



News Release

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City's Annual Satisfaction Survey Shows Residents Enjoy Living in Durham

84% Rated Durham as an Excellent or Good Place to Live

DURHAM, N.C. – The results from the [2019 Durham Resident Satisfaction Survey](#) show that 84% of residents feel that Durham is a good-to-excellent place to live, and 81% of residents are satisfied with the overall quality of life in their neighborhood.

The 2019 results, shared earlier today with the Durham City Council during their annual budget retreat, is the tenth City of Durham resident satisfaction survey distributed over the past 14 years, and the fifth combined survey with Durham County Government and Durham Public Schools, that holistically reveals how residents feel about Durham as a community.

“The survey continues to provide an ongoing opportunity to touch base with our residents – in a statistically sound way – to find out what they think of our community and the services provided by their two local governments and public education system,” said City Manager Tom Bonfield. “The overall results provide a picture of, not only resident satisfaction, but also how we should view community-wide priorities. The City administration specifically uses this information to help direct our priorities, from making day-to-day decisions to overall long-term planning and funding allocation.”

A major theme that emerged from the survey indicated that, compared to other large cities with populations of 250,000 or higher, Durham is setting the standard for the overall quality of City-provided services and customer service from City employees, ranking 22 percentage points above the average in the quality of services and 30 percentage points above the average in customer service.

The top five City-provided services with the highest levels of satisfaction, which combines very satisfied and satisfied responses, included: fire and life safety programming at 80%; response time for fire services at 76%, water and sewer utilities at 69%, parks and recreation programs at 66%, customer service from City employees at 64%, and police protection at 59%.

Other 2019 results showed the following City-provided services that respondents would be willing to pay higher taxes to support: affordable housing at 40%; public safety staffing at 31%; job creation and training at 26%; and youth programming at 25%.

Based on the survey, residents felt the overall community-wide priorities for improvement over the next two years should be public schools, maintenance of city streets, and police protection.

The [ETC Institute](#), which conducted the resident satisfaction survey in December 2019, used a randomly selected sample of 605 households whose demographics accurately reflect the population inside the city limits. The survey has a 95 percent level of confidence with a margin of error of +/- 4 percent.

New for this year, the City's Budget and Management Services Department also connected with an additional 100 residents through one-one-one interviews conducted in English and Spanish along with five

focus groups held with McDougald Terrace and Pearson town residents, Bragg town residents, North Carolina Central University (NCCU) students, the Latinx LGBTQ Initiative, and a mother's group at El Centro Hispano. The department also held three tabling events at the Durham County Department of Social Services, Durham Station Transportation Center, and the Partners Against Crime (PAC) 4 meeting.

An overview of the feedback from all of these engagement activities indicates that residents are concerned about safety, specifically gun violence. Many residents noted a desire for more police presence, better police response times, and stronger relationships with police. Recreation centers and opportunities for play are viewed as neighborhood assets that can help address crime; however, crime and the perception of lack of safety may be preventing some from participating as well as other barriers such as cost and transportation. Residents also expressed the desire for better roads, more sidewalks, and more bus service. Most residents also expressed that they are excited about how Durham is changing and growing, but are concerned about how that growth impacts housing affordability.

The full results of the City's portion of the survey are now available on the City's Budget and Management Services Department [webpage](#).

About the Budget and Management Services Department

The City of Durham [Budget and Management Services Department](#) is responsible for the development and oversight of the City's annual budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The department is also responsible for performance management, continuous improvement, and strategic planning. A division of the department, the [Office of Performance and Innovation](#), serves as internal consultants, helping City departments accomplish Durham's "One Vision and Five Goals" through advancing the City's [Strategic Plan](#); providing framework for data-driven decisions; fostering a culture of innovation; and facilitating process improvements.

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