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News Release

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Share! 80 percent of residents enjoy living in #Durham according to 2016 resident satisfaction survey results
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Durham Survey Shows Residents Enjoy Living in the Bull City

80 Percent Rated Durham as an Excellent or Good Place to Live

DURHAM, N.C. – The results from the [2016 Durham City-County Resident Satisfaction Survey](#) are in and show that 80 percent of residents feel that Durham is a good-to-excellent place to live, and 73 percent are satisfied with the overall quality of life in their neighborhood.

This is the second combined City-County satisfaction survey that reveals how residents feel about Durham as a community, and for the first time, included questions about Durham Public Schools. “The survey provides a great opportunity to touch base with our residents – in a statistically sound way – to find out what they really think of our community and the services provided by their local governments and public school system,” said City Manager Tom Bonfield. “The overall results provide a great 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 resource allocation.”

A major theme that emerged from the survey indicated that, compared to other large cities, Durham is setting the standard for the overall quality of City-provided services and customer service from City employees, rating 64 percent and 58 percent, which is 18 percent and 22 percent above the average, respectively. The overall image of Durham has also improved 27 percent since 2005.

However, residents indicated their overall community-wide priorities for improvement over the next two years should be public schools, maintenance of streets, quality of police protection, and overall traffic flow.

The highest level of satisfaction with City-provided services included fire protection and rescue services which increased 2 percent to 84 percent; parks and recreation programs which decreased 1 percent to 64 percent; and water and sewer utilities which decreased 8 percent to 62 percent.

The largest increases from 2015 to 2016 in overall satisfaction for City-provided services included:

- Athletic programs: 8 percent increase to 49 percent
- Quality of the City's public transit system: 7 percent increase to 39 percent
- Recreation center programs: 6 percent increase to 48 percent
- Condition of bicycle facilities: 6 percent increase to 33 percent

In the area of public safety, 81 percent of respondents felt safe walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day and 50 percent felt safe when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night, a decrease from last year's survey of 10 percent and 13 percent, respectively. Also, 55 percent of respondents were satisfied with the Durham Police Department's relationship with the community, which also decreased 7 percent from last year's survey.

While minor-to-significant decreases in satisfaction were noted in some areas as compared to 2015, including some customer service and operational rankings, those decreases matched a downward trend with satisfaction in those areas nationwide over the past year, according to Jason Morado of the [ETC Institute](#), the company that conducted the survey. "When benchmarked against comparable cities, Durham's drops in these areas were less," Morado said. "Durham's ratings have been consistently higher than many other cities, and residents still rate City services highly despite the current national environment and any local challenges."

The largest decreases from 2015 to 2016 in overall satisfaction for City-provided services included:

- Overall feeling of safety in Durham: 18 percent decrease to 34 percent

- Feeling of safety in downtown: 14 percent decrease to 48 percent
- Condition of neighborhood streets: 13 percent decrease to 50 percent
- Feeling of safety when walking alone in neighborhoods at night: 13 percent decrease to 50 percent
- Mowing and tree trimming along streets and other areas: 11 percent decrease to 43 percent
- Stream and lake protection: 10 percent decrease to 42 percent

Other 2016 results showed:

- City capital projects respondents would be willing to pay higher taxes to support:
 - Street improvements: 43 percent
 - Sidewalks: 30 percent
 - Trails and greenways: 26 percent
 - Parks and open spaces: 24 percent
 - Public safety facilities: 22 percent
 - Bike lanes: 21 percent
 - Parking: 17 percent
 - Aquatic facilities: 13 percent
 - Public art: 13 percent
 - Athletic fields: 7 percent

- City-provided services respondents would be willing to pay higher taxes to support:
 - Affordable housing: 34 percent
 - Job creation/training: 32 percent
 - Youth programming: 30 percent
 - Public safety staffing: 27 percent
 - Senior programming: 27 percent

The ETC Institute, which conducted the survey in December 2016, used a randomly selected sample of 487 households whose demographics accurately reflect the population of the city as well as 248 households outside the city limits. The survey has a 95 percent level of confidence with a margin of error of +/- 4.4 percent. Full results of the City's portion of the survey are now available on the City's Budget and Management Services Department [Web page](#).

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