

# WHAT WE HEARD

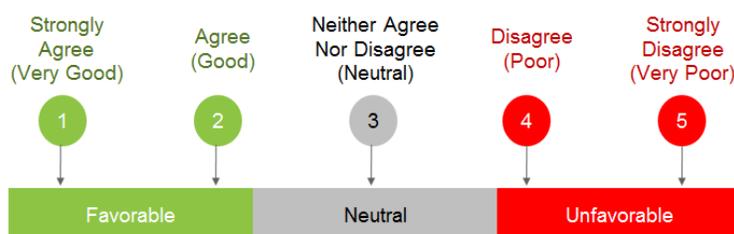
## Responses to the Employee Engagement Survey's Free-Form Questions

We asked for what you really think, and you answered. Almost two-thirds (62%!) of all City of Hayward employees shared their thoughts in the employee engagement survey. Though our promise of anonymity means we can't release every single comment you wrote for us, we wanted to make sure that you knew your point got across. Read on to see what you and your colleagues told us in response to our free-form questions, along with some relevant data from the survey itself.

### Before we get started, a quick note about interpreting the survey results:

When you took the survey, you were asked to express your level of agreement with a number of statements about the City. Your responses were then categorized into favorable, neutral, or unfavorable categories. The total number of answers in each category is represented as percentages of the total number of responses. For example:

Example: "My job makes good use of my skills and abilities"



Here are some guidelines for interpreting the percentage of the favorable (green) rating:

- Favorable rating of more than **75%** → **Clearly favorable**
- Favorable rating between **65%** and **75%** → **Moderately favorable**
- Favorable rating between **50%** and **60%** → **Warning sign**
- Favorable rating less than **50%** → **Red flag**

**Question 1: Please complete the following sentence: The single most important thing the City of Hayward can do to show it values its employees is...**

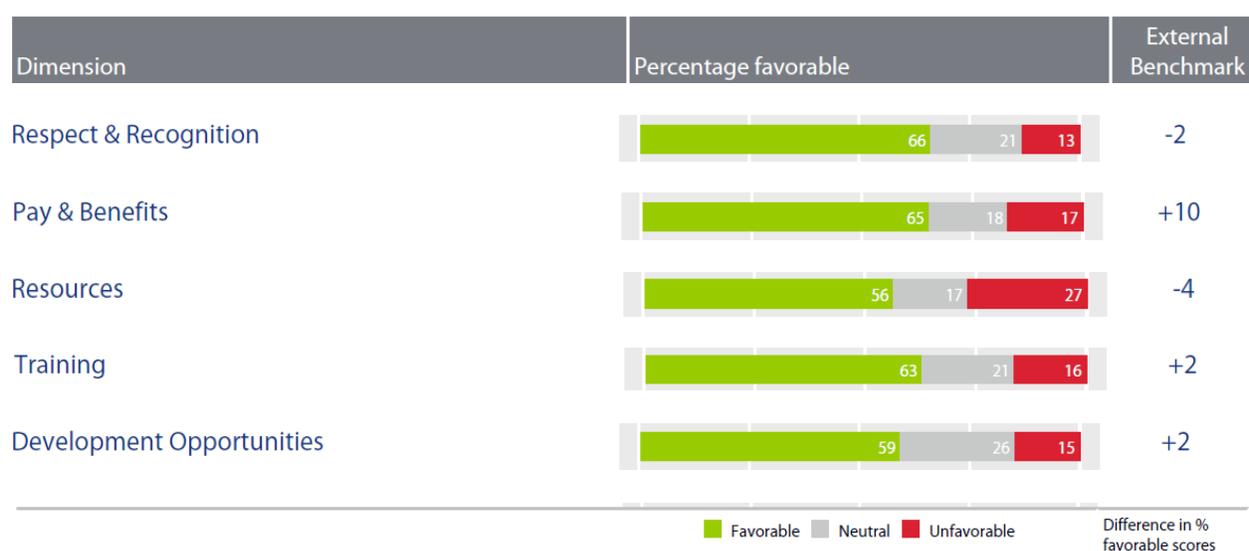
The most common response to this question was to increase pay and benefits. Nearly as many of you were interested in increased recognition of your hard work – in the form of employee events and

awards, performance-related incentives, and a simple personal, heartfelt “thank you.” Communication was also a major theme, with many of you requesting that management both listen to employees more, acknowledge your opinions, and share the rationale behind major decisions.

Workload is a major concern for most respondents – we heard that you’d like to ensure work is distributed fairly, that many of you feel overworked and understaffed, and that flex scheduling is an option many of you would like, if possible. Improving the transparency and timeliness of the labor negotiations process was also a major priority for some of you. Other common responses included offering more training and career development opportunities, treating employees equally, and building trust between management and employees.

#### How does this compare to the survey results?

Here are the survey results directly related to the issues you’ve raised in your comments, and how they compare to the public sector as a whole:



Here are some of your answers, verbatim:

“To compensate them with pay and benefits in line with their work.”

“Publically and immediately recognize above average performance; and in a similar vein, correct underperformance -- and do both in a transparent, sensitive, and fair manner. Structure the work environment to support quality of life issues for employees at all levels.”

“Communicate on a more regular basis - share the vision for where the organization is headed and my role in it.”

“Treat them honestly and fairly, especially when in negotiations at contract time.”

“Provide salary and benefits comparable to other cities.”

“The single most important thing the City of Hayward can do to show it values its employees is to actively ensure that the staffing levels are adequate for quality of work it expects from its employees.”

“Truly allow for flexible work schedules to accommodate a work/life balance. “

“To compensate them with pay and benefits in line with their work. A manager taking a moment to tell an employee that they do a good job goes a long way as well.”

“Provide an engaging, energetic workplace where people are encouraged to take risks, exercise common sense and focus on critical path issues without unnecessary distraction. Second place, compensation.”

“...Consistently provide feedback to employees, recognize high performers, encourage all employees to grow in their respective positions through training and coaching.”

“To trust and support them in decisions, particularly if things don't go well.”

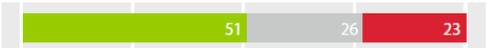
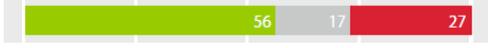
## Question 2: What does the City need to improve?

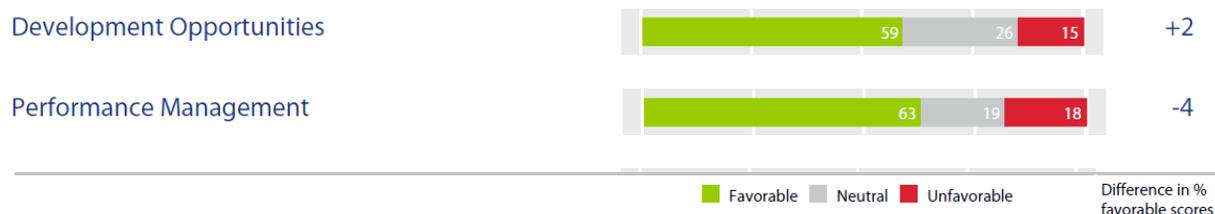
Overwhelmingly, we heard that the City needs to address communication problems – between departments, between City Hall and other worksites, and between upper management and line staff. Specifically, many of you wanted clear communication of the City’s, your department’s, and other departments’ goals and objectives. Similarly, some of you wrote that there is a lack of transparency in the City that needs to be remedied.

As in Question 1, many of you responded that both the size and distribution of your workloads needs improvement. A good number of your responses also requested more training and employee development opportunities through the City. Performance-based recognition and accountability, economic development, and internal customer service were also popular responses.

### How does this compare to the survey results?

Here are the survey results are directly related to the issues you’ve raised in your comments, and how they compare to the public sector as a whole:

Dimension	Percentage favorable	External Benchmark
Communication		-
Resources		-4
Training		+2



Here were some of the opportunities you identified:

“Organization-wide communication. The communication can be very one-sided and often times the message is filtered when it comes through the executive leadership for each respective department.”

“The website design and internal cross-departmental communications. We don't share internally the goals and objectives of each respective department effectively.”

“Encourage more interaction between executive and line staff. Communication breeds understanding and cooperativeness. Foster a sense of working towards common goals. What are our top three priorities for the City and how can each department work together to achieve them.”

“Management of workloads as new priorities and programs are added so that employees can maintain a healthy work/life balance. Also, internal communications could be improved so that people know what is happening in other departments.”

“Providing more in-house training for employees.”

“Transparency. Whether accurate or not, there is the perception that the City is not being transparent with how budget decisions get made.”

“The management appears to have lost touch with the line level city workers.”

“Leadership with effective management and interpersonal skills. People should be treated with respect and sensitivity, and encouraged to do their best. This trumps any amount of financial compensation.”

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### Question 3: What does the City do well?

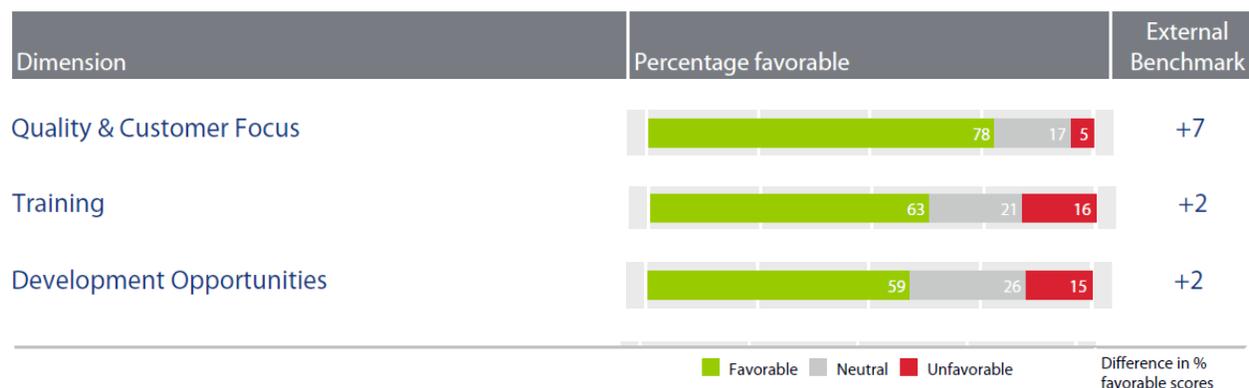
The response from all of you was overwhelming: the City excels at serving, communicating, and connecting with our residents. We also excel at maintaining high level of service through lean times and remaining resilient through change.

Several of you highlighted that the city values employee development, does an excellent job at hiring dedicated and passionate people, and supports our police and firefighters.

Some of the responses to this question were more sarcastic than constructive, suggesting that the City is good at shooting down ideas or keeping secrets.

#### How does this compare to the survey results?

Here are the survey results are directly related to the issues you've raised in your comments, and how they compare to the public sector as a whole:



Read what you had to say:

“The City is very responsive to customer inquiry and resident needs.”

“The City provides high quality services to its residents and is always striving to improve services and raise the performance bar.”

“I've been in local government for 28 years, and compared to the other organizations I have worked for, Hayward seems to very good at maintaining the philosophy of "public service". There is a good balance of providing a high level of service to the public, while still caring and investing in their employees.”

“I think the City does well covering things up. Nothing specific, I just feel that we are not fully informed of things.”

“The City does a good job making most days at our jobs very frustrating.”

“Taking complaints seriously and communicate with the citizens well.”

“The city does a good job maintaining a positive relationship with the public and reaching out to its citizens. Their community events are well organized and draw a good crowd.”

“I would say the City is great at maintaining the current state of affairs or status quo. This may sound negative but it isn't. So many cities do not have the ability to maintain their resources, which include staff and personalities, major projects, community standards, budgets, public interest etc. But uniquely Hayward does. It is not a city in decay like some of our neighbors, it is not a place where the budget is grossly neglected and in jeopardy of failing, and it is not a place where staff and management are unable to provide services which maintain the city in a relatively balanced state of affairs and conditions. Looking past being ‘just stable’ Hayward will

need to embrace innovation and change to push past being a city that is simply ‘just there and working.’”

“The city does a great job of supporting our Police Officers.”

“From a resident's perspective (I am one of the few), the City does a good job in providing basic services, especially the Police Department.”

“The City does an excellent job with its police and fire services. Keep up the great work!”

“Opportunities for growth and professional development health and wellness initiatives.”

“The city of Hayward hires great employees who really care about making Hayward a better place.”

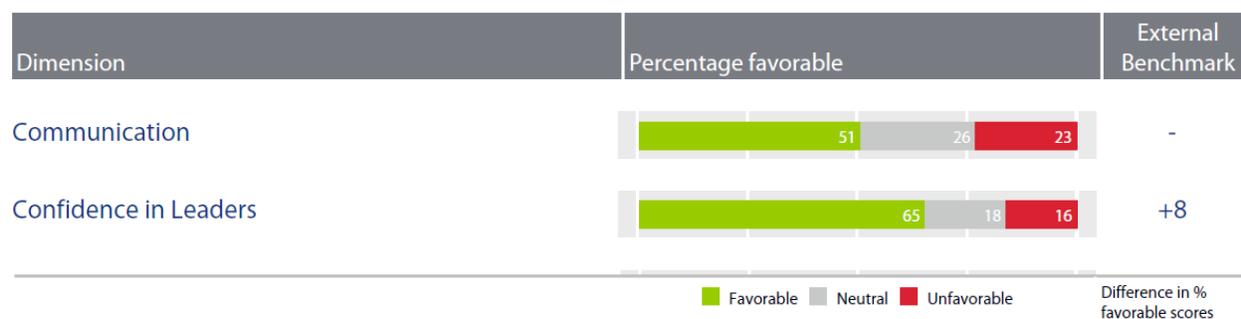
#### Question 4: Where do you go to share ideas about making improvements in the organization?

By far the most popular response, almost all of you said you turn to your direct supervisor or manager with your ideas for making your workplace more efficient and effective. Some of you also reported discussing problems or ideas for improvement with your coworkers and peers. A small number of you take your ideas straight to your department director or the executive team, share in meetings, or have used this survey as an opportunity to offer up your thoughts.

However, a significant number of employees responded that they don't share their ideas, or don't know where to do so – some because of heavy workload, others from a sense of futility, and a few for fear of retaliation. Many of you who do share ideas for improvement are disheartened because you don't see them go anywhere.

#### How does this compare to the survey results?

Here are the survey results are directly related to the issues you've raised in your comments, and how they compare to the public sector as a whole:



And here are some of your comments on sharing ideas:

"I'm fortunate that I have amazing supervisors. I can easily go to them with suggestions. Unfortunately, I know this is not the case city-wide."

"My immediate supervisor, my ideas and comments are always valued and encouraged."

"I have always brought my ideas to the HPD Command Staff and welcomed their honest feedback. I want to play a role in making HPD a better organization and be part of making the City of Hayward a better place to live and work."

"To my supervisor, although I have doubts that the ideas make it to anyone else. Frankly, I have witnessed acts of retaliation toward those who have offered constructive criticism of the City, and I have no desire to find myself on the receiving end of such behavior."

"Our employees turn to their peer to discuss ideas for organizational improvement."

"Sometimes I try to discuss within my group, and if there is consensus, and from there we move up in the management team."

"The toilet.... Because that's where they all end up."

"There is no place to share such ideas!"

"It is hard to make time for idea sharing on process improvement when most of the time I find myself drowning with my current workload. Very rarely do I have the opportunity to share ideas, unless I think that it will have an immediate impact on our internal efficiencies."

"To my Director, he's usually super responsive and interested in staff's ideas. However, I'd like to see the CM make a point to come down to the corporation yard and do brown bag lunches to let line level staff know they are appreciated and left to feel like those in City Hall care."

"I have forwarded memos I have written requesting improvements to my Department Head and the City Manager."