

2013 Newport News Community Survey FINAL Results

Newport News
Where Great Things Are Happening



by

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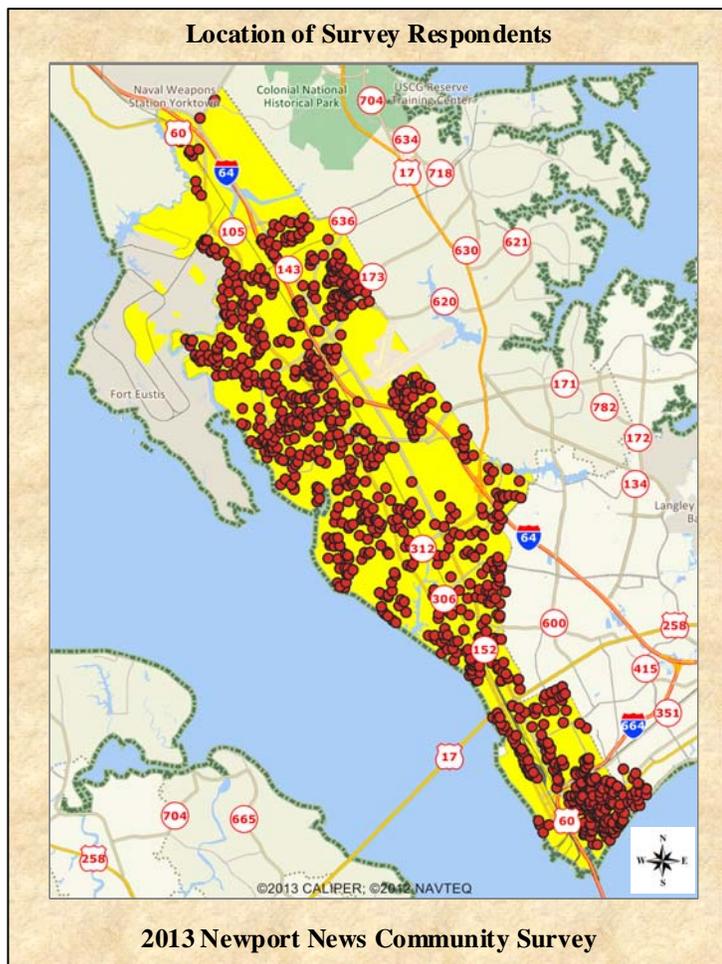


Purpose and Methodology

ETC Institute administered a community survey for the City of Newport News for the first time from mid-April through mid-June 2013. The survey was administered as part of the City’s effort to assess citizen satisfaction with the quality of services. The information gathered from the survey will help the City establish budget priorities and refine policy decisions.

Resident Survey. A seven-page survey was mailed to a random sample of households in the City of Newport News. Approximately seven days after the surveys were mailed, residents who received the survey were contacted by phone. Those who indicated that they had not returned the survey were given the option of completing it by phone. Of the households that received a survey, 698 completed the survey by mail, 290 completed it by phone, and 50 completed it electronically for a total of 1038 completed surveys. The results for the random sample of 1038 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/- 3%. There were no statistically significant differences in the results of the survey based on the method of administration

(mail/phone/electronic). In order to better understand how well services are being delivered by the City, ETC Institute geocoded the home address of respondents to the survey. The map to the right shows the physical distribution of survey respondents based on the location of their home.



The percentage of “don’t know” responses has been excluded from many of the graphs shown in this report to facilitate valid comparisons of the results from the City of Newport News with the results from other communities in the *DirectionFinder®* database. Since the number of “don’t know” responses often reflects the utilization and awareness of city services, the percentage of “don’t know” responses has been provided in the tabular data section of this report. When the “don’t know” responses have been excluded, the text of this report will indicate that the responses have been excluded with the phrase “*who had an opinion.*”

This report contains:

- a summary of the methodology for administering the survey and major findings
- GIS maps that show the results of selected questions as maps of the City
- benchmarking data that shows how the results for the City of Newport News compare to other cities
- importance-satisfaction analysis
- tables that show the results for each question on the survey
- a copy of the survey instrument

Major Findings

- **Overall City Services.** Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the residents surveyed *who had an opinion* were satisfied (rating of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) with the quality of the City's police and fire services, 74% were satisfied with the quality of parks and recreation programs and facilities, and 68% were satisfied with landscaping in parks, medians and public areas. Residents were least satisfied with how well the City is preparing for the future (38%), and the flow of traffic (32%).
- **Services that residents thought should receive the most increase in emphasis over the next two years.** The areas that residents thought should receive the most increase in emphasis from the City of Newport News over the next two years were: 1) the flow of traffic, 2) the maintenance of streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure, and 3) the overall quality of economic development.
- **Perceptions of the City.** Over half (52%) of the residents surveyed *who had an opinion* indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of life in the City of Newport News, 52% were satisfied with the acceptance of diversity in the City, and 50% were satisfied with the availability of preventative health services.
- **Public Safety.** Eighty-six percent (86%) of the residents surveyed *who had an opinion* were satisfied (rating of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) with the professionalism of fire and EMT employees, 85% were satisfied with how quickly fire and rescue responds to 911 emergencies, and 84% were satisfied with the overall quality of fire protection. Residents were least satisfied with the visibility of police in neighborhoods (58%), the visibility of police in retail areas (54%), and the City's efforts to prevent crime (50%).
- **Codes and Ordinances.** Fifty-one percent (51%) of the residents surveyed *who had an opinion* were satisfied (rating of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) with enforcing sign regulations, 48% were satisfied with the maintenance of business property, and 45% were satisfied with the clean-up of litter and debris on private property. Residents were least satisfied with enforcing removal of blighted and abandoned buildings (31%).

- **Parks and Recreation.** Eighty-two percent (82%) of the residents *who had an opinion* were satisfied (rating of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) with the maintenance of City parks, 78% were satisfied with the proximity of their homes to parks and green spaces, 68% were satisfied with the quality of athletic fields. Residents were least satisfied with the City’s adult athletic programs.
- **Environmental and Sustainability Issues.** Residents were asked about the level of importance of various environmental and sustainability issues. The three most important issues were 1) residential garbage and bulk trash collection, 2) stormwater management and flood prevention, and 3) water conservation.
- **Communications.** Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the residents surveyed *who had an opinion* were satisfied (rating of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) with the ease of access to information about programs and services, 58% were satisfied with the quality of the City’s printed materials, and 58% were satisfied with the quality of the City’s website.
- **Transportation and Mobility.** Sixty-three percent (63%) of the residents surveyed *who had an opinion* were satisfied (rating of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) with the level of service at the airport, 57% of those surveyed were satisfied with the availability of sidewalks in the City, and 56% were satisfied with the cleanliness of streets. Residents were least satisfied with the availability of biking lanes and amenities (22%).
- **The Importance of Various Factors in Resident Decision to Live in Newport News.** Residents were asked to choose from a list of 14 issues, the issues that were the most important to their decision to live in Newport News. The top three reasons were 1st) safety and security, 2nd) the affordability of housing, and 3rd) the availability of parks and recreation.

With the same 14 issues, residents were asked if their needs were being met in Newport News. The greatest gap between the order of importance and needs being met, were with;

- Safety and security – 1st in importance – **11th at being met**
- The affordability of housing – 2nd in importance – **10th at being met**
- Employment opportunities – 7th in importance – **13th at being met**
- Quality of public school system – 8th in importance – **14th at being met**

- **Land Use and Development.** Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the residents surveyed *who had an opinion* were satisfied (rating of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) with Christopher Newport University and “Avenue of the Arts” area, 72% were satisfied with the enclosed shopping centers like Patrick Henry Mall, and shopping plazas such as Jefferson Commons (70%). Residents were least satisfied with the Historic downtown and Southeast area (29%). **When asked to indicate the most important actions for the City to take regarding land use and development, residents chose 1) the improvement of existing and commercial corridors, and the redevelopment of Historic downtown and the Southeast neighborhood.**

- **Overall Opinion of the City.** Seventy percent (70%) of the residents surveyed *who had an opinion* rated the City as an excellent or good place to live; 66% rated it as an excellent or good place to work and 60% rated it as an excellent or good place to raise and educate children.

Other Findings.

- 72% of the residents surveyed indicated that there were areas of the City where they felt unsafe.
- 18% of residents surveyed indicated that someone in their family used public transportation and 35% indicated that someone in their family regularly rode a bicycle.
- 42% of residents surveyed indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the value received for property taxes used to support the City's operating budget, and 22% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. The positive to negative ratio for this issue is 2 to 1.
- Residents would like to see more job opportunities and restaurants in historic downtown.
- 88% of residents were supportive of development of older areas of the City – only 8% were not supportive.
- 91% of residents were supportive of city programs that would encourage repair in older areas to preserve Historical properties.
- The housing program that residents felt was most needed in Newport News, was reduced property taxes for repairs and improvements of residential property.

Comparative Benchmarks

Where possible, survey results for Newport News were compared to the U.S. and the Mid-Atlantic Region of the Country. Newport News rated significantly higher in customer service, feelings of safety in City parks, maintenance of City Parks, residential trash collection and recycling programs, than either the U.S. in total or the Mid-Atlantic Region.