

News Releases

Chapel Hill services rank above national averages

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Chapel Hill is setting the standard for service delivery among other U.S. cities, according to Community Survey results provided to the Town Council this month.

About 88 percent of residents reported satisfaction with the overall quality of life in Chapel Hill. Town services that received 80 percent or higher satisfaction include police, fire protection, trash collection, park maintenance, and library services. Exceedingly high satisfaction ratings were recorded for how safe residents feel in their neighborhoods during the day (99 percent), fire protection (94 percent), trash collection (93 percent), and library services (91 percent).



Rankings are well above regional and national benchmarks, according to ETC Institute, the research firm that conducted the survey. Satisfaction with the overall quality of Town services rated 28 percent above the national average. The Town rated above the national average in 46 of the 51 topic areas that were compared.

Chapel Hill ranks highly for engagement and access to elected officials, with 63 percent reporting satisfaction with level of public involvement in decision making, which is significantly higher in comparison to other cities (40 percent for the Southeast and 42 percent for U.S.)

The statistically valid survey was mailed to 2,000 randomly selected Chapel Hill households in November and December 2013. A telephone survey was conducted as a follow-up to the mailed survey. There were 677 residents who completed the survey (a 34 percent response rate).

“The survey helps us learn perspectives shared by a majority of our residents, including those who might not engage in traditional public processes,” said Town Manager Roger L. Stancil. “They give us a thumbs-up for providing excellent services. They are positive about their access to elected officials and engagement in decision-making. They express concerns about planning for the future and issues of traffic, housing affordability, and access to local shopping.”

Some of the survey findings include:

- Since 2009, overall satisfaction has increased in 54 of 77 areas assessed by the survey
- Notable increases from 2009 include Maintenance/preservation of downtown (up 14 percent); Access to the Mayor and Town Council (up 13 percent); Security of parking downtown (up 12 percent); Increases in all areas of Town communications
- Notable decrease from 2009 – Management of stormwater runoff (down 11 percent)
- Parks and Recreation services that should receive the most emphasis – walking/biking trails was No. 1, maintenance of Town parks was No. 2, and a new question – programs for teens, ranked No. 3.
- Residents’ perception on the pace of development – 60 percent said retail is slow or much too slow (up 17 percent from 2009)
- For the first time, the website ranked as residents’ primary source of information about Town services and issues. Newspapers ranked second; word-of-mouth third, radio fourth, and neighborhood associations fifth.

Services that should receive the most emphasis from the Town (and ways we are addressing these issues):

- Overall flow of traffic and congestion (This issue is addressed in part by a newly completed \$5 million Traffic Signal Project. Proposed traffic improvements are part of the Ephesus Fordham Renewal Project.)
- How well the Town is preparing for the future (DESIGN Chapel Hill is the effort to implement the goals outlined in the

Chapel Hill 2020 comprehensive plans. Projects aim to address the community's future needs. View them at www.townofchapelhill.org/DESIGN)

- Value you receive from your town tax dollars (We are engaged in a Priority Budgeting process to better prioritize services the community values.)

Are Your Needs Being Met in Chapel Hill? (new question)

- Highest rankings for University community, access to Research Triangle Park, and safety and security.
- Lowest rankings for access to quality shopping, affordability of housing, and community planning for the future.

To review the complete results of the 2013 Community Survey, see www.townofchapelhill.org/survey. An online survey was offered to those who were interested in reviewing the questions and participating, although it was not tabulated with the main survey. The results of the online survey are being tabulated and will be posted online as soon as possible.

Thank you to our residents for their valuable feedback!

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