



City of Alexandria

City Council Chambers at
Del Pepper Community
Resource Center
4850 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22311

Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 20, 2024

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

FROM: GREG USEEM, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF PERFORMANCE ANALYTICS

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of the 2024 Alexandria Resident Survey Results

ISSUE: Results of the 2024 Resident Survey

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive the results of the 2024 Alexandria Resident Survey.

BACKGROUND: The Office of Performance Analytics (OPA) contracted with ETC Institute and administered a resident survey from April to June of this year. The random sample survey assesses Alexandria residents' satisfaction with the delivery of city services across various topics. The six-page survey, along with a cover letter and postage-paid return envelope, was distributed via mail to a randomly selected sample of households. The cover letter outlined the survey's purpose and encouraged recipients to return their completed survey by mail or participate online. This is the first resident survey conducted since before the COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimately, 1,147 residents completed the survey, which allows for overall results to be interpreted as representative of city residents with precision of at least $\pm 2.88\%$ at the 95% level of confidence. This ensures reliability in the findings, reflecting a strong representation of the views and opinions of Alexandria residents who participated in the survey. The purpose of the survey is to provide staff with actionable information to empower the City to make informed decisions.

DISCUSSION:

The City of Alexandria received high satisfaction ratings across a variety of city services and factors from the 1,147 respondents randomly selected to provide feedback. Respondents were asked to rate services and sentiments as: "very satisfied," "satisfied," "neutral," "dissatisfied," "very dissatisfied," or "don't know/not applicable." Categories of questions were based on the types of support the City provides its residents and included: Alexandria overall; transportation services; transportation maintenance; sense of safety; public safety services; economic opportunity and well-being; culture and education; public space and property services; and city government services. The survey's depth and methodology allow staff and city stakeholders to learn more

about the ways in which city services are perceived. Taken all together, the results paint a picture of general satisfaction with the City and the work its government performs with clear areas for continuous improvement.

In the overall categories “*Alexandria as a place to live*” and “*overall quality of city services*,” respondents showed the City’s satisfaction rate far ahead of the national average by +36 and +41 percentage points respectively. Overall, Alexandria saw positive satisfaction with most results higher or on par with the Atlantic and national averages provided by ETC Institute as benchmarks. While staff and the community have much to celebrate in these predominately favorable results, the City still has a number of areas and opportunities for continuous improvement. The areas which the City had lower rates of satisfaction (either overall or in comparison with Atlantic/national surveys), mirror the current City Council and staff priorities. A deep understanding of these results may provide further insight into how best to continue work in these areas or in programs where the City is proving to be largely successful.

General city government services is an area that showed particularly strong satisfaction as well as higher performance than Atlantic and national peers. Alexandria leads both national and regional comparators in “*overall customer service by Alexandria City employees*” and “*value of services for taxes paid to Alexandria*.” Only 11% of respondents reported being dissatisfied with the customer service provided by City employees. The same percentage reported dissatisfaction with the “*ease of doing business with City (bill pay, applications, permits)*.” In this category of general services, one area for improvement was “*City efforts to keep you informed about local issues*” which had a 41% satisfaction rate (2% lower than the national average).

The feedback provided in the results for other services in the city were also predominately favorable. Other notable positive results include: “*public library services*” (85% satisfaction rate), “*trash/garbage collection services*” (79%), “*sense of safety in Alexandria*” (77%), “*museums/historical sites*” (77%), and “*City sponsored events*” (75%).

The areas for improvement, as seen in the results of this survey, largely match areas the City is focused on addressing. “*Stormwater management/flood control*” had one of the lowest satisfaction rates of any question at 32%. A number of economic factors also provided low satisfaction results: “*availability of affordable housing*” (23% satisfaction rating), “*cost of living in Alexandria*” (16%), “*efforts to manage and plan for grown/development*” (29%), and “*Alexandria as a place to retire*” (45%). These challenges are not unique to Alexandria, but Alexandria does lag the national averages for the latter two questions by -7 and -10 percentage points respectively. Another area receiving a low satisfaction rating was the “*availability of electric vehicle charging stations*” (20% satisfaction). The design of this survey intentionally enables the ability to assess the results by demographic categories. Our sampling plan yielded responses that closely match the race/ethnicity results from the 2020 Decennial US Census for the City of Alexandria. These results permit a review for statistically significant differences in satisfaction across racial and ethnic identities. For ethnicity, the results showed that Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino/a/x respondents tended to have higher perception of city services than non-Hispanic residents. When reviewed across all provided options for race, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test shows only one question with statistically significant difference between respondents’ level of satisfaction and all racial identity options: “*condition of streets*.” Further analysis through t-tests reviewed each race identity as a binary (e.g., Asian or Asian Indian vs. not Asian or Asian Indian). Asian respondents had a higher perception of their “*sense of safety in my neighborhood at night*” and a lower perception of “*City-sponsored special events*” than non-Asian respondents. Black respondents had a higher perception of “*ease of travel by bus*” and “*stormwater management/flood control*” but a lower perception of “*adult recreation programs*” than non-Black respondents. White respondents have a slightly higher perception of most city services than non-White respondents, except for “*ease of travel by bus*.”

Age and gender also yielded some results for statistically significant disparities in the perception of services. Men tended to have a higher perception of city services and opportunities than women with “*availability of affordable, quality childcare/preschool*” and “*availability of affordable housing*” having the highest gaps in perception. Age also showed some statistically significant variations in results with “*Alexandria as a place to retire*” and “*availability of affordable, quality childcare/preschool*” providing the largest differences by age of respondents.

Our survey mechanism also allows for geographic review of results. As expected, results vary by geographic breakdown. Maps for all questions by census tracts are included in the attached geographic analysis.

The City of Alexandria is grateful to the residents who took the time to respond to the survey. As part of our commitment to transparency, we have released the final report publicly on the OPA website (Alexandriava.gov/performance). As we continue to review and share the results, the City is focused on continuously improving by using the information to inform our future decisions.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Presentation of results
2. Resident survey report
3. Resident survey geographic analysis

STAFF:

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