheds light on possibilities to improve their experience navigating for information on projects that are critical to them, in being apparent from the vicinity of their homes. Moving forward, the insight can shed light on opportunities through two "how might we" statements, which draw together all three themes.

1. How might the City establish one unified place for neighborhood construction details that is recognized by residents who do not receive updates elsewhere?
2. How might the City present information about neighborhood construction projects so as to optimize the navigation to critical updates about a specific project?

In accommodating residents who are generally uninterested, these two issues present the opportunity for a localized, organized online environment that satisfies residents that desire critical updates about a construction project affecting their neighborhood. At last, seizing this opportunity could empower the uninterested population to take advantage of government resources after a quick, easy online civic experience finding construction details that affect them when they need it.

Part 3: Discussion

Research Limitations

This report identifies important insights into the citizen perspective on services and communication provided by the City of Ann Arbor. But it is also important to recognize a couple inherent biases in our process.

Due to the requirements for social distancing and remote nature of our research, we relied heavily on online tools to capture user perspective. The survey was promoted online, and required internet access to respond. Additionally, most interviews were recruited through the survey or other online tools, and Zoom was used to record interviews. As a result, the attitudes and behaviors of people without internet access are almost completely unrepresented. However, the population reached through the survey was broad in other respects, like age range.

While many age ranges were represented, the mean age was lower than the mean for Ann Arbor generally. We believe this results from two recruitment tactics:

1. The circle of influence of the research team is centered on the students population, so we would expect that the guerilla promotion of the survey and interview recruitment would reach a largely students audience.
2. Some of the online promotion of the survey was through the Ann Arbor Reddit and other platforms that are known to attract a younger audience.

Still, the survey respondents represent a wide range of ages, as did our interviewee pool.

Finally, the survey and interviews did not screen for previous experience with City Hall and neighborhood construction. Given more time and resources, the research team would have put more effort into focussing research on residents with such experience. As it stands, there was a large volume of responses that indicated a lack of interaction with either of the situations under investigation. This resulted in some main findings being that people lack understanding and awareness about the activities and duties of City Hall.

Next Steps

In closing, we will highlight a few applications of the six insights in this report.

First, focus online engagement on opportunities to complete simple tasks. The city already accommodates paying bills and parking tickets. It might be possible to expand online interactions to include some permits, for example. This leverages people's preference to avoid the challenges of visiting City Hall (parking!), and addresses a large volume of demand for City Hall interaction.

Next, there should be a single engagement platform for updates and press releases from City Hall. That content should be replicated on social media and other channels, but a central and

clearly labeled source for government updates would address residents' reported challenge with finding information on the website.

While a central location is important for general updates, residents are seeking more personalized information. The City should look for opportunities to share information on an individual level. For example, instead of sharing a city-wide map of trash collection, share an interactive map where a variety of service schedules and construction updates can be shared for a specific address. As the volume of information expands, residents are less likely to be aware of critical information and be able to locate a reliable source for that information. Our research suggests that consolidating and personalizing information is an opportunity to reach more residents.

Similarly, leveraging existing social networks can help distribute important information. This includes online resources like neighborhood Facebook groups and Nextdoor.com. But it is important to leverage off-line interactions and shared physical spaces to reach people. Particularly with neighborhood construction projects, people report getting the best information from their landlord, and frequently sharing information with neighbors during casual encounters near home. Simple notices in public or commercial (laundromat, cafe, convenience store) can inform people, and be a gateway to signing up for regular updates via a QR code.

The insights and recommendations provided in this report are broad strokes based on early user research on general topics. The report should serve as a foundation for exploring user preferences and motivation further for more specific civic interactions and communications. The School of Information can be a resource in continuing to refine and focus this work. Client Engagement team (umsi.client.engagement@umich.edu) for more information.

Appendices

[Appendix A: Secondary Research Sources](#)

[Appendix B: Interview Questions](#)

[Appendix C: Interview Questions](#)

[Appendix D: Contributor list](#)

Appendix A: Secondary Research Sources

“Ann Arbor, MI Community Livability Report.” The National Citizen Survey, 2015.

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Appendix B: Survey Questions

Coded and Anonymized survey responses

City Hall

1. Are you a resident of Ann Arbor?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure

2. How old are you?
 - a. Under 18
 - b. 18-29
 - c. 30-39
 - d. 40-59
 - e. 60-69
 - f. 70-79
 - g. 80+

3. How do you stay informed about what is going on in Ann Arbor?
 - a. Text from City of Ann Arbor
 - b. Social Media
 - c. Email
 - d. City website
 - e. I don't make an effort to stay informed

4. What are some reasons that you have visited City Hall in the past?

5. What aspects of visiting City Hall are most important to you? (pick three)
 - a. directions/ finding the right place to go
 - b. contact information
 - c. reception/ feeling welcome
 - d. privacy/ knowing who can see my information
 - e. efficiency/getting my business finished quickly
 - f. knowing whether my business can be completed at City Hall
 - g. understanding required documents and fees before I arrive
 - h. convenient service
 - i. assurance that I've met any requirements

6. What challenges or barriers, if any, have you encountered in completing business at City Hall?

7. What is your preferred way to receive updates about your business with City Hall?
 - a. Text message
 - b. Email

- c. Social Media
- d. Government website
- e. Not at all
- f. Other:

Neighborhood Construction

1. Thinking of the last time you were affected by construction in your neighborhood, how easy was it to get information?

Not easy at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very easy

2. Thinking of the last time you were affected by neighborhood construction, how satisfied were you with the information and updates you received?

Not easy at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very easy

3. How frequently would you like to be updated about neighborhood construction projects?

- a. Daily
- b. Weekly
- c. Only critical updates
- d. Not at all
- e. Other:

4. What is most important for you to know about construction in your neighborhood?

5. What is your preferred way to receive updates about neighborhood construction?

- a. Text message
- b. Email
- c. Social Media
- d. Government website
- e. Not at all
- f. Other:

6. If you are willing to participate in an interview, please share your email address so that we can schedule a time that works for you.

Appendix C: Interview Questions

City Hall

- Have you ever been to city hall?
 - YES: Tell me about what your experiences at City Hall have been like?
 - NO: How have you avoided having to go to City Hall?
- Please tell me your thoughts about the city's services during the pandemic.
 - Follow up: How do you think that response could be improved?
- What do you need from City Hall during this time?
 - Follow up: How can technology help to meet these needs?

- Please describe your experience communicating with City Hall online.
- Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about your experience with visiting City Hall?

Neighborhood Construction

- Can you start by telling me about your experience with neighborhood construction projects in Ann Arbor?
 - Follow up: How do you stay up to date with neighborhood construction news?
- How have neighborhood construction projects affected you in the past?
 - follow-up: Has your involvement with neighborhood construction projects changed during COVID-19?
- What are your most frequently utilized online platforms to find out about neighborhood construction?
 - Follow-up: What forms of communication and/or online platforms would you use to express an idea or concern about these projects?
- How would you like to be informed about construction projects in your neighborhood?
 - Follow-up : Do you think the government should take any other actions to inform and engage residents about construction projects during this time?
- Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about your experience with neighborhood construction projects?

Appendix D: Contributor list

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