



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Chrostwaite Institute Releases Findings of Municipal Management Survey** *Infrastructure Improvement Identified as Top Priority*

**Harrisburg** – A report of findings from a Municipal Management Priorities Survey prepared for the Chrostwaite Institute, an organization focused on research and government efficiency, illustrates that capital infrastructure maintenance and improvement is a top-rated priority for more than 21 percent of municipal governments. Infrastructure also ranked as the highest-rated priority on average across the 15 broad initiatives included in the survey.

The management priorities' survey was distributed in 2017 to 1,058 municipalities with 2,500 or more residents. The survey sample included 322 boroughs; 53 third class cities; 83 first class townships; 599 second class townships; and one town. Of these, 633 surveys were completed representing a 60 percent rate of return.

The survey and its findings, prepared by Beverly A. Cigler, Ph.D., distinguished professor emerita at Penn State University, were supported by the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs and PA Borough Councils Association.

The purpose of the survey was to determine what issues were the most important for municipalities across the state and to explore any significant differences in municipal priority rankings. The findings indicate that priorities often vary among cities, boroughs, and townships.

For example, blight prevention and remediation had the fifth most top-priority ratings of all the initiatives. Fifty-eight percent of city respondents rated blight prevention and remediation as a top priority. By comparison, 26 percent of borough respondents rated blight a top priority, while only 10 percent of first class township and 5 percent of second class township respondents rated blight at the highest priority level.

Following infrastructure, obtaining grants and intergovernmental revenues, stormwater management, and community development were the second through fourth highest ranked priorities, respectively. Community development ratings provide another example of divergence in priority by municipal form. Forty-five percent of city respondents rated the initiative at the top-priority level compared to 25 percent of first class townships, 21 percent of boroughs, and 11 percent of second class townships.

City respondents were also more likely to list pension costs as a top priority – at 37.5 percent of respondents – relative to 16 percent of first class townships respondents, 8.4 percent of second class townships, and 8 percent of borough respondents.

Initiatives having the lowest number of top priority ratings were infill development/redevelopment; provision of services via the internet; and human resources management.

Additional survey findings include the following:

- Over the past 10 years, 39 percent of respondents said their municipality's population size increased; 18 percent said it decreased; and 40 percent said it remained the same.
- Just under 40 percent of municipal comprehensive plans have been reported to have been updated within the past five years, and nearly 25 percent have not been updated in over a decade.
- Nearly 50 percent of respondents reported having general fund revenues between \$1 and \$5 million; 27.2 percent reported having revenues less than or equal to \$1 million; and 23.2 percent reported having revenues over \$5 million.
- Approximately 60 percent of survey respondents have their own police department; 28 percent use State Police; 8 percent are members of a regional police force; and 3 percent contract with a neighboring department.
- Respondents from cities perceive their communities to have numerous issues and initiatives that they rate as highest priority, while respondents from boroughs and townships were less likely to rate as many initiatives at the highest priority level.

To view the full report of findings, visit [www.chrostwaite.com](http://www.chrostwaite.com).

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**About the Chrostwaite Institute**

*The Chrostwaite Institute is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to research and analysis. It focuses on such key areas as government efficiency, community investment, transportation, water infrastructure, economic development, and the promotion of civic engagement in local communities. Visit [www.chrostwaite.com](http://www.chrostwaite.com) for more information.*

**About PSAB**

*The Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) is a statewide non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to serving 956 borough governments. Since 1911, PSAB has represented the interests of boroughs and helped to shape the laws that laid their foundation. The Association improves and assists local governments through legislative advocacy, research, education, and other services. With more than 2.6 million Pennsylvanians residing in borough communities, our members strive to deliver quality leadership and service to citizens across the Commonwealth. For more information, visit <https://boroughs.org>.*

**About BCA**

*The Borough Councils Association (BCA) represents more than 6,000 borough council members across PA. The BCA provides educational programming to its members. For more information, visit <https://boroughs.org/bca>.*