



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 17-531, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 10/4/2017

TITLE:
2017 Citizen Survey Results

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Presentation of 2017 Citizen Survey results

ITEM TYPE: Regular Information Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Walker, Catlin, Wyatt

PRESENTER (S): Louise Wyatt

LEGAL REVIEW: Not Required

REVIEWED BY: Douglas C. Walker

BACKGROUND: Since 2002, the County has contracted with survey consultants to conduct a reliable and valid County-wide citizen survey biennially. The survey results have been used by staff, elected officials and other stakeholders for community planning and resource allocation, program improvement and policy making.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Engaged Citizens: Successfully engage citizens so that local government reflects their values and aspirations.

DISCUSSION: This spring, the County conducted its 2017 Citizen Survey using the survey tool offered by the National Citizen Survey (NCS), which is conducted collaboratively between the National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The NCS was developed by NRC to provide a statistically valid survey of resident opinions regarding the community and the services provided by local government. After the survey template selection, staff worked individually with Board members to add several customized questions to the survey template. Participating households were selected at random and multiple mailings went out to those households to give them several opportunities to participate. Results were statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the community. There were 382 completed surveys, which is a representative sample. The results of this survey are statistically valid within a margin of error of plus or minus 5% points. There are six NCS reports that examine the survey data:

Attachment A, the Community Livability Report, summarizes all results and key findings.

Attachment B, the Dashboard Findings, provides data in a summary chart format that shows how Albemarle County results compare with national benchmarks as well as over time.

Attachment C, the Demographic Crosstabs, analyzes the data by age, sex, race/ethnicity and length of residency.

Attachment D, the Geographic Crosstabs, analyzes the data by geographic area. (Note: "Urban ring" = Neighborhoods 1-7, Pantops, Places 29; "Other developed areas" = Village of Rivanna, Crozet; "Rural areas" = Rural Areas (including Scottsville))

Attachment E, Technical Appendices, provides raw data and survey administration information.

Attachment F, Trends over Time, shows Albemarle County response trends between 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017.

Attachment G, Supplemental Survey Results. For the first time, NCS gave us the ability to put the survey online for ANY interested residents to take. This report contains those results. Please note that these results are NOT scientific, and this data is not reflected in any other reports. We are still studying what, if any, significant differences there may be between the results of the scientific vs opt-in surveys.

Two important acknowledgements about this data:

1. The survey measures what citizens think about the community. Beyond the local government, other sectors that influence community quality include businesses, non-profit agencies, service organizations, and other community groups (like neighborhood associations). Therefore, some of these questions are not necessarily a reflection on County services.

2. Much of this data is most meaningful when compared to the national benchmark. Even then, as NCS points out, less desirable ratings for some indicators should not automatically be seen as negative for a community, but instead a reflection of the community's resources and priorities. Communities may have intentionally directed their resources to areas with a higher priority. In addition, not all indicators that show a lower level of achievement require a call to action, just as not all indicators that are strong should become a gateway to complacency. Without this framework in which to consider the data, it might be easy to misinterpret some of the data.

Looking at the 2017 survey results, citizens continue to rate overall quality of life in the County very high. Of the survey respondents, 89% rated the quality of life in the County as excellent or good, and 91% rated the County as an excellent or good place to live. Some overall conclusions about this survey data according to NCS include:

- Residents desire improvements to mobility in the community-and they're willing to pay for it.
- Location, location, location could be the key to improving recycling in the community.
- Detailed survey data around citizen engagement will help the County better connect with and engage residents in the future.

Staff plans to provide a more detailed overview of survey data early next year at the anticipated joint meeting with the Planning Commission and School Board. This more detailed discussion will be timed to inform the annual budget process and the Board's strategic plan retreat, which will be held later in the spring.

BUDGET IMPACT: There is no budget impact related to this executive summary. The survey results will inform both the County's strategic planning and ongoing budget processes.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that Board members review the attached survey findings and provide any feedback or comment as desired.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A NCS 2017 Citizens Survey Results for Albemarle County: Community Livability Report

Attachment B NCS 2017 Citizens Survey Results for Albemarle County: Dashboard Findings

Attachment C NCS 2017 Citizens Survey Results for Albemarle County: Demographic Crosstabs

Attachment D NCS 2017 Citizens Survey Results for Albemarle County: Geographic Crosstab

Attachment E NCS 2017 Citizens Survey Results for Albemarle County: Technical Appendices

Attachment F NCS 2017 Citizens Survey Results for Albemarle County: Trends over Time

Attachment G NCS 2017 Citizens Survey Results for Albemarle County: Supplemental Survey Results

