

Prince William County Citizen Satisfaction Survey

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction, Respondent Selection, and Summary of Methods

Overview

The 2004 Prince William County Citizen Satisfaction Survey is the twelfth in an annual series conducted by the Center for Survey Research (CSR) at the University of Virginia, at the request of the Prince William County government.

This year's telephone survey of 1,414 randomly selected individuals living in the County, conducted in the spring of 2004, marks the fourth year we have utilized the alternating questions format for the survey. In January 2001, a decision was made by the County government to experiment with a new program for the annual survey, the length of which had become a matter of concern to both County leaders and CSR staff. After careful consideration, about half the questions were designated as "Core" questions, those that will be included on the survey each year. The remaining questions were divided into two groups which will be included in the survey in alternate years. Please refer to Appendix E for a list of which items were included this year.

That said, the survey's purposes are the same as they were from the beginning:

- To assess citizen satisfaction with services offered in the County;
- To compare satisfaction levels with those reported in previous surveys;
- To analyze which subgroups among the County's residents may be more or less satisfied than others with the services they receive;
- To continue annual measurement of overall perception of quality of life in Prince William County;
- To examine the demographic and employment characteristics of workers who

commute out of Prince William County for their primary job.

The complete 2004 interview script is found in Appendix A of this report. Appendix B details survey methodology, Appendix C provides information on the demographic characteristics of the sample, and Appendix D includes the frequency distributions for all substantive questions. Appendix E consists of a table that identifies core questions and alternating-year questions, as well as noting new questions and questions eliminated from the survey. At the end of the report is an index for satisfaction variables appearing in the report.

*"It's people's job to be
involved in the government. I
think it's great that you're doing
these surveys."*

The survey results reported here cover general perception of Prince William County government, overall quality of life, and satisfaction with specific programs, processes, and services. The report begins with a look at quality of life assessment in Chapter 2. Satisfaction with County services is examined in detail in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 looks at the issue of communication with the County, while development, growth, transportation and County appearance are considered in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 examines general attitudes toward government, taxes and educational opportunities. Chapter 7 provides information about employment and commuting in Prince William County. Chapter 8 summarizes the findings of the survey on the whole, particularly with regard to trends in satisfaction levels.

Each chapter provides a descriptive summary and interpretation of the 2004 results. All satisfaction levels and certain other results are compared with results in prior years, with significant changes noted. We do not report results for questions from prior surveys if they were not asked this year. We report the results from the first survey year, 1993, and the most recent five years, 2000 to 2004. Important significant differences among subgroups in the

population are reported. The margin of error for the 2004 survey is ± 2.65 percentage points.

Subgroup Analysis

As in previous years, the responses were broken out and analyzed by several demographic categories. In discussing the results, we report those instances in which relevant *statistically significant* differences were found among demographic subgroups, such as, for example, between women and men, or between residents of different parts of the County. (Statistically significant differences are those that probably did not result merely from sampling variability, but instead reflect real differences within the County's adult population.) The demographic variables listed below were those principally used in our subgroup analysis. In some cases, categories were combined to facilitate comparison.

- Age. Age was divided into five categories for most analyses: 18-25, 26-37, 38-49, 50-64, and over 64.
- Education level. Persons with some high school, high school graduates, some college, four-year degrees, some graduate work, including professional and doctorate degrees, were compared.
- Marital status. Respondents presently married were compared with those in other categories (separated, divorced, widowed, or never married).
- Work status. Persons in the labor force working full-time, working part-time, or looking for work were compared with those not in the labor force: retirees, homemakers, and students.
- Military Status. This year we compared persons in the armed forces — serving currently, on reserve, and veterans — to those who had never served.
- Household income. Seven categories of self-reported annual household incomes were compared: Less than \$15,000; \$15,000 to \$34,999; \$35,000 to \$49,999; \$50,000 to

\$74,999; \$75,000 to \$99,999, \$100,000 to \$150,000; and more than \$150,000.

- Homeowner status. This year we also compared homeowners with renters on satisfaction items.
- Race/ethnicity. Whites, African-Americans, Asians, and “others” were compared. Hispanic respondents were also compared with non-Hispanic respondents.
- Gender. Women were compared with men.
- Geographic area. The study areas, shown in Figure 1-1, include four regions that had previously been defined for the survey: (1) Lake Ridge-Westridge-Occoquan; (2) Dale City; (3) Woodbridge-Dumfries; and (4) Sudley-Yorkshire. The fifth area, known as the “rural-residential crescent” was divided into four separate areas, for a total of eight. These are called North County, Gainesville-Linton Hall, Mid-County, and Brentsville. Our subgroup analysis of geography includes these areas. Residents of the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park and Quantico Military Base were excluded from the study.

Interpreting Subgroup Differences

We have taken pains here to avoid speculative interpretations about why, for example, men as a group should differ significantly from women, or residents of Dale City from those in the rural crescent, or persons with college degrees from those without college degrees, in their satisfaction levels with respect to given items. A variety of circumstances can cause two groups to differ in the levels of satisfaction they express with a given service, program, or process. People are “satisfied” when the level of service they receive (or perceive to be available to them) meets their expectations. Therefore, satisfaction depends both on what people receive and what they think they ought to receive. When Group A expresses a higher level of satisfaction than Group B, it can mean one or more of the following:

Actual differences in service levels. People in Group A may actually be receiving a different level of service than those in Group B. This can

happen because the service is site-specific, and the people in Group A are located closer to the service site(s) than are those in Group B. The given service also may be targeted specifically toward members of Group A for reasons of age, income, eligibility, need, etc. Older residents may be more satisfied than younger people with services to senior citizens, for instance, because they are the targeted recipients of those services. In several cases we are able to control for these factors by asking screening questions about the eligibility or familiarity of the respondent. In other instances, of course, it is impractical to determine eligibility or proximity to a service through the use of survey questions directed at County residents as a whole.

Differences in expectations. People in Group B may report lower satisfaction because they expect more service than do those in Group A. Expectations about service differ for many reasons. Often, people form expectations about what government services should be from past experience. Group B, then, may include people who experienced a higher level of service in some other community, leading to dissatisfaction with the service level available where they live now. Conversely, members of group A may be highly satisfied now because they used to live somewhere with poorer provision of the service in question. When service levels in a community increase over time, satisfaction of long-term residents may be higher than the satisfaction of newcomers because their expectations are based on the lower service levels to which they became accustomed in the past.

Differences in perceptions of costs versus benefits. Group B also may be less satisfied than Group A because they perceive the costs of the service differently, or think that government is doing "too much" as a general matter. For example, higher income residents may feel that welfare programs impose a tax burden upon them while not bringing them direct benefit. Political viewpoints differ among citizens to begin with: some expect their governments to provide many services, while others desire lower service levels. These differences can be especially important in people's judgments about human services provided by government. Thus, some residents may base their satisfaction level

on an informal cost-benefit analysis involving both perceptions of service quality and considerations of service cost efficiency.

We hope, nonetheless, that the subgroup analyses provided will give both County decision-makers and the public a better sense of how different residents perceive County services, and will suggest possible avenues to improvement in service levels.

Visibility

At various places in this report, we refer to the "visibility" of various services. By this we mean simply the percentage of County residents who are sufficiently familiar with a service to be able to rate it. For example, if 10 percent of those asked about a service say they don't know how to rate it or don't have an opinion about its rating, then that service has a visibility of 90 percent. For some services, we specifically asked respondents a screening question to determine if they were familiar enough with a particular service to give it a rating. The visibility of all service items is summarized and compared in Chapter 8 of this report.

Summary of Methods

This survey was conducted by telephone in order to ensure the broadest possible representation of results. For most households, CSR employed a random-digit dialing method that ensures that all households in the County with telephones were equally likely to be selected for interviews (8,269 numbers); for the remainder we utilized the electronic white pages (1,791 numbers). According to respondents, about 23 percent of calls were to unlisted numbers; the majority of these (93%) had chosen an unlisted number, as opposed to others whose number had not yet appeared in the latest phone book.

We conducted all interviews from CSR's Computer-Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) laboratory in Charlottesville, Virginia. Production interviews were conducted from April 7 to May 17, 2004. The interviewing staff was comprised of carefully trained personnel, most of whom had prior experience as CSR interviewers, and a number of whom had prior experience with the previous Prince William County survey specifically. A total of 32,363

dialing attempts were made in the course of the survey, involving a sample of 10,080 different attempted phone numbers. All numbers were attempted at least once, but not all were working numbers and not all working numbers were those of residences located within the study area. Up to ten attempts were made before a working number was inactivated, and a portion of the initial refusals were contacted again after no less than five days. CSR completed a total of 1,372 interviews and 42 partial interviews, for a final response rate estimated at 23.8 percent of the number of qualified households in our original sample. The interview took an average of 19.2 minutes to complete, with a median time of 18 minutes.

Based on a sample of 1,372 respondents, the survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 2.65 percentage points. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size drawn from Prince William County, the percentage results obtained for each question in each sample would fall in a range of ± 2.65 percent of what would have been obtained if every household in the County with a working telephone had been interviewed. Larger sampling errors are present when analyzing subgroups of the sample.

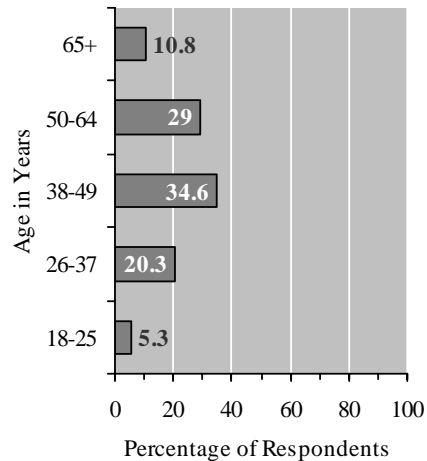
When comparing the results of the 2004 survey with those of previous years, statistical significance in difference in satisfaction is measured by the chi-square test of independence and indicated where applicable in the concluding chapter. The sample size of each survey is large enough that a change of approximately 5 percent, up or down, will be statistically significant if a service was rated by most of the respondents questioned each year. However, for services that were less "visible" and rated by smaller numbers of respondents, a change of only 5 percent in satisfaction may not be statistically significant. Further details on the sample and method may be found in Appendix B of this report.

Demographic Profile

Each year we ask respondents some questions about themselves and their households to allow for analysis of the data by personal and social characteristics. The demographic profile this year was similar to prior years. Women were slightly over-represented in our sample at 57.2

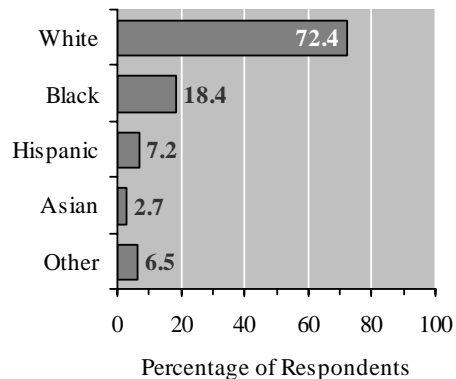
percent. In terms of age, 5.3 percent of our sample was between 18 and 25, 20.3 percent were between 26 and 37, 34.6 percent were between 38 and 49, 29.0 percent were between 50 and 64, and 10.8 percent were 65 and older.

Figure 1-2: Age of Respondents, 2004



Over two-thirds of our respondents were married (70.2%); 13.0 percent were divorced or separated, 5.0 percent were widowed, and 11.8 percent were never married. Thirty-six percent of homes had children under the age of five, 65.2 percent had children between five and twelve, and 64.9 percent had teens from age thirteen to seventeen.

Figure 1-3: Race of Respondents, 2004



To report race, we asked respondents what race they considered themselves to be, and whether they considered themselves Hispanic. Almost three-quarters of our sample (72.5%) were white, 18.4 percent were black, 2.7 percent were Asian, and 6.5 percent said they were something else (*i.e.*, Native American, Pacific Islander, etc.). Not included in this breakdown are the 2.9

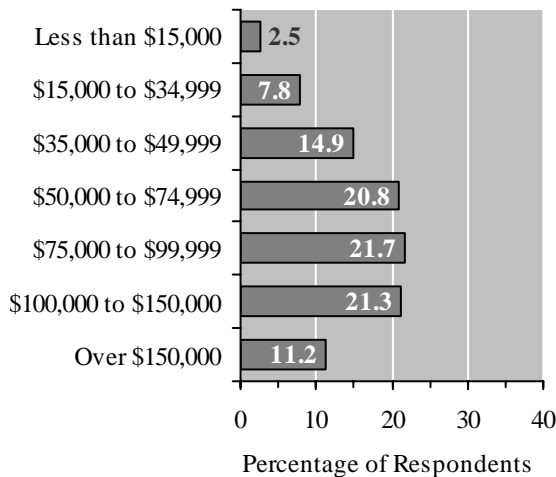
percent of our sample who refused to answer the question about race. Over 7.2 percent of our sample said they considered themselves to be Hispanic.

Approximately 65 percent were working full-time, and an additional 11.0 percent were working part-time. Those not employed comprised 6.5 percent homemakers, 12.3 percent retirees, 1.8 percent students, and 2.6 percent who were looking for work.

Almost three quarters of our respondents had never served in the military, while 4.8 percent were currently serving on active duty, 0.7 percent were currently in the reserves, and 21.0 percent had past military service.

The median annual household income for our sample was between \$75,000 and \$100,000. Over ten percent of the sample reported household incomes under \$35,000, 14.9 percent fell into the \$35,000 to \$49,999 range, 20.8 percent fell into the \$50,000 to \$74,999 range, and 54.2 percent reported incomes over \$75,000.

Figure 1-4: Household Income, 2004

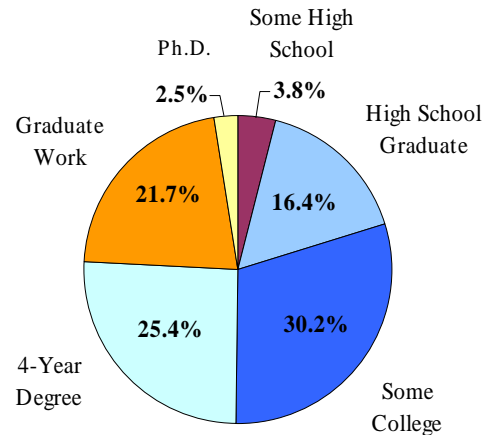


In terms of education, 3.8 percent had not graduated from high school. About eighty percent had at least some college education. Almost half had at least a 4-year degree, and 24.2 percent had completed at least some graduate education.

Most of our respondents live in a home that they own (80.8%), while 18.2 percent rent, and 1.1 percent have some other arrangement, such as living with parents. Most respondents live in

single-family homes (64.6%), while 23.9 percent live in duplexes or townhouses, and 10.9 percent live in apartments. Less than 1 percent live in some other type of structure, such as a mobile home or trailer.

Figure 1-5: Educational Level, 2004



Approximately 8.8 percent have lived in Prince William County less than one year, while 29.7 percent have lived in the County 1 to 5 years, 34.5 percent have lived in the County 6 to 19 years, and 22.3 percent reported living in the County twenty years or more. Four and half percent said they had lived in Prince William County all of their lives.

In terms of geographic distribution across parts of the county (defined by groups of zip codes), the population of the rural crescent was oversampled to ensure enough participants for statistically reliable comparisons. As a result, 17.8 percent of our sample lived in the Woodbridge/Dumfries area, 14.8 percent in Dale City, 12.8 percent in the Lake Ridge/Westridge/Occoquan area, and 6.7 percent in the Sudley/Yorkshire area. The four areas created from the “rural crescent” accounted for 10.8 percent in the Mid-County area, 13.2 percent in Gainesville/Linton Hall, 12.9 percent in the North County area, and 11.0 percent in Brentsville. The numbers for each region were weighted to match the actual population of residents in those areas. For more about the weighting procedure, see the Methodology Report in Appendix B.

CHAPTER 2: Quality of Life in Prince William County

Overall Impression of PWC

In previous years we asked a question about residents' overall impressions of the quality of life in Prince William County. This year we posed this same question, asking residents, "Where [on a scale of 1-10] would you rate Prince William County as a place to live?"—with 10 being the highest and 1 being the lowest.

"I enjoy living in Prince William County with the benefit of living in the County and working in the city. The schools are absolutely fantastic and provide many opportunities."

This year's mean of 7.32 is not significantly greater than last year's mean of 7.25, but is at an all-time high – an indication of the continuing high regard the county's residents have for the quality of life in Prince William County. Figure 2-1 illustrates the distribution of ratings provided by respondents. When divided into three categories, approximately half (50.7%) felt the best about the quality of life in Prince William County, while 38.3 percent were in the middle, and 12.0 percent felt the worst. "Best" was defined as those ratings from #10-8, "Middle" was #7-6, and "Worst" was #5-1. Figure 2-2 tracks the average rating over the last eleven years.

Figure 2-1: Overall Quality of Life Ratings, 2004

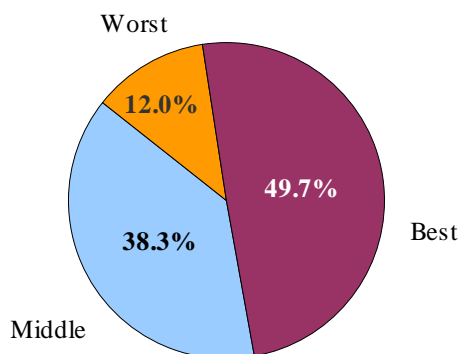
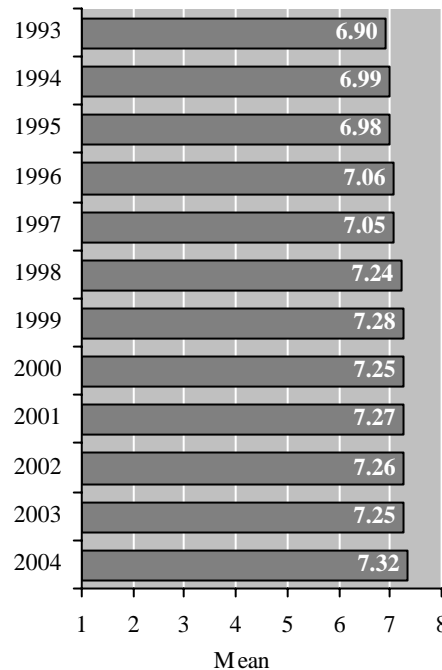


Figure 2-2: Mean Overall Quality of Life Ratings, 1993-2004



Demographic Factors Affecting County Ratings

Our subgroup analysis shows significant differences between how minority versus white residents rated the quality of life in the County. This year, minorities consistently gave higher ratings than whites. The mean quality of life rating was 7.21 for whites, 7.68 for blacks, 7.47 for Asians, and 7.67 for "Other." Hispanics rated the quality of life at 7.86, which was significantly greater than that of non-Hispanics, and similar to last year's Hispanic rating of 7.89.

County residents with lower incomes were more likely to give the County a higher rating than those with higher incomes. Mean ratings for those making less than \$35,000 and those making \$35,000-\$49,999 annually rated the County at 7.71 and 7.34, respectively. Those making \$50,000-\$74,999 and those making over \$75,000 annually rated the County at 7.18 and 7.29, respectively. Those with less than a high school diploma ranked the quality of life at 8.10 compared to those with a doctorate who rated the County at 7.03. Marital status was also a factor, with never married residents offering the lowest ratings at 7.07, married residents at 7.34,

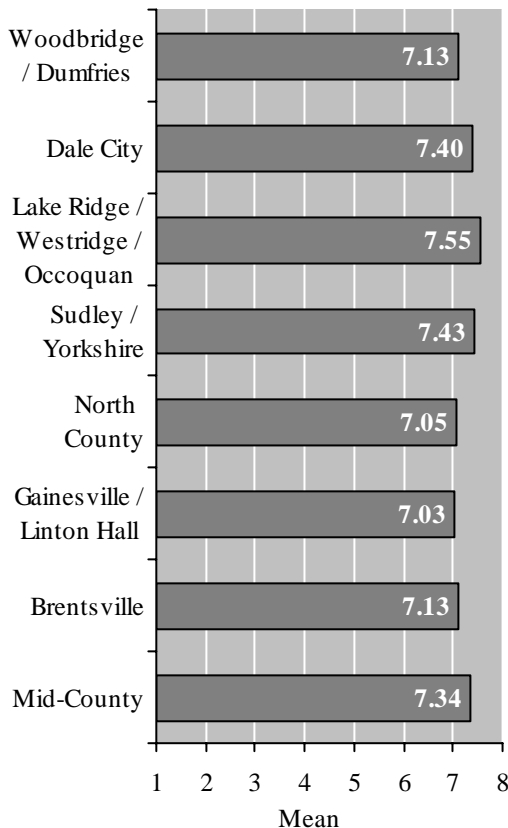
and widowed residents the highest ratings at 7.71.

These findings may be related to age, which also played a role in predicting quality of life ratings for residents. The 18-25 year old group rated the County at 7.17 compared to residents older than 65 years of age, who gave a mean rating of 7.66.

“I enjoy living here. I think things are going in right direction – I love the County!”

Geographic area was also a determining factor for rating overall quality of life. The highest ratings were given by residents of the Lake Ridge/West Ridge/Occoquan, Sudley/Yorkshire, and Dale City areas, with mean ratings of 7.55, 7.43, and 7.40, respectively. Those with the lowest ratings were residents of Gainesville/Linton Hall and North County, with mean ratings of 7.03 and 7.05 respectively.

Figure 2-3: Mean Overall Quality of Life Ratings by Area, 2004



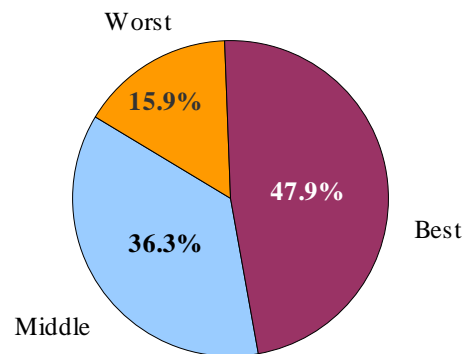
Quality of Life Over Time

Residents who lived in the Prince William County for over five years were asked to rate, on a scale of 1-10, where the county stood five years ago. On this scale, 1 represents the worst possible community to live in and 10 the best. The mean rating on this item was 7.20, which is significantly less than the current quality of life rating (7.32), and significantly greater than the rating of 6.91 in 2002 – the last time this question was asked. This means that residents perceive that the quality of life has improved, whether or not this is actually the case.

Interestingly, the rating for this item is almost matches the actual quality of life rating given by residents five years ago, in 1999, which was 7.28.

Responses on this item varied by education and race. Those with less than a high school education gave a rating of 7.90, which was significantly higher than others; those with some college education but no degree gave the lowest ratings with a mean of 6.92. Among racial groups, blacks gave the lowest rating which was 7.02, and those in the “other” category gave a mean rating of 7.97, which was significantly higher than average. Results for this item appear in Figure 2-4, using the same classification system as Figure 2-1, where “best” was defined as those ratings from #10-8, “Middle” was #7-6, and “Worst” was #5-1.

Figure 2-4: Quality of Life Five Years Ago, 2004



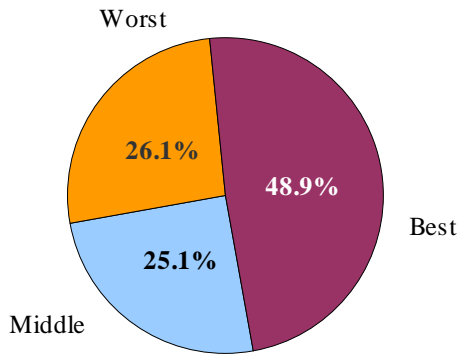
Residents were asked, on a scale of 1-10, where they think Prince William County will stand five years from now. As in the previous two items, 1 represents the worst possible community to live in and 10 the best. The rating for this item is

6.93, which means that residents feel the quality of life will decrease in the future. This rating is almost unchanged from 2002 (6.99), the last time this question was asked.

Responses to this question varied by age, race and employment status. By age, the most optimistic group was the 26-37 year olds, who rated this item at 7.50, as opposed to younger residents 18-25, who gave a rating of 7.09, and 50-64 year olds, who gave the lowest rating of 6.60. Among racial groups, whites rated the future of the County at 6.67, blacks at 7.88, Asians at 8.05, and others at 6.98. Hispanics gave a rating of 7.85 compared to the non-Hispanic mean of 6.88.

By work status, full and part-time workers rated the future at 6.89 and 6.95, respectively, work seekers at 7.45, the retired at 7.08, homemakers at 7.60, and students at 7.83.

Figure 2-5: Quality of Life Five Years from Now, 2004



Finally, residents were asked if they would like to be living in Prince William County five years from now or if they hope to be living someplace else. Approximately 60% indicated they would like to stay in Prince William County, whereas about 40% said they would like to live someplace else. This was not significantly changed from 2002, the last time this question was asked. But it is significantly different from the 1994 results, the first time this question was asked, when only 51.2% said they would like to stay in the County.

Responses on this item varied by age, marital status, military status, and ethnic identity. Those in the youngest age group, 18-25, were more likely to want to move someplace else in the

next five years (64.2%), as opposed to older residents. Divorced and never married residents were also somewhat more likely to desire a move than others (42.9% and 54.7%, respectively). Those on active duty in the military and reservists were much more likely to want to move (64.5% and 77.8% respectively). There were no significant differences on this item by race, except for Hispanics, who were less likely to desire to move in five years (25.8%).

Summary

Satisfaction with the quality of life in Prince William County is at an all-time high. Minorities, low-income households, and elderly residents are more satisfied than others. Residents of the Lake Ridge/West Ridge/Occoquan, Sudley/Yorkshire, and Dale City also give more positive ratings. Residents feel the quality of life has improved over the last five years.

Residents in the 26-37 year old range, minorities, and those not working were most likely to feel optimistic about the future of the County. Most people like living in Prince William County, but young, single people, and those in the military were more likely to want to live someplace else in the future. An overview of quality of life items by demographic variables is shown in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Quality of Life by Demographics and Area, 2004

Group Mean	Perception 5 yrs ago	Actual 5 yrs ago	Current	Future 5 yrs from now
All	7.20	7.28	7.32	6.93
18 – 25 yrs old	6.77	7.41	7.17	7.09
26 – 37 yrs old	7.24	7.35	7.41	7.50
38 – 49 yrs old	7.15	7.22	7.32	6.93
50 – 64 yrs old	7.25	7.22	7.21	6.60
Over 65 yrs old	7.18	7.34	7.66	7.16
Black	7.02	7.58	7.68	7.88
Non-Black	7.23	7.23	7.26	6.75
Hispanic	7.35	7.29	7.86	7.85
Working	7.15	7.23	7.29	6.90
Not-working	7.33	7.29	7.45	7.15
College degree	7.20	7.27	7.31	6.85
No college degree	7.17	7.28	7.38	7.16
New residents (5 years or less)	-	7.48	7.44	7.30
Old residents (more than 5 years)	7.20	7.19	7.25	6.71
Military (current active or reserve)	6.91	7.11	7.20	7.02
Woodbridge/Dumfries	6.91	7.16	7.13	7.12
Dale City	7.33	7.31	7.40	6.83
Lake Ridge/Westridge/Occoquan	7.42	7.48	7.55	7.11
Sudley/Yorkshire	7.35	7.40	7.43	7.06
Rural Crescent	7.04	7.10	7.13	6.41

CHAPTER 3: Satisfaction with County Services

County Government Services

The heart of this survey is the determination of how satisfied the citizens of Prince William County are with the services they receive from their local government. Respondents were asked whether they were very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with an array of government services. For purposes of analysis, responses were sometimes dichotomized into two categories: satisfied or dissatisfied. We generally report the percent of respondents satisfied with each service. Those who were not familiar enough with a service to respond were not counted in either of the two categories. Their responses are considered when the “visibility” of a service is determined (Chapter 8).

This chapter will report the general level of satisfaction with County government services, and specific services relating to public safety, public services, and social services.

The first question, and perhaps the most important question in the survey, reads, “How satisfied are you in general with the services the County provides?” Figure 3-1 illustrates the response to this question, and Figure 3-2 illustrates the mean level of satisfaction on this question in 1993 and over the past 5 years. This year, the total percentage is 90.2 percent satisfied, which is not a significant increase from 89.6 percent in 2003. A total of 9.7 percent expressed some level of dissatisfaction, and only 2.6 percent were very dissatisfied.

There were some trends in satisfaction by age and level of education. Those over age 64 were more likely to report being very satisfied than somewhat satisfied. Those with a college degree were less satisfied than others. Hispanics reported more satisfaction than non-Hispanics. Otherwise, there were not large differences in satisfaction by other racial categories, home ownership, or gender.

There were also some differences by geographic region. Residents of Gainesville/Linton Hall

and Lake Ridge/Westridge/Occoquan expressed above average levels of satisfaction regarding County services in general (about 94%), while residents of Mid-County, Brentsville, and North County were less satisfied (about 85%).

Figure 3-1: Overall Satisfaction with County Government Services, 2004

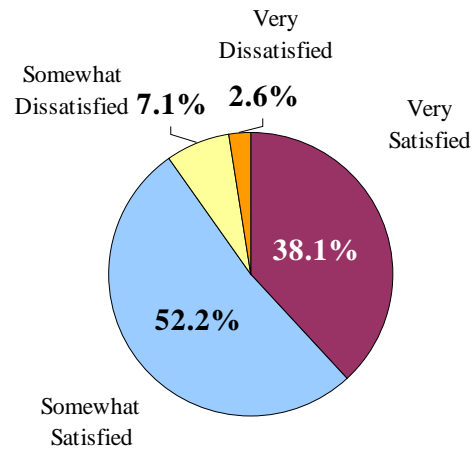
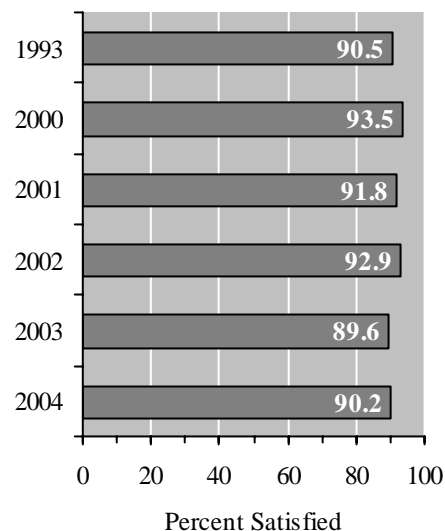
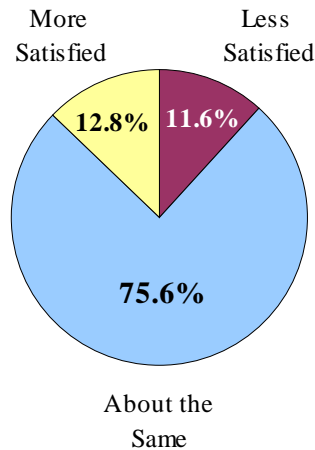


Figure 3-2: Overall Satisfaction with County Government Services, 1993 and 2000-2004



Residents were also asked if their satisfaction with the services offered by Prince William County had increased, decreased, or stayed the same over the past year. The vast majority felt the services had stayed the same (75.6%), with about equal numbers reporting their level of satisfaction had changed for the better or worse (12.8% and 11.6%, respectively). This is illustrated in Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-3: Change in Satisfaction with County Services over the Year, 2004



We asked about satisfaction in two areas of County government services, specifically with regard to providing convenient opportunities for voters to register and keeping citizens informed about government services. Over 94 percent were satisfied with voting opportunities, and 81.0 percent were satisfied with the county’s efforts at keeping residents informed. This represents a high level of satisfaction for these services, and for keeping residents informed it represents a significant increase from last year – a return to its 2002 level, as shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1: Trends in General Satisfaction with Government Services, 1993 and 2000-2004

		PERCENT SATISFIED					
Item Number	Satisfaction Item	1993	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	<i>General Satisfaction with Government Services</i>						
CTYSAT97	Services of the County Government in General	90.5	93.5 ⁶	91.8	92.9 ^{1,6}	89.6 ^{2,4,5,7,9}	90.2 ^{2,4,5,7,9}
VOTE	Voter Registration	91.5	95.5 ^{0,5}	96.4 ^{0,2,5}	97.1 ^{0,1,2,3}	95.3 ^{0,2,4,5}	94.5 ^{0,4,5}
GOVTSERV	Information on Government Services	70.9	86.9 ^{0,4,5,6}	79.7 ^{0,1,2,6,7}	80.8 ^{0,1,2,6,7}	75.3 ^{1,3,4,5,7,9}	81.0 ^{0,1,2,6,7,10}

⁰ Significantly Different from 1993 ⁴ Significantly Different from 1997 ⁸ Significantly Different from 2001
¹ Significantly Different from 1994 ⁵ Significantly Different from 1998 ⁹ Significantly Different from 2002
² Significantly Different from 1995 ⁶ Significantly Different from 1999 ¹⁰ Significantly Different from 2003
³ Significantly Different from 1996 ⁷ Significantly Different from 2000

Emergency Services

Residents had an opportunity to voice their satisfaction with County emergency services. This included police performance, police attitudes toward citizens, efforts to reduce drug and gang related activity, fire department performance, rescue service performance, and the prevalence of cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training among the public.

The great majority of residents, 93.7 percent, are satisfied with the overall performance of the police department, which is approximately the same as in 2003. When reviewing individual factors related to satisfaction with police performance, age seemed to be the major predictor. Younger residents were less satisfied (85.7% for those 18-25) and older residents were most satisfied (97.8% for those over 64). This is likely the cause of similar trends observed based on income (lower earners less satisfied) and marital status (never married individuals less satisfied), as those groups are younger on average. This year, there were no significant differences by race, gender, education, income, or home ownership status. Geographic region, however, did play a significant role in satisfaction. Residents of Mid County and North County were more satisfied (99.0% and 97.5%, respectively), and residents of Woodbridge/Dumfries were the least satisfied (89.2%).

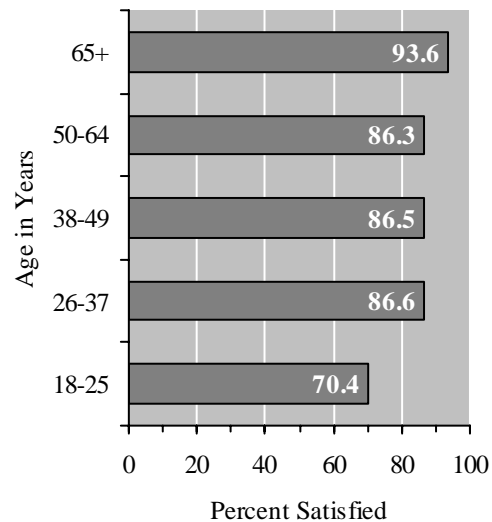
“My daughter's middle school is frequently visited by police on preventive visits. The school is very proactive in drug control.”

When asked about the efforts law enforcement is making toward reducing the use of illegal drugs, 84.1 percent expressed satisfaction. Responses to this item were not significantly different from last year and responses did not vary by area. For the first time, residents were asked how satisfied they were with the job police are doing to combat gang activity. Eighty percent expressed satisfaction on this item. Residents of Brentsville, Lake Ridge/Westridge/Occoquan, and Dale City were less satisfied than average (approximately 73%) and residents of North County were most satisfied (90.0%). Residents

were also satisfied with the crime prevention programs offered by the police department, with 82.8 percent expressing satisfaction, which is not significantly different from when this question was last asked in 2002.

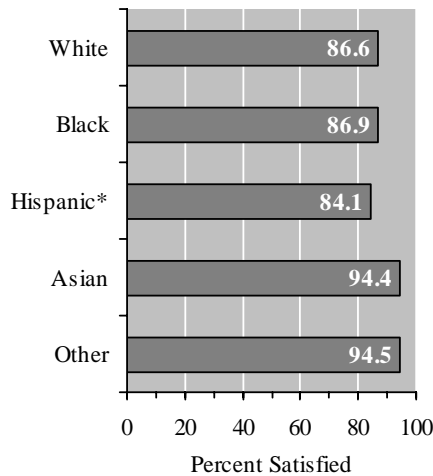
Residents were also asked about satisfaction with the attitude police demonstrate toward the public. Not significantly different from prior years, 86.3 percent were satisfied, but this varied according to demographic factors. Young people were less likely to express satisfaction (70.4% for 18-25 year olds), while older residents were more satisfied (93.6% for those over age 64). Divorced, separated, and never married residents also expressed less satisfaction than their married counterparts (approximately 81% versus 89% satisfied, respectively). People in the workforce full and part-time were more satisfied than others such as students, homemakers, and those seeking employment (about 88% satisfied for workers versus 78% for non-workers). Homeowners were more satisfied than renters (88.1% versus 79.7%). Age effects are illustrated in Figure 3-4.

Figure 3-4: Satisfaction with Police Attitude by Age, 2004



Unlike last year, there was no significant effect for race, with blacks, whites, and Hispanics expressing similar levels of satisfaction toward police attitudes. Racial differences in responses are shown in Figure 3-5.

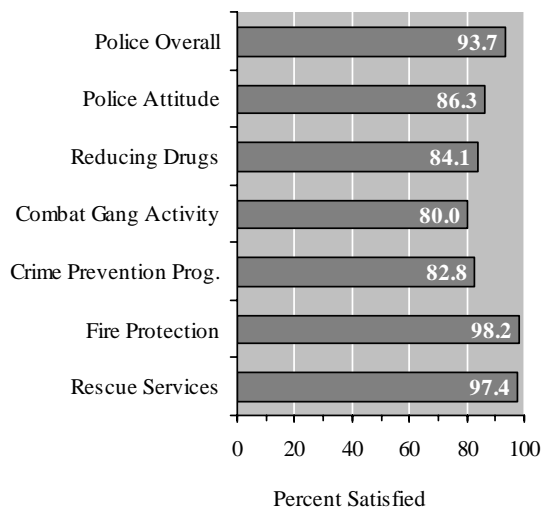
Figure 3-5: Satisfaction with Police Attitude by Race, 2004



*Hispanic residents were able to choose a racial category in addition to Hispanic (*i.e.*, black, white, or Asian), and approximately 50% elected to do so.

In sum, although most residents are satisfied with the overall performance of the police department, younger, single, and non-working residents are more likely to feel dissatisfied with the attitude shown by law enforcement officials.

Figure 3-6: Satisfaction with County Emergency Services, 2004



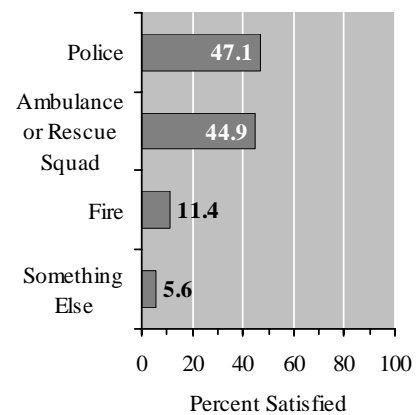
As they have been in the past, residents are very satisfied with fire and rescue services. This year satisfaction with fire fighting was 98.2 percent, and satisfaction with emergency rescue services was 97.4 percent, both of these virtually unchanged from last year.

One important safety item that has been asked in previous years is how many people in the home are trained in CPR techniques. Our survey has consistently found that about 70 percent of households in the County have someone trained in CPR, and this year is no exception. The majority of homes, 69.9 percent, have at least one person trained in the technique, while 30.4 percent have two or more.

Calling 911

Nearly 22 percent of our respondents had dialed 911 in the past twelve months, about the same as the past two years. Most of them had called for police (47.1%) or emergency medical service (44.9%). About 11.4 percent had called for fire fighters, and about 5.6 percent for something else. These percentages sum to more than 100 percent because some respondents had called 911 for more than one service. Figure 3-6 illustrates these results.

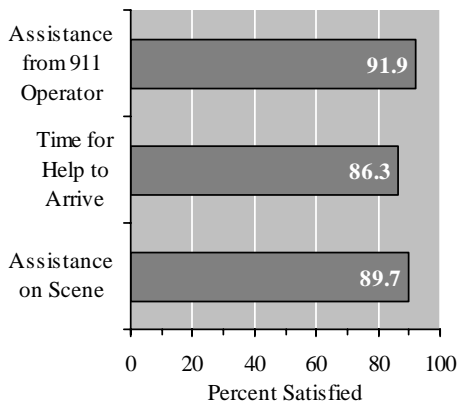
Figure 3-7: Purpose of 911 Call, 2004



Asked about the last time they called 911, 79.7 percent said they were very satisfied with the help they received from the person who took their call, while an additional 12.2 percent said they were somewhat satisfied, for a total of 91.9 percent satisfied. Responses did not vary significantly by race or ethnic identification.

All respondents who had used 911 were also asked questions about their satisfaction with the length of time taken for emergency services to arrive. Over seventy percent (71.2%) were very satisfied, and an additional 15.1 percent were somewhat satisfied, for a total of 86.3 percent satisfied.

Figure 3-8: Satisfaction with 911 Services, 2004



Respondents were also satisfied with the help they received at the scene. Three-quarters (75.9%) said they were very satisfied, while an additional 13.8 percent were somewhat satisfied, totaling to 89.7 percent. Figure 3-7 illustrates the satisfaction findings pertaining to calling 911.

Safety from Crime

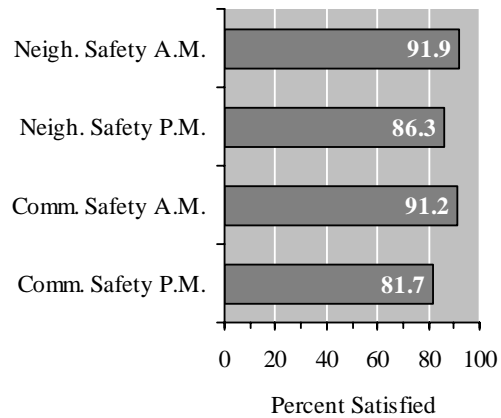
Residents of Prince William County continue to feel safe in their neighborhoods. As we would expect, a smaller number (86.3%) report feeling satisfied with the safety in their neighborhood at night than in the daytime (91.9%). These figures are essentially unchanged from last year. In terms of daytime safety from crime, women felt somewhat less satisfied (90.2%) than men (93.9%). Satisfaction also varied by geographical area, with residents of Woodbridge/Dumfries expressing the least satisfaction (87.0%) and residents of Gainesville/Linton Hall, North County, and Mid County the most satisfied (97.8%, 97.7%, and 95.9% respectively).

Satisfaction with neighborhood safety from crime in the evening also varied by geographical

area but not gender. Residents of Dale City and Woodbridge/Dumfries expressed the least satisfaction (80.6% and 82.8%, respectively) and residents of Gainesville/Linton Hall and North County expressed the most satisfaction (94.4%, and 94.8%, respectively).

This year residents were asked how safe they felt in commercial and business areas of the County during daylight hours. The majority, 91.2 percent, felt safe during the day, and 81.7 percent felt safe at night. There were no significant differences by gender or geographical area for daytime safety, but residents of Lake Ridge/Westridge/Occoquan and Gainesville/Linton Hall reported more satisfaction with commercial and business area safety after dark (89.3% and 88.2%, respectively), and females were less satisfied than males (77.9% versus 86.5%, respectively).

Figure 3-9: Satisfaction with Safety from Crime, 2004



Public Safety

Trends for all public safety items from 1993 and the last five years are shown in Table 3-3.

Table 3-2: Trends in Satisfaction with Public Safety Services, 1993 and 2000-2004

Item Number	Satisfaction Item	PERCENT SATISFIED					
		1993	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	<i>Public Safety</i>						
POLICE	Overall Satisfaction with Police	88.7	93.0 ⁰	91.6	93.0 ^{0,1}	93.2 ^{0,1}	93.7 ^{0,1,4}
DRUGS	Reducing Illegal Drugs	79.2	82.9	82.9 ¹	83.6 ¹	82.6 ¹	84.1 ^{0,1}
ATTITUDE	Police Behaviors Toward Citizens	—	87.5	85.9	86.7	85.4	86.3
GANGS	Combating Gang Activity	—	—	—	—	—	80.0
FIRE	Fire Protection	97.2	97.3	97.3 ¹	97.5 ¹	97.1 ¹	98.2 ^{1,2,6}
RESCUE	Medical Rescue	96.6	97.0	96.7	97.6 ^{4,6}	97.2	97.4 ^{4,6}
EMSATIS	911 Phone Help	—	95.6 ³	91.2	93.3	91.0 ^{4,7}	91.9
EMTIMEB	Time for Help to Arrive	—	87.5	—	80.8	85.3	86.3
EMASSTB	Assistance on the Scene	—	92.9 ³	—	89.3	88.9	89.7
AMCRIME	Safety In Neighborhood in Daylight	—	93.3 ⁴	93.2 ⁴	91.3 ⁶	93.1 ⁴	91.9 ⁶
PMCRIME	Safety in Neighborhood in Dark	—	86.5 ^{3,4,5}	87.8 ^{2,3,4,5,6}	85.6 ^{2,3,4}	86.2 ^{2,3,4,5}	86.3 ^{2,3,4,5}
DYCRIMEB	Safety in Commercial Areas in Daylight	—	93.0	—	90.9 ²	—	91.2
NTRIMEB	Safety in Commercial Areas in Dark	—	82.1 ⁵	—	77.9 ^{2,4,6}	—	81.7 ^{2,3,4,6}
	⁰ Significantly Different from 1993		⁴ Significantly Different from 1997		⁸ Significantly Different from 2001		
	¹ Significantly Different from 1994		⁵ Significantly Different from 1998		⁹ Significantly Different from 2002		
	² Significantly Different from 1995		⁶ Significantly Different from 1999		¹⁰ Significantly Different from 2003		
	³ Significantly Different from 1996		⁷ Significantly Different from 2000				

Public Services

Of course, residents of Prince William County rely on their government for other kinds of services than protection from crime and emergencies. This year we again asked about libraries, parks, and county water/sewer services. Figure 3-10 illustrates the satisfaction levels pertaining to these services.

Regarding the libraries, we first asked how satisfied our respondents were with the job the County is doing in providing library services to County residents. Almost all, 96.2 percent, were satisfied on this item, with 74.7 percent very satisfied. More than three quarters of

Center for Survey Research

respondents (76.4%) said they or a member of their household had gone to one of the county libraries or used their services. Of those who had visited the library, 99.1 percent were satisfied with the quality of service they received from the library staff, with 89.9 percent very satisfied. This is a notable increase from last year, and also represents a return to the levels prevailing in prior years.

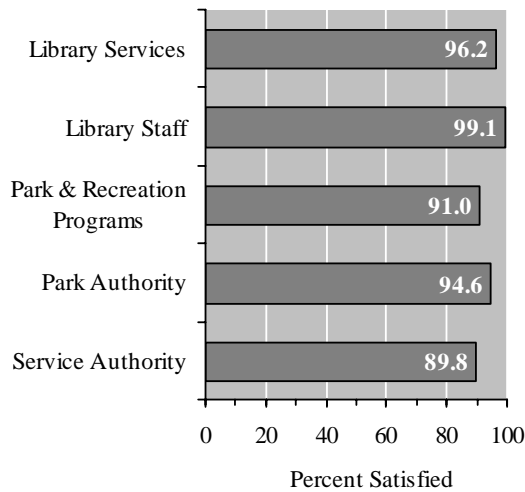
Although the great majority were satisfied with the library service, several respondents commented that library hours and number of branches should be increased to meet the demand. In the words of one resident, “They need to expand the number of libraries, the

collection of books and the hours of service. I have to go to the main branch to enjoy a wider selection of books and the local branch near my house has limited hours.”

When asked about the County’s park and recreation programs, almost two thirds (61.6 %) said they had used the county parks or recreation facilities and 91.0 percent were satisfied. There were some geographical differences on this items, as North County, Gainesville/Linton Hall, and Brentsville residents expressed less satisfaction (approximately 85%) than others. About half of residents (55.5%) were familiar with the County Park Authority and the vast majority (94.6%) were satisfied that they provided efficient and effective service.

Most (57.9%) were familiar with the County Service Authority, which provides water and sewer service to County residents. The majority (89.8%) were satisfied that they provide efficient and effective service. The few negative comments focused on rates being too high, the quality of the water, and not being notified sooner about problems.

Figure 3-10: Satisfaction with Public Services, 2004



Human Services

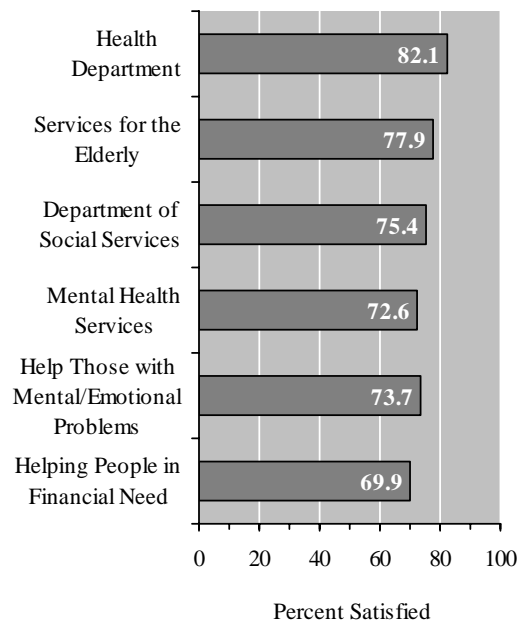
We asked a series of questions about health and human services, such as citizen satisfaction with the health department, programs for the elderly, social services, and services for the mentally ill. We first asked respondents if they were familiar enough with these services to be able to rate them, as a relatively smaller number of respondents had experience with them.

Regarding the Health Department, 21.4 percent were familiar enough to rate it. The response was positive, with 82.1 percent expressing satisfaction, which was not a significant decrease from last year. Almost eighty percent (77.9%) were satisfied with programs and services available to the elderly, which was not a significant change from last year’s satisfaction rating, but is a significant increase from a decade ago (68.3%).

“I had to get information from the County office about Alzheimer's Disease for a relative. The County employee was wonderfully informative.”

When asked specifically about the County’s Department of Social Services, almost a quarter were able to rate it (23.8%), with 75.4 percent expressing satisfaction. This is not a significant increase from last year, but does represent a significant increase from 1993 when the percent satisfied was 60.3.

Figure 3-11: Satisfaction with Human Services, 2004



Respondents were asked if they were familiar with the community mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse services. About fourteen percent were able to rate these,

with 72.6 percent expressing satisfaction. Although similar to last year, this represents a significant decrease from 1993. Another question not asked since 2002 was about satisfaction with providing help to people with financial need. Almost 30 percent were very satisfied and 40.3 percent were somewhat satisfied, for a total of 69.9 percent, a small and non-significant decrease from the 2002 level of 72.4 percent.

Satisfaction for all human service items is shown in Figure 3-11.

Trends in Social Services

Trends for all public and human service items from 1993 and the last five years are shown in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3: Trends in Satisfaction with Public Services, 1993 and 2000-2004

		PERCENT SATISFIED					
Item Number	Satisfaction Item	1993	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	<i>Public Services</i>						
LIBRARY	Library Services	94.9	96.9	96.8 ⁵	96.8 ⁵	96.3 ⁵	96.2 ⁵
LIBRYSAT	Satisfaction with Library Staff	98.2	98.8	99.3	99.1	97.8 ⁸	99.1 ¹⁰
PARK	Park & Recreation Facilities	88.7	90.7 ^{3,5}	88.4 ²	88.2 ²	89.5	91.0 ^{1,3,5}
PARK2	County Park Authority Provides Efficient and Effective Service	—	95.4	94.5	94.3	93.8	94.6
CTYSERV2	County Service Authority Provides Efficient and Effective Service	—	89.9 ⁵	91.6	91.8 ⁵	92.3	89.8 ⁵
ELDERLY	Helping the Elderly	68.3	83.1 ^{0,3}	82.6 ^{0,1,3}	79.1 ^{0,1,5}	77.6 ^{0,1,5,7,8}	77.9 ^{0,1,5,7}
HLTHSAT	Health Department	84.6	89.9	88.8 ²	85.6	86.4	82.1 ^{5,7,8}
DSSSAT	Satisfaction with DSS	60.3	71.7 ⁰	73.7 ^{0,2}	72.5 ^{0,2}	69.2 ^{0,5}	75.4 ^{0,1,2}
MENTLSAT	Mental Health Agency	85.1	82.7	81.6	79.6	75.9	72.6 ^{0,4,7}
PROBLEMB	Providing Help to Those with Emotional Problems	70.1	79.8 ⁰	—	71.7 ^{2,4,5,6,7}	71.2 ^{2,4,5,6,7}	73.7 ^{2,5,6,7}
FINNEEDB	Providing Help to Those in Financial Need	61.0	73.5	—	72.4	—	69.9 ^{0,5,6}

⁰ Significantly Different from 1993 ⁴ Significantly Different from 1997 ⁸ Significantly Different from 2001
¹ Significantly Different from 1994 ⁵ Significantly Different from 1998 ⁹ Significantly Different from 2002
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CHAPTER 4: Communication with the County

Contact with County for Any Purpose

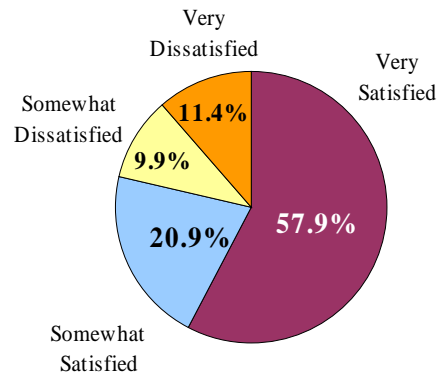
While the citizens of Prince William County receive a great deal of service from the County government, they also have responsibilities as residents. They pay taxes and purchase licenses for various projects. As consumers of services or providers of revenue, citizens communicate with the County government in a number of ways. In the satisfaction survey, we again asked a series of questions about citizens' experiences as they contacted the County.

"I have lived here almost twenty years. I have been so impressed with the County employees, personally and professionally, that I really look forward to raising my two children here."

We should first consider the amount of contact citizens have with the County government. We asked, "Thinking back over the past twelve months, have you had any occasion to contact the County about anything—a problem, a question, a complaint, or just needing some information or assistance?" Exactly half of our respondents had contacted the county government. Older residents, aged 50-64, were most likely to have contacted the county (54.7%), and younger residents, aged 18-25, were least likely (38.0%). This did not vary significantly by geographic region.

Of all those who did contact the County, a total of 78.8 percent were satisfied with the helpfulness of County employees (57.9% were very satisfied). This level of satisfaction represents no significant change from the level reported for the 2003 survey. The level of satisfaction did not vary significantly by geographic region or most other demographic variables, but satisfaction levels were somewhat higher among males (80.9%).

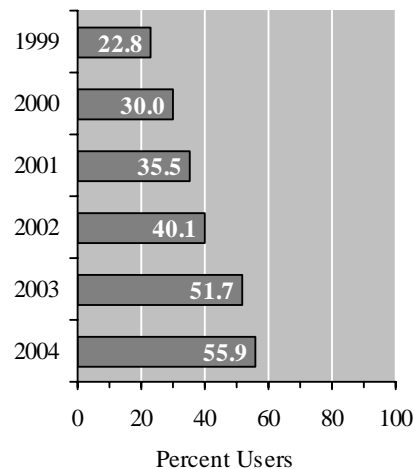
Figure 4-1: Satisfaction with County Employee Helpfulness, 2004



County Web Site

Two questions in the survey pertained to the Prince William County website. Approximately 55.9 percent reported that they had used the website, compared with 51.7 percent in 2003. This year's level continues the trend upward from 22.8 percent in 1999, the first year we asked website questions in comparable wording. Figure 4-2 illustrates the increasing use of the County government website since 1999.

Figure 4-2: Use of County Website, 1999-2004

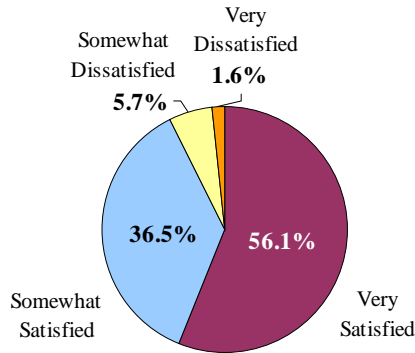


The degree of use of the county web site is consistent among most age groups, but is lowest among residents aged 18-25 and those 65 and over (31.1% and 28.8%, respectively). The web site is less likely to have been used by lower income residents, with 20.2 percent of those making less than \$35,000 having used it. Usage also increases by education level, with 20.0 percent of those without a high school education having used the site compared to approximately

80.8 percent for those with post-graduate education.

“The website is really good, and it also has a place where you can look for jobs.”

Figure 4-3: Satisfaction with County Website, 2004



Of those who had used the website, 92.6 percent said they were satisfied with it (56.1% were very satisfied), approximately the same levels as prior years.

Figure 4-4 illustrates the satisfaction levels for all communication items in 2004. The trends for the related satisfaction items over past surveys are shown in Table 4-1.

Figure 4-4: Satisfaction with Contacting the County, 2004

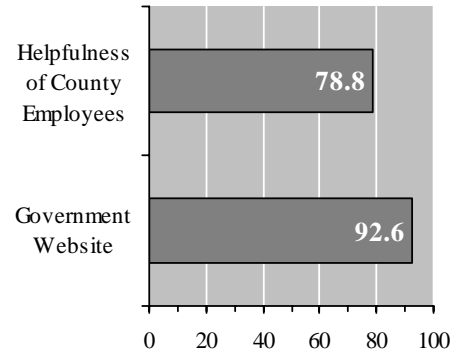


Table 4-1: Trends in Communication Items, 1993 and 2000-2004

Item Number	Satisfaction Item	PERCENT SATISFIED					
		1993	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	<i>Communication with the County</i>						
HELPFUL2	Helpfulness of Employees	79.3	79.1	82.0	80.0	80.8	78.8
NET2	County Website	—	92.5	91.0	91.5	93.5	92.6

⁰ Significantly Different from 1993 ⁴ Significantly Different from 1997 ⁸ Significantly Different from 2001
¹ Significantly Different from 1994 ⁵ Significantly Different from 1998 ⁹ Significantly Different from 2002
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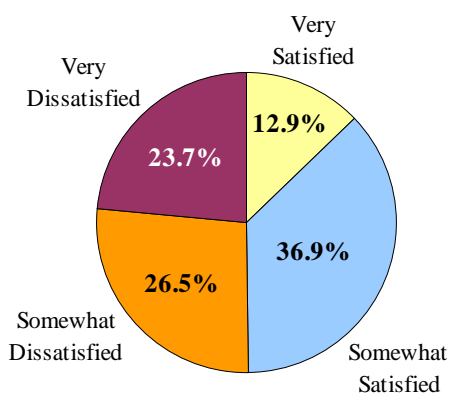
CHAPTER 5: Development Issues

Each year of the survey we have included a series of questions to gauge citizen opinion about land use, appearance, new jobs, ease of travel, waste management, and related issues in Prince William County. Growth and development mean new opportunities for employment, but also can bring new demands on infrastructure, such as roads and community facilities. In the free response portion of the survey, many residents commented that the population growth of the County had outpaced the development of necessary roads and other infrastructures. Correspondingly, many of the items reported in this chapter continue to show the lowest level of satisfaction with Prince William County government overall.

Land Use and Development

The first question we asked this year on this topic was, “In general, how satisfied are you with the job the County is doing in planning how land will be used and developed in the County?” As illustrated in Figure 5-1 below, only 12.9 percent said they were very satisfied, and an additional 36.9 percent said they were somewhat satisfied, for a total of 49.8 percent. This level of satisfaction does not differ significantly from 2003.

Figure 5-1: Satisfaction with Planning and Development, 2004



Satisfaction varied by several demographic variables. Younger residents were more satisfied than older residents (75.4% for 18-25 year olds, but 39.7% for 50-64 year olds). Correspondingly, those with less education were more satisfied, as were single residents

compared to married residents. Those with the greatest annual incomes tended to be the least satisfied – only 47.0 percent for those making over \$75,000 annually. Similarly, homeowners were less satisfied than renters (47.3% versus 61.5%, respectively). Whites were less satisfied (46.4%) than African-Americans (59.5%), Asians (73.9%), and Hispanics (76.7%).

By geography, only 38.4 percent of North County residents were satisfied, 34.5 percent of Gainesville/Linton Hall residents were satisfied, and 31.0 percent of Brentsville residents voiced satisfaction; the most satisfied were residents of Sudley/Yorkshire, of whom 59.7 percent said they were satisfied.

“The opportunity for citizen input is there. How much good it does is another question.”

Even though the majority were satisfied with opportunities for citizens to provide input into the development process (57.4%), this is a significant decrease from last year’s satisfaction level of 69.2 percent, and is the lowest rating in several years. Those with incomes between \$35,000 and \$50,000 were more satisfied than average (75.0%), and those making over \$75,000 were less satisfied (52.3%). By geographic area, Gainsville/Linton Hall residents were least satisfied (44.8%) and residents of Lake Ridge/Westridge/Occoquan and Sudley/Yorkshire were most satisfied (63.5% and 66.7%, respectively) with the opportunities for citizen input.

A related question is whether the citizens of Prince William County are satisfied with the rate of growth the County is experiencing. On this question less than half expressed satisfaction (48.7%). This item varied by certain demographic characteristics, most notably age, with younger residents expressing greater satisfaction than older residents. Of those aged 18-25, 64.5 percent expressed satisfaction, while only 40.4 percent of those aged 50-64 did so. Those with a college degree were less satisfied than those without (45.8% versus 53.6%, respectively). Those with incomes under \$35,000 were more satisfied than those making over \$75,000 (58.9% versus 44.7%, respectively). Males were more satisfied than

females (51.5% versus 46.4%, respectively). Whites (45.3%) expressed less satisfaction on this item than blacks (56.8%), Hispanics (68.5%), or Asians (77.1%). Homeowners were less satisfied than renters (46.9% versus 54.8%, respectively).

“The County needs to make a greater effort to accommodate the rapid growth with adequate services. This requires both adequate revenues and long-range planning.”

Satisfaction also varied by geographic location. Residents of Sudley/Yorkshire and Dale City expressed the most satisfaction (approximately 54%) while satisfaction levels hovered between 30 and 40 percent for residents of North County, Gainesville/Linton Hall, and Brentsville. Satisfaction by area is shown in Figure 5-2.

Figure 5-2: Satisfaction with County Growth by Area, 2004

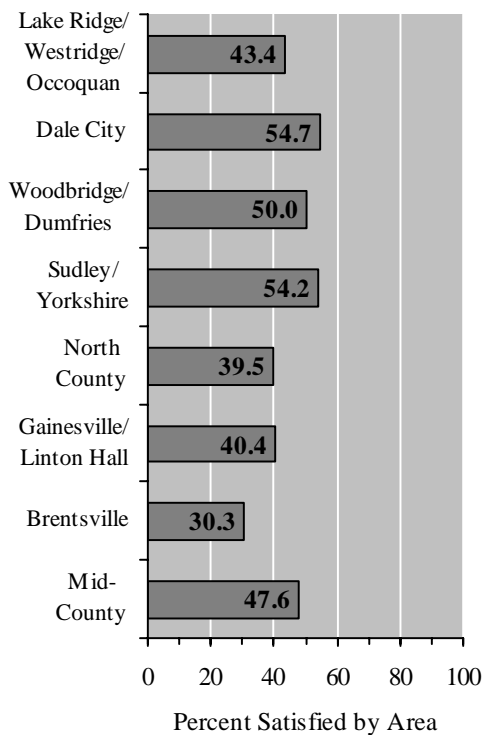
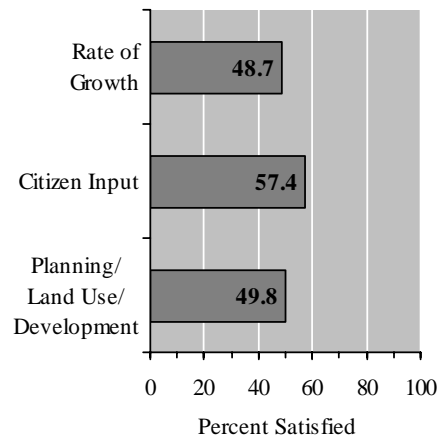


Figure 5-3 illustrates satisfaction levels for all land use and development items.

Figure 5-3: Satisfaction with Development Items, 2004



Appearance

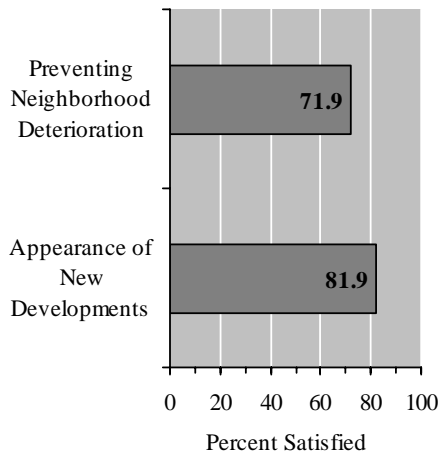
Two questions were posed to residents about the appearance of the county. Residents were first asked how satisfied they were with the job the County was doing in preventing neighborhoods from deteriorating and making sure the community is well kept up. Significantly greater than last year’s rating of 67.0 percent, 71.9 percent expressed satisfaction. This varied somewhat by geographic area, as residents of Lake Ridge/Westridge/ Occoquan and Sudley/Yorkshire expressed the most satisfaction (79.7% and 76.8%, respectively), while satisfaction levels were about 66 percent for residents of Brentsville and Mid County.

Those who were dissatisfied were asked for some of the reasons of their dissatisfaction. Several residents voiced concerns about too many people living in one household, especially in neighborhoods not zoned for multiple families. Residents also commented on poor road maintenance, trash and vehicles in yards, and some neighborhoods being old and rundown.

Asked how satisfied they were with the visual appearance of new development, a total of 81.9 percent said they were satisfied. Homeowners were less pleased than renters, with owners 79.1 percent satisfied and renters 92.5 percent satisfied. There were no large differences in satisfaction by geographic area for this item, except for residents of Brentsville, who expressed less satisfaction than others at 70.6 percent.

Figure 5-4 illustrates mean satisfaction levels for appearance items.

Figure 5-4: Satisfaction with Appearance Items, 2003



New Jobs

Asked about satisfaction with the County’s efforts to attract new jobs and businesses to the County, a total of 73.0 percent said they were satisfied. An additional screening question was added prior to the question assessing satisfaction with the county attracting new jobs and businesses. Approximately fifty percent of citizens were first asked if they were familiar enough with these efforts to provide a satisfaction rating (43.2 percent gave a positive response). This practice differed from previous years where citizens were not screened. There was no significant difference between the satisfaction levels of those respondents who did not receive the screening question in 2004 (69.1% satisfied) and the satisfaction of 2003 respondents (66.4% satisfied). Where increases in satisfaction exist between 2003 and 2004 (73% satisfied overall), they appear to be due to the addition of the screener rather than a change in satisfaction, because satisfaction proved to be higher among those most familiar with the County’s efforts. Satisfaction on this item did not vary significantly by work status or geographic area.

About 10 percent of respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional open-ended feedback about their satisfaction with the county’s efforts to attract new jobs and businesses, as well as what kind of new jobs they would like to see in the County. Of these,

the majority of respondents, 63.6 percent, told us that they were satisfied with Prince William’s efforts to bring new jobs and businesses to the county. Eleven percent stated that the increased jobs and businesses, which bring in a larger tax base, are a positive step toward improving the county’s roads and transportation system.

“They had a job fair last Friday and it was all the business in the County. I went for my two teenagers and I thought they did a good job.”

Those who reported that they were dissatisfied with the county’s efforts to attract new jobs and businesses were further questioned as to what exactly they were dissatisfied about. Almost 21 percent simply felt that the county is not doing enough to attract jobs and businesses. Thirteen percent reported feeling that the county was more interested in building residential areas than addressing new jobs and businesses. Ten percent felt the county’s zoning restrictions and the county administrators were preventing businesses from locating in the county, and another 10 percent felt there are too many retail areas and strip malls, which allow for minimum wage jobs, rather than higher paying jobs. Fourteen percent commented that the County infrastructure cannot support any more businesses, but only 1.8 percent of residents are against job growth in general.

When asked what kinds of jobs they would like to see in Prince William County, 46.8 percent responded that they would like to see more white collar and technology jobs. Almost 9 percent felt that the County should attract contractors for the government and civil service, and 8.26 percent wanted to see more blue collar jobs.

Overall, the majority of those asked were satisfied with the County’s efforts to attract more jobs. Of those not satisfied, residents specifically thought that the county was too focused on building residential areas rather than businesses, that the zoning restrictions and administrators were preventing businesses from

coming, that the County infrastructure could not support more businesses, and that more white collar, higher paying jobs are needed.

Transportation

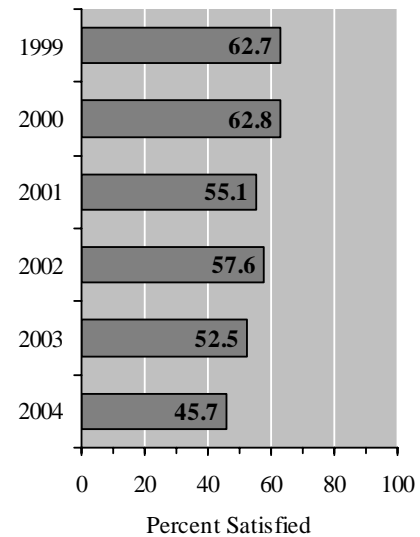
Getting around is not always easy in the Northern Virginia area. Asked how satisfied they were with the ease of travel or getting around within Prince William County, a total of approximately 45.7 percent said they were satisfied, with only 16.1 percent being very satisfied and 29.6 percent somewhat satisfied. This level represents a statistically significant decrease from 2003.

“Prince William County is growing too big! The traffic is bad, and the price of housing is high.”

As we might expect, a respondent’s location in the County made a difference in how satisfied they were with this issue. The least satisfied were those in the Gainesville/Linton Hall area, of whom only 15.0 percent were satisfied, followed by residents of North County at 16.0 percent, and Brentsville at 25.0 percent. The most satisfied were respondents from Sudley/Yorkshire, of whom 55.3 percent were satisfied.

Figure 5-5 illustrates results for this item, over the past six years, documenting residents increasing dissatisfaction with transportation within the county.

Figure 5-5: Satisfaction with Transportation in the County, 2004



Landfill

Regarding the landfill, 42.5 percent of our responding households had taken trash to the County’s landfill at Independent Hill. Almost all, 95.9 percent, were satisfied with the landfill (84.8% said they were very satisfied). As expected, there were some geographic differences in use of the landfill. Brentsville and Mid County residents were most likely to use the landfill (78.1% and 61.6%, respectively), while less than a third of residents in Gainesville/Linton Hall, Sudley/Yorkshire, and North County residents had used it.

Table 5-1: Trends in Development Issues, 1993 and 2000-2004

Item Number	Satisfaction Item	PERCENT SATISFIED					
		1993	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	<i>Planning and Development Issues</i>						
LAND	Planning and Land Use	53.9	56.4	53.0	52.8	53.2 ³	49.8 ^{2, 3, 5, 6, 7}
INPUTDEV	Citizen Input Opportunity re: Development	—	70.8 ⁴	65.7	61.2 ^{3, 5, 6, 7}	69.2 ⁹	57.4 ^{3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10}
GROWTHC	Growth in County	—	—	59.8	53.4 ⁸	49.5 ⁸	48.7 ^{8, 9}
VISDEV	Appearance of New Development	—	87.0 ^{4, 5}	79.9 ^{3, 6, 7}	84.1 ^{4, 8}	80.0 ^{3, 6, 7, 9}	81.9 ^{3, 7}
NEIGHBOR	Prevent Neighborhood Deterioration	67.8	71.4	73.6 ^{0, 1}	68.9 ⁸	67.0 ^{2, 7, 8}	71.9 ¹⁰
NEWJOBS	Attract New Jobs and Businesses	64.3	80.2 ^{0, 5}	75.8 ^{0, 1, 2, 7}	71.0 ^{0, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8}	66.4 ^{3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8}	73.0 ^{0, 2, 7, 10}
TRAVEL97	Getting Around	—	62.8 ⁵	55.1 ^{5, 6, 7}	57.6 ⁵	52.5 ^{4, 5, 6, 7, 9}	45.7 ^{4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10}
LFILLSAT	Landfill	91.7	98.1 ^{0, 3, 4, 5, 6}	96.2 ^{0, 3, 4, 5}	96.1 ^{0, 3, 4, 5}	97.0 ^{0, 3, 4, 5, 6}	95.9 ^{0, 4, 5, 7}

⁰ Significantly Different from 1993 ⁴ Significantly Different from 1997 ⁸ Significantly Different from 2001
¹ Significantly Different from 1994 ⁵ Significantly Different from 1998 ⁹ Significantly Different from 2002
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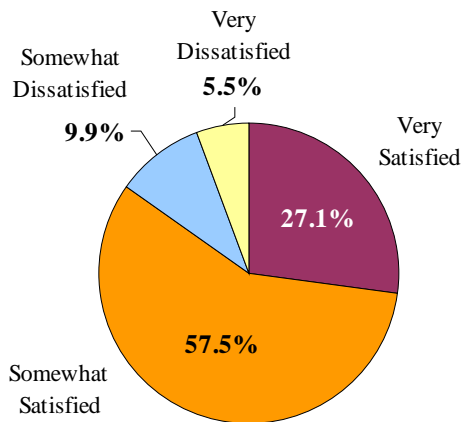
CHAPTER 6: Views of Government and Education

In this chapter, we consider the general views of local government expressed by the citizens of Prince William County. In Chapter 3, we reported satisfaction levels with various government services and the overall sense of satisfaction with County services. In this chapter, we will examine attitudes of residents toward the County government, opinions about the value for tax dollar of government, and the County educational system.

Attitudes toward Government

The County’s Strategic Plan contains “community outcome indicators” to help monitor progress in meeting goals stated in the Plan. This year, we again asked the citizens of Prince William about the extent to which they believe the government provides efficient and effective service. The majority of residents were satisfied with this issue, with 84.6 percent expressing satisfaction. Figure 6-1 illustrates these results.

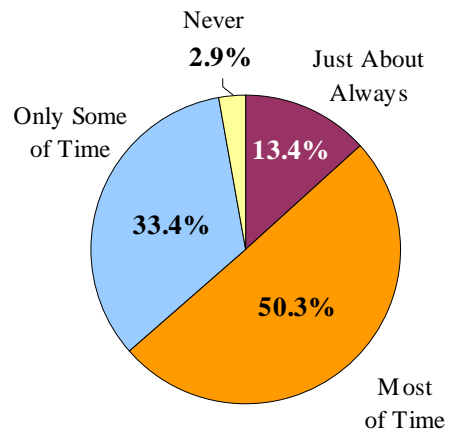
Figure 6-1: Satisfaction with Efficiency & Effectiveness of County Service, 2004



Opinions on this item varied by age, race, and work status. Those aged 26-37 were most satisfied (96.9%), while those aged 50-64 were least satisfied (74.8%). Hispanics were more likely to report satisfaction (94.5%) than other racial and ethnic groups. Those looking for work were most satisfied (96.2%), while students were least satisfied (73.3%).

We asked citizens how often they trust the County government to do what is right. The majority, a total of 63.7 percent, said that they felt that the County could be trusted most of the time or just about always. About a third (33.4%) said that the County government could be trusted only some of the time, while 2.9 percent said that they could never or almost never trust the government.

Figure 6-2: Trust County Government Decisions, 2004

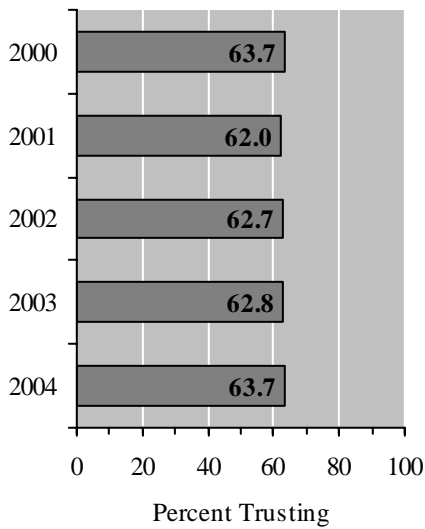


On this issue, the survey indicates that there is no significant difference between this year and 2003. There were some demographic differences in response to this question. Younger respondents were somewhat less likely than average to trust the County government “most of the time” or “just about always” (54.4% for age 18-25) compared to older residents (71.5% for over 64). Those with a college degree were more trustful than those without (66.9% versus 58.9%, respectively).

“I love living in Prince William County; it’s just the roads, there’s not enough of them.”

Figure 6-2 illustrates the level of trust citizens express about their County government. Figure 6-3 illustrates the trends for this question over the last five years of the citizen survey, showing the total percent of respondents who said they would trust the county government most of the time or just about always.

Figure 6-3: Trust County Government Decisions, 1999-2004



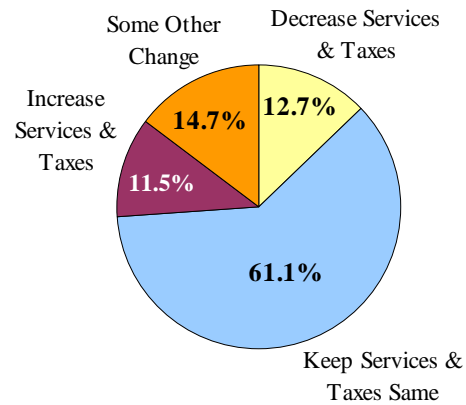
As a general statement, local governments encounter the difficult tradeoff of operating within resource constraints while at the same time trying to satisfy the increasing demands and expectations of the community. Citizens, unlike elected leaders and other policy makers, are not faced every day with the need to choose the right mix of taxes and services. One question we posed to our respondents asked them to consider just this tradeoff. We modeled this question after one used previously in a series of national telephone polls sponsored by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR):

“Considering all the County government’s services on the one hand and taxes on the other, which of the following statements comes closest to your view: they should decrease services and taxes, keep taxes and services about where they are, or increase services and taxes?”

This year, 61.1 percent of our respondents chose the middle path of maintaining services and taxes at roughly current levels; 12.7 percent said that they would cut services and taxes, while 11.5 percent opted for increased services and taxes, and 14.7 percent suggested some other change. Figure 6-4 illustrates this finding. Among those volunteering some other change, 6.8 percent volunteered that services should be increased while taxes are decreased, 2.2 percent said that services should stay the same while taxes are decreased, and 4.1 percent said that

services should be increased while taxes stayed the same. Several citizens commented that the tax should stay the same, but that the spending priorities should change. Taxes are acceptable “if the money goes into the right places, like transportation, mass transit, roads, and schools,” commented one resident.

Figure 6-4: Preferred Level of Services and Taxes, 2004



Our subgroup analysis found some significant differences between groups. For the purpose of this analysis, we omitted those who suggested some other type of change. This gives an average of 14.9 percent who want to decrease tax and services, 13.5 who want to increase tax and services, and 71.6 who want to keep things the same.

“We live in an urban center, so I think the taxes are in line with the services.”

Again, on this issue, geographic area of the County was important, with those respondents in Brentsville being more likely than others to say that taxes and services should be decreased (21.7%), those in Gainesville/Linton Hall more likely to want an increase (20.1%), and those in Lake Ridge/Westridge/Occoquan preferring to keep tax and service the same (76.7%). Response to this item also varied by race, with blacks, Hispanics, and Asians more likely to favor decreasing tax and services (20.1%, 21.5%, and 38.5% respectively) than whites and others (about 12%). Those in the \$35,000 to \$50,000 income range were also more likely to

share this view as were renters (as opposed to home owners) at about 22 percent.

We also asked how satisfied the citizens were with the value for their tax dollar provided by the County government. Figure 6-5 shows that 75.8 percent said they were satisfied on this score, with 22.3 percent saying they were very satisfied. This figure decreased significantly from than the level of satisfaction reported in 2003, but is still far higher than the 65.5 percent recorded in 1993.

Figure 6-5: Satisfaction with Value of Tax Dollar, 2004

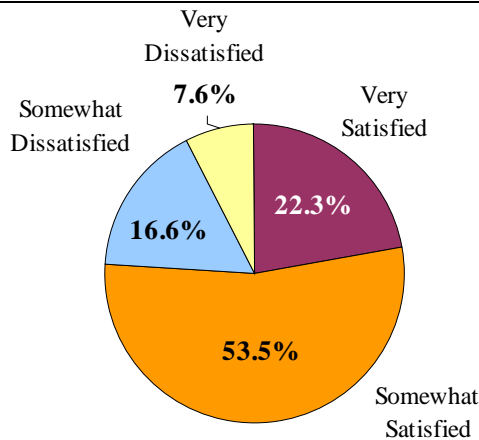
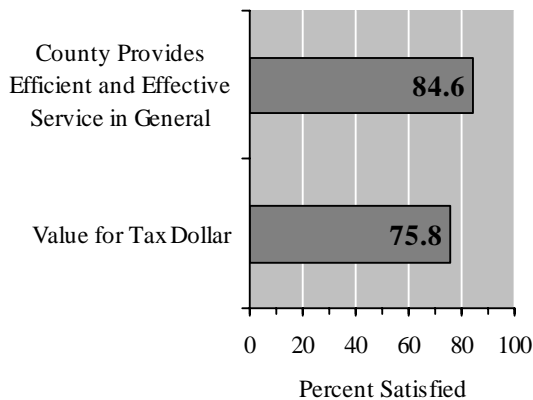


Figure 6-6 shows the level of satisfaction for these items for the current year.

Figure 6-6: Satisfaction with Government Items, 2004



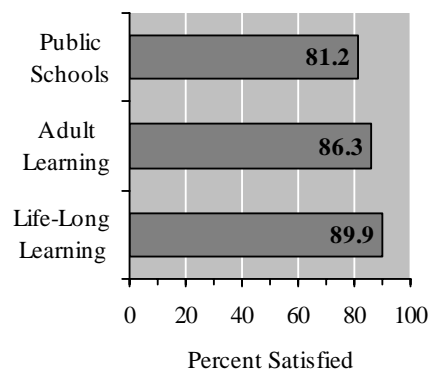
Education

The great majority of parents, 82.4 percent, reported that they had at least one child attending Prince William County public schools.

Over three-quarters (81.2%) of all residents were satisfied that the school system provided efficient and effective service, with 46.9 percent very satisfied. Parents with children in the public schools were slightly more satisfied (83.4%) than the general public. By geographic area, residents of North County, Gainsville/Linton Hall, and Brentsville were most satisfied (about 88%), while residents of Woodbridge/Dumfries and Dale City were least satisfied (about 77%).

We asked about satisfaction with adult learning opportunities. Adult learning opportunities are those that enable residents to advance in their jobs, get new jobs, or change careers. A total of 86.3 percent said they were satisfied, about the same as last year, with half very satisfied. A few respondents commented that they were not aware of these opportunities. We also asked about opportunities for life-long learning – classes that provide possibilities for increasing quality of life: fishing classes, gardening, etc. On this question, 43.8 percent said they were very satisfied and an additional 46.1 percent said they were somewhat satisfied, a total of 89.9 percent. Figure 6-7 illustrates the results for the current year.

Figure 6-7: Satisfaction with Education Items, 2004



Trends in Satisfaction with Government and Education

Table 6-1 indicates trends in satisfaction for all attitudes toward government and education items for 1993 and over the past five years.

Table 6-1: Trends in Satisfaction with Government and Education, 1993 and 2000-2004

PERCENT SATISFIED							
Item Number	Satisfaction Item	1993	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	<i>Government and Education</i>						
EFFNEFF	County Provides Efficient and Effective Service in General	—	89.4 ⁶	85.0 ^{4, 5, 7}	86.8 ⁵	89.1 ^{6, 8}	84.6 ^{4, 5, 7, 10}
VALUE	Value for Tax Dollar	65.5	80.0 ^{0, 3}	79.0 ^{0, 1, 2, 3}	77.9 ^{0, 1}	82.7 ^{0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9}	75.8 ^{0, 1, 5, 8, 10}
SCHL4	School System Provides Efficient and Effective Service	—	78.2	77.6	79.2	79.5	81.2
ADULTC	Learning Opportunities	—	—	86.1	85.2	85.4	86.3
LEARNC	Opportunities for Life-long Learning	—	—	86.8	89.5	87.8	89.9

⁰ Significantly Different from 1993 ⁴ Significantly Different from 1997 ⁸ Significantly Different from 2001
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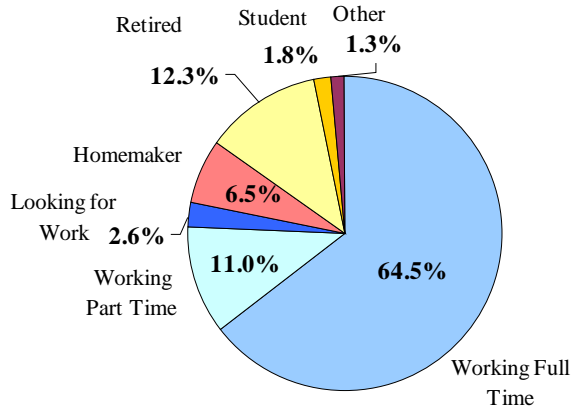
CHAPTER 7: Employment and Commuting

Included in the report once again this year is some information about employment and commuting patterns in Prince William County. We included an elaborate set of questions about the occupations, employment sector, and commuting patterns of our respondents. In this section, we will also detail the characteristics of commuters by occupation, industry, race, income, and educational level.

Employment

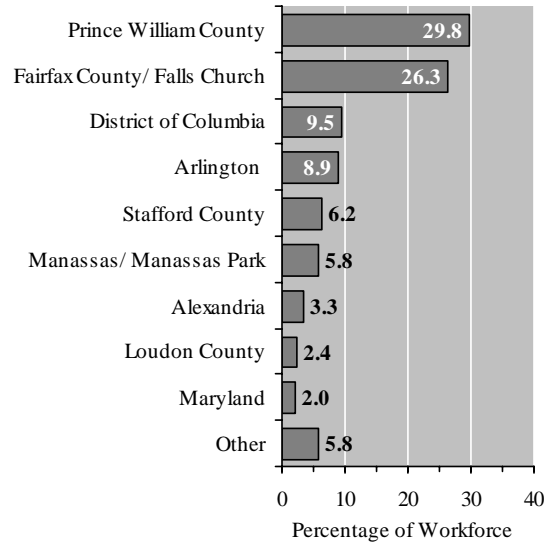
Figure 7-1 shows that the respondents to our survey hold a variety of statuses in the labor force. Approximately two-thirds were working full time; an additional 11 percent were working part time. Homemakers accounted for 6.5 percent, and 12.3 percent were retired. Students made up 1.8 percent of the sample, and those looking for work made up 2.6 percent. These figures are very similar to last year's figures.

Figure 7-1: Employment Status, 2004



About a third of our sample, 29.8 percent, live and work in Prince William County. Almost 6 percent work in Manassas or Manassas Park. The remaining 64.4 percent work elsewhere; 26.3 percent of the workforce commute to Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, or Falls Church; 8.9 percent work in Arlington and 9.5 percent work in Washington D.C. Figure 7-2 details these findings.

Figure 7-2: Place of Work, 2004



Occupation and Industry

This year we again asked a series of questions about the specifics of each respondent's job. Almost 35 percent of our respondents said they had some kind of specialized credential for work other than a college degree.

We also asked respondents several questions designed to obtain further information about the Prince William County workforce. First, we asked respondents their occupation, then the industry they were part of, and finally their employment sector. Occupation and industry were asked as open-ended questions, recorded verbatim, and subsequently post-coded into reporting categories by CSR staff.

Prince William County workers work in a variety of settings. Almost half, 46.6 percent, work in a private company. Approximately 27 percent work for the federal government, and an additional 2.2 percent work for the state government. Almost 13 percent work for local government, while 6 percent work for nonprofit organizations, and 5.5 percent own their own business. We also asked employed respondents whether they worked in particular technology fields. Three percent of our respondents said they worked in biotechnology, 3.5 percent in the manufacturing of computer hardware, 2.9 percent in instrument manufacturing, 2.0 percent in pharmaceuticals, 8.7 percent in research and design of software, and 5.9 percent in other research services.

Commuting

As in previous surveys, we dichotomized workers into commuters and non-commuters. To be considered a commuter, a worker needed to be commuting both outside of Prince William County or Manassas and Manassas Park, and have a commute of 30 minutes or longer. Approximately 50 percent of the employed respondents met both criteria.

Commuters and non-commuters are spread among many occupations, which are detailed in Table 7.1. The table includes three columns, the first of which shows the percentage of the workforce accounted for by a particular occupation. For instance, 16.7 percent of the Prince William County workforce is employed in office and administrative support occupations,

14.5 percent in business financial operations, and so on. The second column gives the percentage of the commuting workforce accounted for by an occupational group.

So while office and administrative support occupations account for 16.7 percent of the total workforce, they account for 16.6 percent of the commuting population. Finally, the third column indicates the percentage of each occupational group that commutes to work. We can see from the third column that 57.3 percent of those working in office and administrative support occupations commute to work; that is, they work outside Prince William County, Manassas, and Manassas Park, and drive longer than 30 minutes to work. Table 7.2 provides the same information by industry and Table 7.3 by employment sector.

Table 7-1: Occupation of Prince William County Workers, 2004

Occupation	Percentage of PWC Workforce	Percentage of Commuting Workforce	Percentage of Occupation that Commutes
Office and Administrative Support	16.7	16.6	57.3
Business Financial Operations	14.5	17.4	69.4
Computer and Mathematical	9.1	13.0	82.1
Education, Training, & Library	7.8	4.1	29.9
Sales and Related Occupations	6.9	3.7	30.5
Management	6.6	6.9	68.0
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	4.5	3.9	50.0
Architecture and Engineering	4.0	5.5	79.4
Installation Maintenance and Repair	3.7	3.9	59.4
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	3.7	3.2	51.6
Protective Service	3.5	3.4	58.6
Military Specific	3.2	4.5	78.6
Food Preparation and Serving	2.8	2.2	45.8
Transportation and Material Moving	2.3	2.0	50.0
Construction and Extraction	2.3	1.4	35.0
Personal Care and Service	2.2	1.2	31.6
Building and Grounds	2.0	1.2	33.3
Life, Physical, & Social Sciences	1.8	2.2	68.8
Community and Social	1.2	1.2	54.5
Legal	1.0	1.2	66.7
Production	.5	.8	100.0
Healthcare Support	.5	.4	40.0

Table 7-2: Industry of Prince William County Workers, 2004

Industry	Percentage of PWC Workforce	Percentage of Commuting Workforce	Percentage of Industry that Commutes
Public Administration	28.9	38.4	76.1
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	13.3	16.3	69.6
Educational Services	10.3	4.5	25.0
Health Care and Social Assistance	7.5	6.3	47.7
Retail Trade	6.1	2.9	26.9
Finance and Insurance	5.7	7.1	71.4
Construction	5.2	3.7	40.9
Other Services (except public admin)	5.0	3.9	44.2
Transportation and Warehousing	5.0	5.3	60.5
Information	3.9	4.1	58.8
Accommodation and Food Services	2.9	3.3	61.5
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2.3	1.2	30.0
Manufacturing	1.2	1.0	50.0
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	1.0	1.2	66.7
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	.9	.2	14.3
Mining	.4	.2	33.3
Wholesale Trade	.2	.2	100.0
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting	.1	.2	100.0

Table 7-3: Employment Sectors of Prince William County Workers, 2004

Employment Sector	Percentage of PWC Workforce	Percentage of Commuting Workforce	Percentage of Sector that Commutes
Private Company	46.6	44.9	56.0
Federal Government	27.1	38.6	82.6
Local Government	12.7	6.6	30.2
Non-Profit Organization	6.0	5.9	57.4
Own Business	5.5	2.7	28.0
State Government	2.2	1.3	35.0

The average commute time for all Prince William County workers is 40.1 minutes. For those who work in Prince William County, the mean commute time is just over 17 minutes. Figure 7-3 shows the variation in average commute time for PWC workers depending on the part of the County in which they reside. The longest commute is by North County residents, at about 53 minutes, while the shortest is in Sudley/Yorkshire, at about 32 minutes. Figure 7-4 illustrates the trend in overall commute time from 1999.

Most of our respondents (81.1%) were commuting to the same place as they were last year. For about half of those who commuted to the same workplace from the same home (55.7%), the commute time had stayed the same compared to a year ago. However, 41.6 percent reported that their commute had gotten longer, while 2.7 percent said it had gotten shorter. Results are shown in Figure 7-5.

Figure 7-3: Length of Commute by Region, 2004

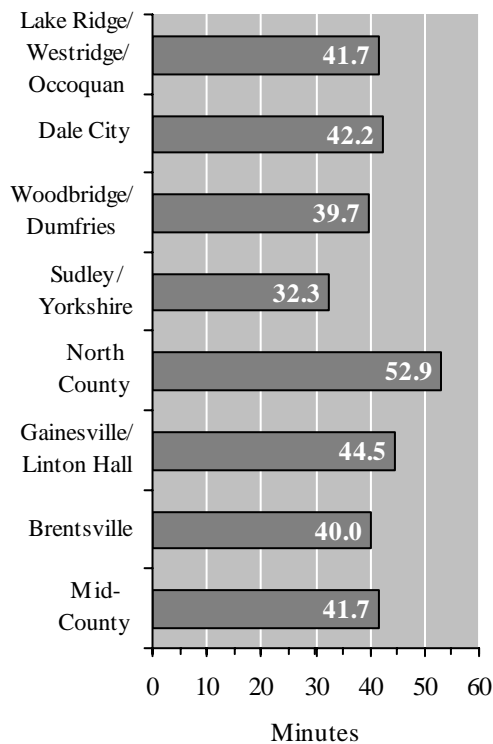
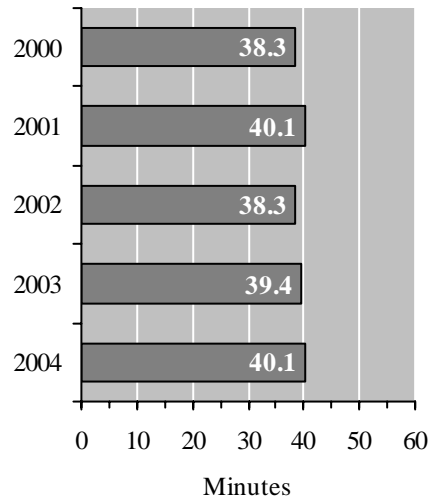
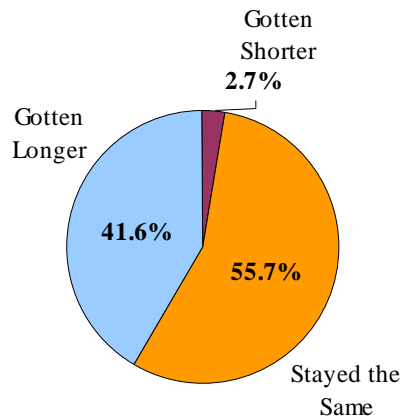


Figure 7-4: Average Commute Time, 2000-2004



"I can pick and choose when I go in, so I go when the traffic isn't heavy. But if I go during rush hour, it can take an hour to get from Woodbridge to Seven Corners."

Figure 7-5: Change in Travel Time from Last Year, 2004



At the request of the County, we examined in more detail the socio-economic characteristics of commuters. Residents with higher income were more likely to be commuters than were those with lower incomes. There was also a significant difference among ethnic groupings, with African Americans more likely to be commuters than those with other ethnic backgrounds. No difference was found based on educational level.

The county was also interested in where commuters' jobs were located for each geographic area of the County. Most commuters are traveling to the Fairfax/Falls Church, Arlington, and Washington DC areas. This information is detailed in Table 7-4 for commuters and Table 7-5 for both commuters and non-commuters together.

Telecommuting

We also asked employed respondents about telecommuting. The question asked, "A telecommuter is someone who spends a whole day or more per week working at home or at a telecommuting center closer to home, instead of going to their main place of work. Do you ever telecommute or telework?" 19.3 percent of our employed respondents said they did telecommute. This was a significant increase from last year's number of 15.7. Those who said they telecommute were asked how often they did: 7.8 percent said they telecommute all the time, 25.2 percent said they telecommute several times a week, 21.6 percent several times a month, 26.6 percent once or twice a month, and 18.7 percent several times a year.

Table 7-4: Percent Job Location of Commuters by Residence Area, 2004

Job Location	Woodbridge/ Dumfries	Dale City	Lake Ridge/ Westridge/ Occoquan	Sudley/ Yorkshire	North County	Gainesville/ Linton	Brentsville	Mid County
Stafford County	11.8	13.0	10.3	-	9.1	2.3	-	5.9
Fredericksburg/ Spotsy	1.0	3.3	2.3	-	-	4.7	-	-
Fauquier/ Warrenton	2.9	1.1	-	6.7	-	2.3	16.7	3.9
Loudon County	2.0	4.3	1.1	10.0	13.6	4.7	-	3.9
Fairfax/ Falls Church	36.3	42.4	33.3	46.7	54.5	65.1	33.3	51.0
Arlington	18.6	10.9	17.2	10.0	18.2	9.3	-	11.8
Alexandria	2.9	9.8	6.9	-	-	-	16.7	3.9
Other Virginia	1.0	-	-	3.3	-	4.7	-	-
Washington, DC	16.7	13.0	19.5	13.3	-	4.7	33.3	17.6
Maryland	3.9	1.1	4.6	6.7	-	2.3	-	-
Another location	2.0	1.1	4.6	-	4.5	-	-	2.0
Work all over	1.0	-	-	3.3	-	-	-	-

Table 7-5: Percent Job Location of Commuters and Non-Commuters by Residence Area, 2004

Job Location	Woodbridge/ Dumfries	Dale City	Lake Ridge/ Westridge/ Occoquan	Sudley/ Yorkshire	North County	Gainesville/ Linton	Brentsville	Mid County
Manassas	33.3	29.4	28.9	25.0	23.3	23.4	53.3	32.6
Manassas Park	0.6	3.3	1.5	19.1	3.3	6.5	6.7	8.1
Stafford County	1.7	0.7	-	-	-	3.9	-	-
Fredericksburg/ Spotsy	8.6	8.5	6.7	-	6.7	1.3	-	3.5
Fauquier/ Warrenton	0.6	2.0	1.5	-	-	2.6	-	-
Loudon County	1.7	0.7	-	4.4	-	1.3	6.7	2.3
Fairfax/ Falls Church	1.1	3.9	0.7	4.4	10.0	2.6	-	2.3
Arlington	23.0	26.1	23.7	29.4	40.0	41.6	13.3	30.2
Alexandria	10.9	7.2	11.9	5.9	13.3	5.2	-	7.0
Other Virginia	1.7	7.2	4.4	-	-	-	6.7	2.3
Washington, DC	1.1	-	-	1.5	-	2.6	-	-
Maryland	9.8	8.5	13.3	5.9	-	1.3	-	10.5
Another location	2.3	0.7	3.7	2.9	-	-	13.3	-
Work all over	2.9	1.3	3.7	-	3.3	3.9	-	1.2

CHAPTER 8: Summary and Conclusion

As in prior years, the 2004 annual Citizen Satisfaction Survey continues to be good news for the leadership of Prince William County. The chapters herein describe residents' predominantly high level of satisfaction with specific County services. In conclusion, we will consider the entire list of services our survey has rated.

Table 8-1 shows the satisfaction ratings for the services and programs, in the order in which they were discussed in the preceding chapters, for this year and for the most recent five years in which a specific satisfaction item has been included in the survey. The superscripted numbers in this table indicate statistically significant changes in satisfaction levels between years, including between this year and any of the nine preceding years.

Changes from Prior Years

In many categories of service there was little change to report since 2003. Citizen satisfaction levels remained relatively constant.

Five items showed increases in satisfaction:

- Satisfaction with information on government services increased from 75.3 percent in 2003 to 81.0 percent in 2004.
- Satisfaction with library staff increased from 97.8 percent in 2003 to 99.1 percent in 2004.
- Satisfaction with the prevention of neighborhood deterioration increased from 67.0 percent in 2003 to 71.9 percent in 2004.
- Satisfaction with the County's efforts to attract new jobs and businesses increased from 66.4 percent in 2003 to 73.0 percent in 2004, but this increase was due to a change in wording for some of the interviews conducted. (Among those who received the standard wording, satisfaction was not changed from 2003.)
- Citizen perceptions of where Prince William County's quality of life will stand five years from now increased from 6.99 in 2002 to 7.20 in 2004.

Four items showed decreases:

- Satisfaction with citizen input opportunity

- regarding development decreased from 69.2 percent in 2003 to 57.4 percent in 2004.
- Satisfaction with in-county travel decreased from 52.5 percent in 2003 to 45.7 percent in 2004.
- Satisfaction with how the county provides efficient and effective service in general decreased from 89.1 percent in 2003 to 84.6 percent in 2004.
- Satisfaction with the county's value for tax dollars decreased from 82.7 percent in 2003 to 75.8 percent in 2004.

"This is an excellent survey – invaluable for attracting people to the County. I like Prince William's citizen-oriented approach."

Long-Term Trends

The overall long-term picture remains positive: a combination of steady rates of satisfaction in some indicators and sustained improvement in others over the annual surveys. Prince William County residents are on the whole very satisfied with their County government and quality of life. On most satisfaction items included in the 2004 survey, where significant changes in citizen satisfaction have occurred since the baseline survey taken in 1993, changes have been in the direction of greater satisfaction or continued high levels of satisfaction with minor fluctuations from year to year.

Those indicators showing a general trend of improvement are as follows:

- Satisfaction with voter registration is up 3 points from 1993.
- Satisfaction with information on government services is up over 10 percentage points.
- Satisfaction with the police department is up 5 points since 1993.
- Satisfaction with the reduction of illegal drugs is up nearly 5 percentage points.
- Satisfaction with helping the elderly is up almost 10 points.
- Satisfaction with the Department of Social Services is up over 15 percentage points.
- Satisfaction with providing help to those in

- financial need is up almost 9 points.
- Satisfaction with attracting new jobs and businesses is up 8.2 points since 1993.
- Satisfaction with the landfill is up over 4 percentage points.
- Satisfaction with the County’s value for tax dollar is up more than 10 points.

An exception to this trend of increased satisfaction is:

- Satisfaction with the County’s Mental Health Agency is down 12.5 points since 1993.

With regard to overall quality of life, Prince William County remains a place that people believe is a good place to live. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest quality, the mean rating has increased from 6.90 in 1993 to 7.32 in 2004, a statistically significant improvement.

Services Ranked by Satisfaction Level

Table 8-2 is a list of satisfaction items, ranked from those with the highest levels of satisfaction to the lowest. The respondents rated 43 specific services and provided a general rating of satisfaction with government services and quality of life in Prince William County. The highest rated satisfaction items in our survey related to the libraries, the landfill, emergency services, the park authority, and opportunities for voter registration. Thirty of the 43 ranked satisfaction items scored ratings of 80 percent or better. Four items received ratings less than 60 percent: satisfaction with growth in the county, opportunities for citizen input into development, planning and land use and getting around PWC.

The general County government rating, perhaps the single most important item in the survey, has a high satisfaction level of 90.2 percent. Over a third said they were “very satisfied” with the services of the County government in general.

Table 8-3 ranks all satisfaction items for 2004 by visibility (the percentage of respondents who were able to rate an item). Table 8-4 is a list of all satisfaction items, categorized by level of visibility and satisfaction level. Figure 8-1 illustrates those numbers graphically.

Conclusions

Our survey suggests that most residents of Prince William County are satisfied with the services they receive. Reductions in satisfaction levels on some items also indicate areas where improvements might be made.

“I am so thrilled that I can finally tell my friends I’ve been polled! We talk about it every couple of years. We’d say ‘where are those numbers coming from?’”

We wish to stress once again, as we have in previous reports, that the reasons for citizens’ satisfaction with any particular service relates not merely to its actual quality, but also to citizens’ expectations of its quality, or to their own informal cost-benefit analyses regarding the usefulness of a given service to them. These figures are subject to change as people’s life circumstances and expectations change. We must also stress that a citizen satisfaction survey is only one of many possible indicators of the actual quality of the work a public agency is doing, and our findings must of course be weighed against other objective and qualitative indicators when policy and resource allocation decisions are made.

Having said this, Prince William County certainly can take continuing pride in the high levels of satisfaction its citizens have indicated toward most County government agencies, services and programs, and in the general improvement in citizen satisfaction levels, overall and with several specific areas, since we began these surveys in 1993. It is our hope that this survey series will continue to be of help to decision-makers and citizens as they work toward continuous improvement of public services and programs for the people of Prince William County.

Table 8-1: Percent Satisfied for All Satisfaction Items, 1993 and 2000-2004

Item Number	Satisfaction Item	PERCENT SATISFIED					
		1993	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	<i>General Satisfaction with Government Services</i>						
CTYSAT97	Services of the County Government in General	90.5	93.5 ⁶	91.8	92.9 ^{1,6}	89.6 ^{2,4,5,7,9}	90.2 ^{2,4,5,7,9}
VOTE	Voter Registration	91.5	95.5 ^{0,2,5}	96.4 ^{0,5}	97.1 ^{0,2,5}	95.3 ^{0,1,2,3}	94.5 ^{0,4,5}
GOVTSERV	Information on Government Services	70.9	86.9 ^{0,4,5,6}	79.6 ^{0,1,2,6,7}	80.8 ^{0,1,2,6,7}	75.3 ^{1,3,4,5,7,9}	81.0 ^{0,1,2,6,7,10}
	<i>Public Safety</i>						
POLICE	Overall Satisfaction with Police	88.7	93.0 ⁰	91.6	93.0 ^{0,1}	93.2 ^{0,1}	93.7 ^{0,1,4}
ATTITUDE	Police Behaviors Toward Citizens	—	87.5	85.9	86.7	85.4	86.3
PREVENTB	Crime Prevention Programs	83.4	85.1	—	80.5 ^{2,7}	—	82.8
DRUGS	Reducing Illegal Drugs	79.2	82.9	82.9 ¹	83.6 ¹	82.6 ¹	84.1 ^{0,1}
GANGS	Combat Gang Activity						80.0
FIRE	Fire Protection	97.2	97.3	97.3 ¹	97.5 ¹	97.1 ¹	98.2 ^{1,2,6}
RESCUE	Medical Rescue	96.6	97.0	96.7	97.6 ^{4,6}	97.2	97.4 ^{4,6}
EMSATIS	911 Phone Help	—	95.6 ³	91.2	93.3	91.0 ^{4,7}	91.9
EMTIMEB	Time for Help to Arrive	—	87.5	—	80.8	85.3	86.3
EMASSTB	Assistance on the Scene	—	92.9 ³	—	89.3	88.9	89.7
AMCRIME	Safety In Neighborhood in Daylight	—	93.3 ⁴	93.2 ⁴	91.3 ⁶	93.1 ⁴	91.9 ⁶
PMCRIME	Safety in Neighborhood after Dark	—	86.5 ^{3,4,5}	87.8 ^{2,3,4,5,6}	85.6 ^{2,3,4}	86.2 ^{2,3,4,5}	86.3 ^{2,3,4,5}
DYCRIMEB	Safety in Commercial Areas in Daylight	—	93.0	—	90.9 ²	—	91.2
NTCRIMEB	Safety In Commercial Areas after Dark	—	82.1 ⁵	—	77.0 ^{2,4,6}	—	81.7 ^{2,3,4,6}
	⁰ Significantly Different from 1993		⁴ Significantly Different from 1997		⁸ Significantly Different from 2001		
	¹ Significantly Different from 1994		⁵ Significantly Different from 1998		⁹ Significantly Different from 2002		
	² Significantly Different from 1995		⁶ Significantly Different from 1999		¹⁰ Significantly Different from 2003		
	³ Significantly Different from 1996		⁷ Significantly Different from 2000				

Table 8-1 (cont'd.): Percent Satisfied for All Satisfaction Items, 1993 and 2000-2004

Item Number	Satisfaction Item	PERCENT SATISFIED					
		1993	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	<i>Public Services</i>						
LIBRARY	Library Services	94.9	96.9	96.8 ⁵	96.8 ⁵	96.3 ⁵	96.2 ⁵
LIBRYSAT	Library Staff	98.2	98.8	99.3	99.1	97.8 ⁸	99.1 ¹⁰
PARK	Park & Recreation Facilities	88.7	90.7 ^{3,5}	88.4 ²	88.2 ²	89.5	91.0 ^{1,3,5}
PARK2	Park Authority Provides Efficient & Effective Service	—	95.4	94.5	94.3	93.8	94.6
CTYSERV2	Service Authority Provides Efficient & Effective Service	—	89.9 ⁵	91.6	91.8 ⁵	92.3	89.8 ⁵
ELDERLY	Helping the Elderly	68.3	83.1 ^{0,3}	82.6 ^{0,1,3}	79.1 ^{0,1,5}	77.6 ^{0,1,5,7,8}	77.9 ^{0,1,5,7}
HLTHSAT	Health Department	84.6	89.9	88.8 ²	85.6	86.4	82.1 ^{5,7,8}
DSSSAT	Satisfaction with DSS	60.3	71.7 ⁰	73.7 ^{0,2}	72.5 ^{0,2}	69.2 ^{0,5}	75.4 ^{0,1,2}
MENTLSAT	Mental Health Agency	85.1	82.7	81.6	79.6	75.9	72.6 ^{0,4,7}
PROBLEMB	Providing Help to Those with Emotional Problems	70.1	79.8 ⁰	—	71.7 ^{2,4,5,6,7}	71.2 ^{2,4,5,6,7}	73.7 ^{2,5,6,7}
FINNEEDB	Providing Help to Those in Financial Need	61.0	73.5	—	72.4	—	69.9 ^{0,5,6}
	<i>Communication with the County</i>						
HELPFUL2	Helpfulness of Employees	79.3	79.1	82.0	80.0	80.8	78.8
NET2	County Website	—	92.5	91.0	91.5	93.5	92.6

⁰ Significantly Different from 1993 ⁴ Significantly Different from 1997 ⁸ Significantly Different from 2001
¹ Significantly Different from 1994 ⁵ Significantly Different from 1998 ⁹ Significantly Different from 2002
² Significantly Different from 1995 ⁶ Significantly Different from 1999 ¹⁰ Significantly Different from 2003
³ Significantly Different from 1996 ⁷ Significantly Different from 2000

Table 8-1 (cont'd.): Percent Satisfied for All Satisfaction Items, 1993 and 2000-2004

Item Number	Satisfaction Item	PERCENT SATISFIED					
		1993	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	<i>Planning and Development Issues</i>						
LAND	Planning and Land Use	53.9	56.4	53.0	52.8	53.2 ³	49.8 ^{2, 3, 5, 6, 7}
INPUTDEV	Citizen Input Opportunity re: Development	—	70.8 ⁴	65.7	61.2 ^{3, 5, 6, 7}	69.2 ⁹	57.4 ^{3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10}
GROWTHC	Growth in County	—	—	59.8	53.4 ⁸	49.5 ⁸	48.7 ^{8, 9}
VISDEV	Appearance of New Development	—	87.0 ^{4, 5}	79.9 ^{3, 6, 7}	84.1 ^{4, 8}	80.0 ^{3, 6, 7, 9}	81.9 ^{3, 7}
NEIGHBOR	Prevent Neighborhood Deterioration	67.8	71.4	73.6 ^{0, 1}	68.9 ⁸	67.0 ^{2, 7, 8}	71.9 ¹⁰
NEWJOBS	Attract New Jobs and Businesses	64.3	80.2 ^{0, 5}	75.8 ^{0, 1, 2, 7}	71.0 ^{0, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8}	66.4 ^{3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8}	73.0 ^{0, 2, 7, 10}
TRAVEL97	Getting Around	—	62.8 ⁵	55.1 ^{5, 6, 7}	57.6 ⁵	52.5 ^{4, 5, 6, 7, 9}	45.7 ^{4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10}
LFILLSAT	Landfill	91.7	98.1 ^{0, 3, 4, 5, 6}	96.2 ^{0, 3, 4, 5}	96.1 ^{0, 3, 4, 5}	97.0 ^{0, 3, 4, 5, 6}	95.9 ^{0, 4, 5, 7}
	<i>Government and Education</i>						
EFFNEFF	County Provides Efficient and Effective Service in General	—	89.4 ⁶	85.0 ^{4, 5, 7}	86.8 ⁵	89.1 ^{6, 8}	84.6 ^{4, 5, 7, 10}
VALUE	Value for Tax Dollar	65.5	80.0 ^{0, 3}	79.0 ^{0, 1, 2, 3}	77.9 ^{0, 1}	82.7 ^{0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9}	75.8 ^{0, 1, 5, 8, 10}
SCHL4	School System Provides Efficient and Effective Service	—	78.2	77.6	79.2	79.5	81.2
ADULTC	Learning Opportunities	—	—	86.1	85.2	85.4	86.3
LEARNC	Opportunities for Life-long Learning	—	—	86.8	89.5	87.8	89.9
	⁰ Significantly Different from 1993		⁴ Significantly Different from 1997		⁸ Significantly Different from 2001		
	¹ Significantly Different from 1994		⁵ Significantly Different from 1998		⁹ Significantly Different from 2002		
	² Significantly Different from 1995		⁶ Significantly Different from 1999		¹⁰ Significantly Different from 2003		
	³ Significantly Different from 1996		⁷ Significantly Different from 2000				

Table 8-2: Ranked List of Satisfaction Items, 2004

Rank	Item Number	Satisfaction Item	Percent Satisfied
1	LIBRYSAT	Library Staff	99.1
2	FIRE	Fire Protection	98.2
3	RESCUE	Medical Rescue	97.4
4	LIBRARY	Library Services	96.2
5	LFILLSAT	Landfill	95.9
6	PARK2	Park Authority Provides Efficient & Effective Service	94.6
7	VOTE	Voter Registration	94.5
8	POLICE	Overall Satisfaction with Police	93.7
9	NET2	County Website	92.6
10	EMSATIS	911 Phone Help	91.9
11	AMCRIME	Safety In Neighborhood in Daylight	91.9
12	DYCRIMEB	Safety in Commercial Areas in Daylight	91.2
13	PARK	Park & Recreation Facilities	91.0
14	CTYSAT97	Services of the County Government in General	90.2
15	LEARNC	Opportunities for Life-long Learning	89.9
16	CTYSERV2	Service Authority Provides Efficient & Effective Service	89.8
17	EMASSTB	Assistance on the Scene	89.7
18	ATTITUDE	Police Behaviors Toward Citizens	86.3
19	EMTIMEB	Time for Help to Arrive	86.3
20	PMCRIME	Safety in Neighborhood after Dark	86.3
21	ADULTC	Learning Opportunities	86.3
22	EFFNEFF	County Provides Efficient and Effective Service in General	84.6
23	DRUGS	Reducing Illegal Drugs	84.1
24	PREVENTB	Crime Prevention Programs	82.8
25	HLTHSAT	Health Department	82.1
26	VISDEV	Appearance of New Development	81.9
27	NTCRIMEB	Safety In Commercial Areas after Dark	81.7
28	SCHL4	School System Provides Efficient and Effective Service	81.2
29	GOVTSERV	Information on Government Services	81.0
30	GANGS	Combat Gang Activity	80.0
31	HELPFUL2	Helpfulness of Employees	78.8
32	ELDERLY	Helping the Elderly	77.9
33	VALUE	Value for Tax Dollar	75.8
34	DSSSAT	Satisfaction with DSS	75.4
35	PROBLEMB	Providing Help to Those with Emotional Problems	73.7
36	NEWJOBS	Attract New Jobs and Businesses	73.0
37	MENTLSAT	Mental Health Agency	72.6
38	NEIGHBOR	Prevent Neighborhood Deterioration	71.9
39	FINNEEDB	Providing Help to Those in Financial Need	69.9
40	INPUTDEV	Citizen Input Opportunity re: Development	57.4
41	LAND	Planning and Land Use	49.8
42	GROWTHC	Growth in County	48.7
43	TRAVEL97	Getting Around	45.7

Table 8-3: List of Satisfaction Items Ranked by Visibility, 2004

Rank	Item Number	Satisfaction Item	Visibility Score	Percent Satisfied
1	VISDEV	Appearance of New Development	96.1	81.9
2	TRAVEL97	Getting Around	96.0	45.7
3	PMCRIME	Safety in Neighborhood after Dark	95.8	86.3
4	AMCRIME	Safety In Neighborhood in Daylight	95.5	91.9
5	CTYSAT97	Services of the County Government in General	95.4	90.2
6	POLICE	Overall Satisfaction with Police	95.2	93.7
7	VALUE	Value for Tax Dollar	92.1	75.8
8	LIBRARY	Library Services	91.3	96.2
9	GOVTSERV	Information on Government Services	90.9	81.0
10	GROWTHC	Growth in County	90.7	48.7
11	PARK	Park & Recreation Facilities	90.5	91.0
12	DYCRIMEB	Safety in Commercial Areas in Daylight	89.0	91.2
13	EFFNEFF	County Provides Efficient and Effective Service in General	88.7	84.6
14	LAND	Planning and Land Use	86.3	49.8
15	ATTITUDE	Police Behaviors Toward Citizens	86.0	86.3
16	NTCRIMEB	Safety In Commercial Areas after Dark	83.8	81.7
17	FIRE	Fire Protection	83.2	98.2
18	VOTE	Voter Registration	82.3	94.5
19	RESCUE	Medical Rescue	80.9	97.4
20	NEIGHBOR	Prevent Neighborhood Deterioration	77.2	71.9
21	NEWJOBS	Attract New Jobs and Businesses	76.5	73.0
22	PREVENTB	Crime Prevention Programs	76.1	82.8
23	LIBRYSAT	Library Staff	75.5	99.1
24	SCHL4	School System Provides Efficient and Effective Service	74.6	81.2
25	GANGS	Combat Gang Activity	65.2	80.0
26	DRUGS	Reducing Illegal Drugs	62.6	84.1
27	INPUTDEV	Citizen Input Opportunity re: Development	58.3	57.4
28	LEARNC	Opportunities for Life-long Learning	57.8	89.9
29	ADULTC	Learning Opportunities	56.0	86.3
30	CTYSERV2	Service Authority Provides Efficient & Effective Service	55.9	89.8
31	NET2	County Website	54.8	92.6
32	PARK2	Park Authority Provides Efficient & Effective Service	53.6	94.6
33	HELPFUL2	Helpfulness of Employees	48.1	78.8
34	ELDERLY	Helping the Elderly	42.7	77.9
35	LFILLSAT	Landfill	41.5	95.9
36	FINNEEDB	Providing Help to Those in Financial Need	37.1	69.9
37	PROBLEMB	Providing Help to Those with Emotional Problems	36.3	73.7
38	DSSSAT	Satisfaction with DSS	23.3	75.4
39	HLTHSAT	Health Department	20.7	82.1
40	EMSATIS	911 Phone Help	20.1	91.9
41	EMTIMEB	Time for Help to Arrive	18.6	86.3
42	EMASSTB	Assistance on the Scene	18.2	89.7
43	MENTLSAT	Mental Health Agency	13.6	72.6

Table 8-4: List of Services in Satisfaction/Visibility Categories, 2004

High Satisfaction/High Visibility

<i>Question</i>	<i>Service</i>
LIBRYSAT	Satisfaction with Library Staff
FIRE	Fire Protection
RESCUE	Medical Rescue
LIBRARY	Library Services
VOTE	Voter Registration
POLICE	Overall Satisfaction with Police
AMCRIME	Safety in Neighborhood in Daylight
DYCRIMEB	Safety in Commercial Areas in Daylight
PARK	Park & Recreation Facilities
CTYSAT97	Services of the County Government in General
ATTITUDE	Police Behaviors Toward Citizens
PMCRIME	Safety in Neighborhood in Dark
EFFNEFF	County Provides Efficient and Effective Services in General
PREVENTB	Crime Prevention Programs
VISDEV	Satisfaction with Appearance of New Development
NTRIMEB	Safety in Commercial Areas in Dark
GOVTSERV	Information on Government Services

High Satisfaction/Medium Visibility

<i>Question</i>	<i>Service</i>
LFILLSAT	Landfill
PARK2	County Park Authority Provides Efficient & Effective Service
NET2	County Web Site
LEARNC	Satisfaction with Opportunities for Life-Long Learning
CTYSERV2	County Service Authority Provides Efficient & Effective Service
ADULTC	Satisfaction with Learning Opportunities
DRUGS	Reducing Illegal Drugs
SCHL4	School System Provides Efficient & Effective Service
GANGS	Combat Gang Activity

High Satisfaction/Low Visibility

<i>Question</i>	<i>Service</i>
EMSATIS	911 Phone Help
EMASSTB	Assistance on the Scene
EMTIMEB	Time for Help to Arrive
HLTHSAT	Health Department

Low to Moderate Satisfaction/High Visibility

<i>Question</i>	<i>Service</i>
VALUE	Value for Tax Dollar
NEIGHBOR	Prevent Neighborhood Deterioration
LAND	Planning and Land Use
GROWTHC	Satisfaction with Growth in County
TRAVEL97	Getting Around
NEWJOBS	Attract New Jobs and Businesses

Low to Moderate Satisfaction/Medium Visibility

<i>Question</i>	<i>Service</i>
HELPFUL2	Helpfulness of County Employees
ELDERLY	Helping the Elderly
PROBLEMB	Providing Help to Those with Emotional Problems
FINNEEDB	Providing Help to Those in Financial Need
INPUTDEV	Satisfaction with Citizen Input

Low to Moderate Satisfaction/Low Visibility

<i>Question</i>	<i>Service</i>
DSSSAT	Satisfaction with DSS
MENTLSAT	Mental Health Agency

