



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 19, 2017

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Oral Report on the 2017 Resident Survey Results.

ISSUE: Results of the 2017 Alexandria Resident Survey.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive the results of the 2017 Alexandria Resident Survey.

BACKGROUND: The City conducted a resident survey in January and February 2017, to collect data on residents' satisfaction with City services. The survey, developed in conjunction with the National Research Center (NRC) and the International City and County Managers' Association (ICMA), included standardized questions to allow comparison to national benchmarks and questions specific to Alexandria needs. Results will be used to guide the City's budget process, track progress on the City's Strategic Plan, and provide data for performance reports. This survey was also conducted in 2016 and will be conducted annually going forward so resident satisfaction is annually measured and response trends are tracked.

The survey was distributed by mail to a random, representative sample of 3,000 Alexandria households; of that sample, 689 returned surveys, equaling a 24% response rate. Recipients received three reminders and the survey was available in Spanish. A random sample sought to ensure that the survey was completed by a diverse group of residents across Alexandria. To that end, if under or over reporting occurred, survey responses were weighted to reflect the City's demographics based on data from the US Census Bureau. The survey should be considered statistically representative of the Alexandria population at large with citywide questions having a 95% confidence interval with a margin of error of +/- 4%.

DISCUSSION: Alexandria continues to be a place where residents want to live. Most residents (95%) rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Quality of life was at 89% satisfaction which represents an increase of 6% from last year. Overall appearance, neighborhoods, remaining in Alexandria, recommending Alexandria to others, and overall image were all rated above 80% satisfaction. Housing and cost-of-living remain challenges for City residents and were both rated below 25% for satisfaction and is lower than the average of comparator communities.

Overall, residents feel safe in their community, with 96% feeling safe in their neighborhood and 97% feeling safe in the downtown/commercial area (i.e. Old Town). Public safety services also were rated highly. Most notably, animal control was rated higher than comparison communities and crime prevention services improved from last year from 6%.

At the request of the Police Department, the survey included questions about contact with police officers and on community policing, the results were all positive. Of those who had recent contact with a police officer, 78% rated that experience as good or excellent. For community policing, about three-quarters of residents rated the Police Department's collaboration, responsiveness, and relationships with the community positively.

Mobility realized positive results and some challenges. Public transportation, buses, walking, and paths satisfaction and use were rated higher than comparator communities. Street signs had a satisfaction rating of 83%, an improvement since last year. While public parking satisfaction was rated at 34% and was below comparators, it has improved from last year.

The natural and built environment generally had satisfaction levels in line with comparator communities. A highlight was that residents who did not observe a code violation was at 73%, which was above comparator communities.

Overall, the City's economy was highly rated with many aspects being rated higher than comparison communities including, the vibrancy of our downtown (79%) and the City as a place to visit (92%), work (81%), and shop (77%). One challenge area was cable television which was rated below comparators at 39%; although an improvement from last year.

Recreation and libraries had mixed results. Public libraries and City parks were rated above 80% for resident satisfaction, in line with comparator communities. Cultural arts, and music activities were rated by residents above comparators at 74% satisfaction. However, recreation centers and programs reduced in satisfaction from last year and the use of recreation centers by residents, at 45%, is below comparator communities.

Resident satisfaction with the City Government improved from last year. Specifically, tax collection services, the overall direction of the government, the City being honest, the City treating residents fairly, City services, and the value of services for taxes paid all improved from last year by 8% to 14%.

The results of this Resident Survey will be posted on the City's website along with more detailed technical appendices.

FISCAL IMPACT: The survey has been completed and there is no further direct cost. Additional cost associated with any actions taken as a result of survey data are not immediately evident.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Livability Report
2. PowerPoint Presentation

STAFF:

Greg Useem, Chief Performance Officer