Prince William County
2014 Community Survey

September 2014
Background & Objectives

• Prince William County has conducted an annual resident survey since 1993
• Decision made to change to a biennial survey beginning in 2012
• Objectives of the community survey:
  • To measure changes in residents’ opinions vs. the 2012 survey
  • To assess resident perceptions of the overall quality of life in Prince William County
  • To assess perceptions of County services
• Surveys were distributed and collected throughout June & July 2014
• A total of 1,831 surveys were completed
  • 1,355 (74%) by phone; 476 online (26%)
  • Margin of error ± 2.3% at 95% confidence level
Key Findings
Quality of Life

• As in 2012, Prince William County residents are very positive about the quality of life in the community.
Residents agree that the overall quality of services offered by Prince William County meet or exceed their expectations. This year’s ratings are just slightly higher than in 2012.

- Greatly Exceeds Expectations (8-10)
  - 2014: 39%
  - 2012: 41%

- Meets/Exceeds Expectations (5-7)
  - 2014: 52%
  - 2012: 49%

- Does Not Meet Expectations (0-4)
  - 2014: 9%
  - 2012: 10%
Efficient and Effective Service

- As in 2012, the vast majority (91%) of Prince William County residents agree the county provides efficient and effective service.
County Employees

- As in 2012, county employees receive very high ratings for being courteous & helpful.
Value for Tax Dollars

- The majority of residents believe the county provides services and facilities that are a good value for their tax dollars.
- Current (2014) value perceptions are similar to 2012 and represent the highest level ever for this question.

![Bar Chart]

- High Value (8-10): 2014 - 86%, 2012 - 85%
- Good Value (5-7): 2014 - 34%, 2012 - 35%
- Low Value (0-4): 2014 - 14%, 2012 - 15%
View on Taxes

- Nearly two-thirds of residents want taxes and services to remain the same.
- In 2014, residents desiring lower taxes with the trade-off of lower services increased from 2012, as did the percent who want higher taxes and more services.

↑/↓ Indicate a statistically higher/lower score than 2012 at the 95% confidence level.
Trust the County Government to Do the Right Thing

- Most (84%) residents trust the county to do the right thing.
- Residents’ current trust in the government is comparable to what it was in 2012.
Detailed Findings
Safety – Neighborhood and Commercial Areas

- As in 2012, residents feel safe in Prince William County’s neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- Perceptions of safety are higher for their own neighborhood than in commercial areas.
Public Safety – Fire & Emergency Services

- As in 2012, firefighting services and emergency medical staff are given high ratings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2014 (% Positive)</th>
<th>2012 (% Positive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire and rescue’s overall performance meets community needs</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Medical Services staff is skilled and reliable</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firefighting services are prompt and reliable</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public Safety – Police Department

• Overall, Prince William County’s police department receives very high ratings for performance, being courteous/helpful, and responding quickly to requests for police assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014 (% Positive)</th>
<th>2012 (% Positive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police department’s overall performance meets community needs</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Officers are courteous and helpful to all community members</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests for police assistance receive a prompt response</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
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Public Safety – Police Department (cont’d)

- Overall, residents agree the police department treats everyone fairly, provides adequate information and crime prevention programs, and has positive attitudes and behaviors towards county residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014 (%) Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Police department treats everyone fairly regardless of race, gender, ethnic or national origin</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Police department provides adequate information and crime prevention programs</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Police department has positive attitudes and behaviors towards residents</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Question not asked in 2012.
Transportation - Getting Around

• While residents generally agree they can easily get around by car within the county, they are less likely to agree that the transportation & road systems adequately support development. 2014 scores on both these aspects were significantly lower than 2012.

• The rating of the local bus service is largely positive and consistent with 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014 (% Positive)</th>
<th>2012 (% Positive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can easily get around by car in the county</td>
<td>80% 🔻</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street lighting provided where needed in county</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local bus services meets residents' needs</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can get around easily by car outside the county</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; road systems adequately support development</td>
<td>62% 🔻</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• When asked what is the most important issue for the County to address, the largest number of respondents (44%) stated a traffic or transportation related item.

↑/↓ Indicate a statistically higher/lower score than 2012 at the 95% confidence level.
Summary & Conclusions
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- Overall, the County performs very well, with most current (2014) scores remaining similar to 2012.
- Residents believe Prince William County offers a very high quality of life, are satisfied with County services, and believe the services offered are effective and efficient.
- Examining the full report will provide additional insights into how data varies by region and key demographics such as income, age, ethnicity, and length of residency.
- When asked about key issues, most citizens raised the issues of transportation and infrastructure as one that needs to be addressed.
Project Overview
Focus on Outcomes

• Focus in 2012/2014 on outcomes – being the “community of choice” – rather than simply performance

• The 2014 survey used the same measurement scale as was used in 2012 to ensure easy comparisons for 2014 and beyond.

*Throughout the survey, other scales follow the same format.*
Why Communities Do Surveys?

• Communities such as Prince William County do surveys to:
  • Provide valid insights from a representative sample on performance
  • Provide reliable indicators of public support for proposed policies and initiatives
  • Track changes in demographics and attitudes
  • Help inform budget and resource allocation decisions
• Done correctly, community surveys provide reliable and valid data to inform a community’s strategic decisions
  • More representative sample than people who attend town hall meetings or write to their council members
  • Controlled responses—everyone gets asked the same questions in the same way
  • Independent administration—reduces bias
Study Methodology

- Draw Address-Based Sample of All Residents
- Check for Matching Landline Telephone Numbers
  - Yes: Notification Invite to Complete Online or Inbound Call
  - No: Notification Invite to Complete Online or Inbound Call
- Follow-Up Calls to Non-Responders
- Reminder to complete online