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Craig Ross
Vice-President
Business Development
Questica Inc

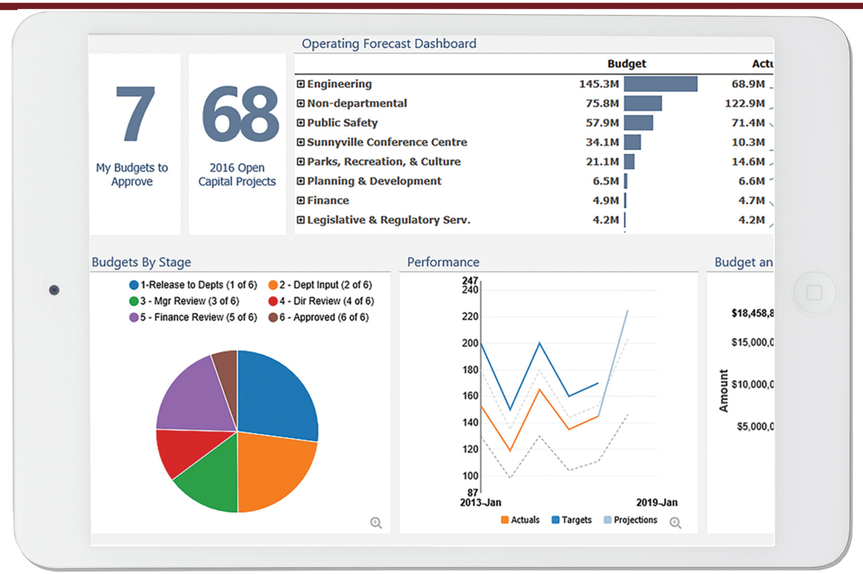
Questica

# SIMPLIFYING PUBLIC SECTOR BUDGETING

In the past few years, there has been increased scrutiny over public sector budgets and how taxpayer dollars are spent. Citizens also have a growing expectation of better transparency and accountability for these budgets. On the flip side, federal and state governments who provide funding to various institutions are faced with their own budget management challenges. This inevitably translates into tighter budgets for these publicly funded organizations. To tackle their funding challenges, many organizations are exploring different budget methodologies. No matter the budgeting method used, the desired outcome is the same, to create a budget that is developed with thought and insight, and then is managed appropriately. With Questica's web-based multi-user budgeting software, organizations have everything they need in one easy-to-access place, deployed to their servers or hosted in the cloud. "With our comprehensive solution organizations can improve and shorten their budgeting cycle by ensuring an accurate and collaborative budgeting process," says Craig Ross, Vice-President, Business Development, Questica Inc. "Our system's unlimited versioning and what-if scenarios allow users to shift their time from manually entering and verifying spreadsheets to analyzing and reporting the impacts of budgetary changes."

Questica Budget represents a proven budgeting solution — not a software development platform – but rather a mature application designed for the unique needs of public sector and non-profit organizations. Questica's system helps organizations develop, review, approve and report on their operating and capital budgets. With graphical dashboards and sophisticated workflow, users can create both bottom-up and top-down budgets with extensive multi-level review and approval processes. Questica Budget has been integrated with over 25 different financial systems including Microsoft Dynamics GP, Workday, SAP, Oracle eBusiness, PeopleSoft, SAP and JD Edwards.

Questica's focus is on improving the budgeting process for public sector organizations through the implementation of best practices that have been established over 20 years and hundreds of implementations. Their products offer tailored workflows, dashboards, report scheduling and automated distribution, and user-defined fields and configurable entry screens.




In addition, there are advanced search capabilities for detailed analysis, along with change requests and interdepartmental allocation options. Questica Budget has a strong integration to Excel from within the solution itself, to ensure users can utilize its features to the fullest and boasts of having four core modules: Operating, Salary/Position Planning, Capital, and Performance. These modules can be purchased individually, or bundled together as a complete solution set. "Developed in response to our customers increasing need to share financial and other data with both internal and external stakeholders we introduced OpenBook, a web-based visualization tool," says Ross. "It can work independently with any data source or integrates seamlessly with Questica Budget."

Many customers move to Questica directly from a spreadsheet budgeting process, however the City of Denver chose to implement Questica Budget because their old budgeting system was outdated and no longer met the requirements of flexible and comprehensive budgeting. Questica Budget aligned with Denver's existing budget process so the new budget development process remained largely unchanged. However, the process of submitting, reviewing and approving the budget was streamlined, and the visibility into the data has been greatly improved. Questica helps public sector organizations save time and money. When the City of Palo Alto in California required an integrated budgeting system that would streamline budget development, forecasting, labor cost modeling, financial reporting and workflow management – they chose Questica. The time savings with Questica Budget allowed staff more time to be spent on analysis and higher value projects. Within the first year of implementation Palo Alto saved more than $85,000 annually in productivity costs.

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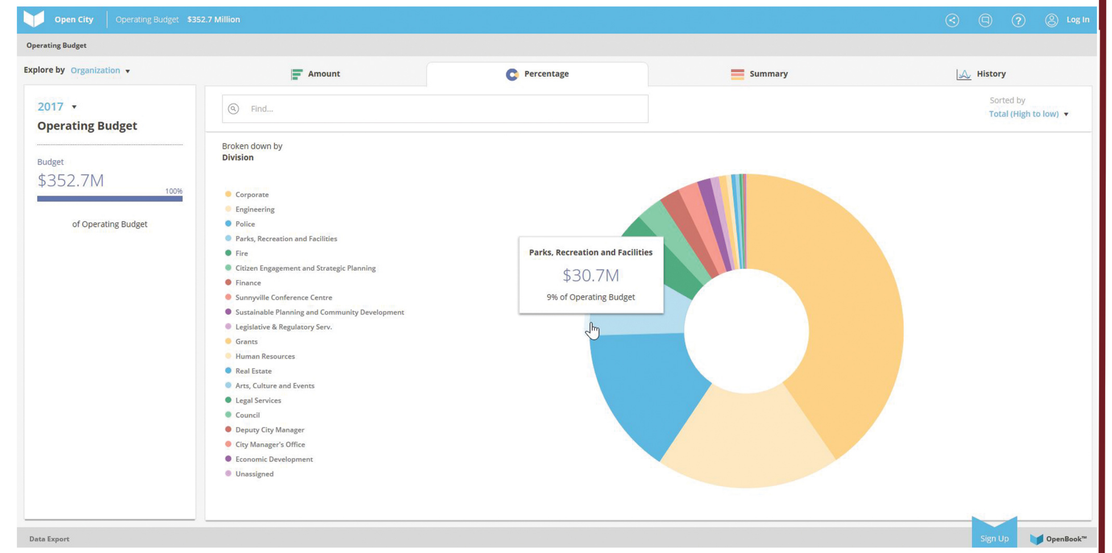

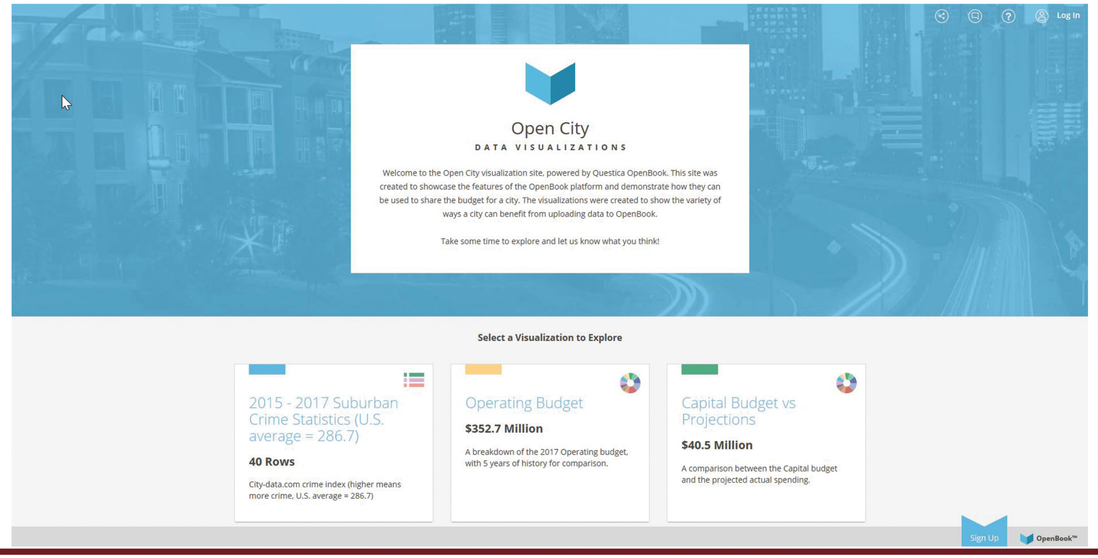
Over the next few years, Questica is looking to expand its strong customer base within both the public and non-profit sectors. Before year end, Questica Budget will launch an expansion of its already powerful reporting and analytics capabilities, along with an interactive capital project mapping functionality, and features to simplify the integration to external systems that ultimately reduce the cost to implement solution. Their system roadmap also includes plans to develop a new funding module which will integrate tightly within Questica Budget, allowing detailed management of grants, debt and transfers among funds/reserves along with any number of other funding sources. In addition to this, they will develop a module to allow organizations to develop, monitor and manage their strategic plans incorporating long range financial planning, organizational objectives, budgeting and performance measurement into the process. "Along with our commitment to lifelong support for our customers, we will continue to expand and evolve our current solutions adding new features and functions while incorporating and adopting the latest innovations in technologies," concludes Ross.IE