

Public Policy Institute

Western Carolina University

2020-2021 Matthews Citizen Satisfaction Survey



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2020, the Public Policy Institute (PPI) at Western Carolina University (WCU) facilitated a survey for the Town of Matthews, N.C. The survey explored various citizen attitudes about Matthews' town services, government leadership, and the community. The survey instrument was distributed through the U.S. mail using a stratified sampling method. Several key findings emerged from the results that may be of interest for Town leaders:

- Overall, respondents shared positive views of living in Matthews, with the services provided, and with the professionalism of Town employees. Large majorities agreed that “Matthews is a good place to live,” “Matthews is a safe place to live,” and that they are satisfied with the town’s current level of services”
 - Over three-fourths of respondents agreed that “Town employees do their job in a professional manner.”
 - Respondents noted high levels of satisfaction with various town offices and departments, such as fire/EMS (72%), police (80%), and parks and recreation (71%). Less than half of respondents had interacted in the past with the town manager’s office or animal control.
 - Planning and development had the highest level of dissatisfaction (18%), with almost half (42%) of respondents expressing satisfaction with that office.
 - The largest concerns involved a need for the Town to focus on “properly managed growth and development” (50%) and maintaining a “small town feeling and identity” (42%).
 - Of those that reported using them, large majorities of respondents stated they were satisfied with various facilities operated by the Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Resources Department.
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I. SURVEY METHODS

The Public Policy Institute worked closely with the town leadership of Matthews, NC. Building upon previous town surveys, a series of questions was created to assess community opinions on various issues (see Appendix I for all questions and responses). The PPI staff used property parcel ownership records¹ and U.S. Census block data to identify 12 target areas based on population density and racial diversity within the city limits. The PPI staff identified a respondent pool using a stratified random sampling strategy. This type of sampling design uses neighborhood demographic information to divide the population into representative strata to create a representative respondent pool.² As an example, US Census estimates suggest that about 10% of Matthews' population is African-American.³ Therefore, about 10% of the respondent pool was selected from census blocks with high African-American populations. To ensure that only Matthews' residents were included, any property owner listed with a mailing address outside of the city limits was excluded. Property owners listed as corporations, nonprofits, government agencies, or other private businesses were also excluded from the respondent list. Duplicate entries, such as an individual's second property that was owned, were also excluded. In total, 3,330 potential respondents across all areas of the town were included in the respondent pool.

In November 2020, all surveys were printed and mailed from the Western Carolina University's Print Shop. Respondents living in 4 of the 12 targeted areas of Matthews that, according to Census block data, have a Hispanic population above 10% were sent the survey in both English and Spanish. In total, 2,167 surveys were sent with the English-only version and 1,163 respondents received both the English and Spanish versions. The survey packet also included a cover letter explaining the survey's purpose and that it was voluntary and confidential. Contact information was also included as well as a self-addressed pre-paid envelope for the respondent to return the survey.

From the initial mailing, 39 packets were returned as "undeliverable." Responses were collected through the end of January 2021. The PPI received 536 usable responses, providing a response rate of 16.2%. Once received, all respondent answers were coded into Excel worksheets by the PPI staff using a common coding system. Rankings of agree/disagree answers were given a numeric value to allow for statistical analysis. Any open-ended responses were transcribed exactly as written by the respondent. Numerical data were analyzed using statistical software programs Excel and STATA. With 536 responses using stratified sampling and an estimated adult population of 26,046, this provides a margin of error of 4.2% at the 95% confidence level.

As with any survey, some limitation should be noted. First, we relied on property ownership records. While this provides a useful means of gaining a respondent pool, it means that residents who are renters are underrepresented in the results. The response rate (16%) may have been influenced by the busy election season, an overload of campaign flyers, the push for completing the U.S. Census, and other mass mailings. As noted below, non-White residents are also

¹ <https://maps.mecklenburgcountync.gov/notify/>

² Ammons, D.N. 2008. *Tools for Decision Making: A Practical Guide for Local Government*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

³ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/matthewstownorthcarolina/PST045219>.

underrepresented in the sample based on Census population estimates. Lastly, it is important to note that the data represent a snapshot of public opinion that may be in-part influenced by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. While some of the questions were phrased to indicate pre-COVID-19 usage, some responses may have been influenced by current health trends.

II. SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS METHODS

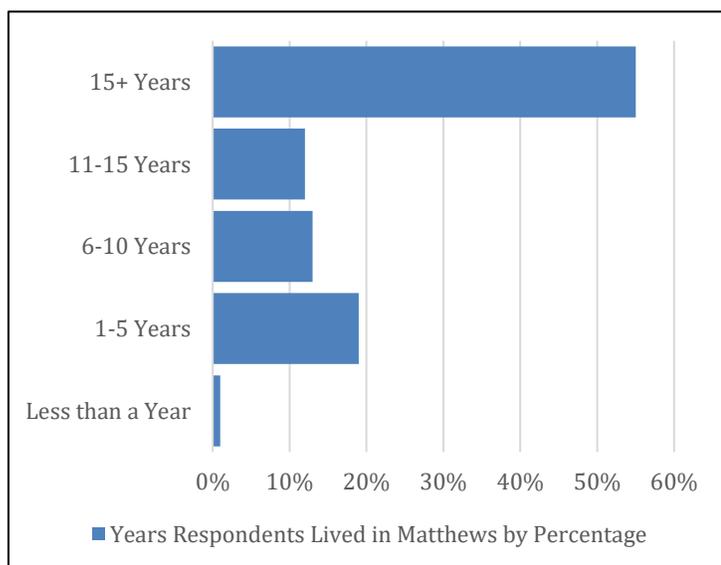
Of the 536 surveys received, 504 respondents were residents of Matthews either full or part-time, 16 respondents were business owners, and 2 were employees who worked but did not live in Matthews. Most of the respondents (59%) identified as male, 37% of the respondents identified as female, 1% identified as non-binary, and 3% preferred not to respond. The sample underrepresents the female population, as U.S. Census data for Matthews in 2019 estimated that females to make up 50% of the total population.⁴

About 88% of respondents identified as White/Caucasian, 5% of respondents identified as Black/African American, 3% of respondents identified as Hispanic/Latino, 2% of respondents identified as Asian, 1% of respondents identified as Arab/Middle Eastern, and 1% of respondents identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native. The sample overrepresented the White/Caucasian population in Matthews, as the U.S. Census reported White/Caucasian residents to make up

approximately 78% of the population. Likewise, the sample slightly underrepresents the minority populations, with the U.S. Census reporting Black/African American residents making up approximately 10% of the population, Hispanic/Latino residents making up 7% of the population, and Asian residents representing 4% of the population.

In regard to age, less than 1% of respondents were between the ages of 18-22, 6% of respondents were between the ages of 23-35, 15% of respondents were between the ages of 36-45, 19% of respondents were between the ages of 46-55, 36% of respondents were between the ages of 56-65, and 34% of respondents were over the age of 65. The U.S. Census estimates that individuals 65 or older to make up approximately 17% of the total population, giving this sample an over representation of that age bracket.⁵

Figure 1: Age Distribution



⁴ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/matthewstowncarolina/PST045219>

⁵ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/matthewstowncarolina/PST045219>

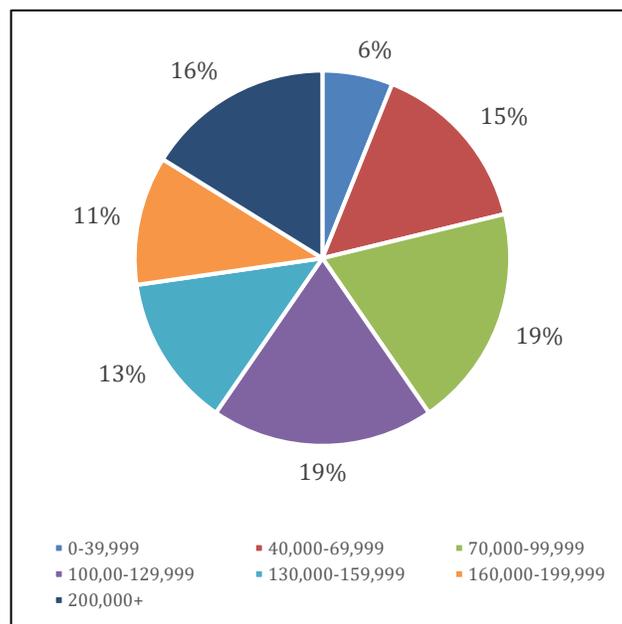
Over half of the respondents (55%) have lived in Matthews for more than 15 years. Few respondents (1%) have lived in Matthews for less than a year, 19% of respondents have lived in Matthew for 1-5 years, 13% have lived in Matthews for 6-10 years, and 12% of respondents have lived in Matthews for 11-15 years.

The median household income for the town of Matthews in 2019, according to the U.S. Census, was \$84,000, and the median respondent household income was \$100,000 to \$129,999. The largest groups by self-reported income were those earning between \$70,000 to \$99,999 (19%) and those earning between \$100,000 and \$129,999 (19%). Another 16% reported earning above \$200,000.

On the lower side, 6% of respondents stated they had a total household income under \$40,000, while another 15% of respondents stated they had a total household income between \$40,000 to \$69,000. As the respondent pool was based on property ownership, it was somewhat expected that the respondent income levels may be higher than Census data medians.

Survey respondents had varying employment status, with a majority (55%) indicating full-time employment, 9% identifying as part-time employees, and 6% stating that they were self-employed. About one-third (32%) of respondents reported that they are retired, which is consistent with the sample response of age. Collectively about 4% of respondents reported being either unable to work, full-time students, currently looking for work, or not employed and are not looking for work at this time.

Figure 2: Wealth Distribution



III. SURVEY RESULTS

The survey asked many questions concerning general perceptions of the Town and government leaders, areas of focus for the Town, Town services and events, and citizen involvement, among other questions (see the Appendix I for full wording of each question and response percentages). The questions were grouped for this report into three categories: general perceptions of the community, opinions of Matthews' town government job performance, and citizen involvement in the community and with town governance.

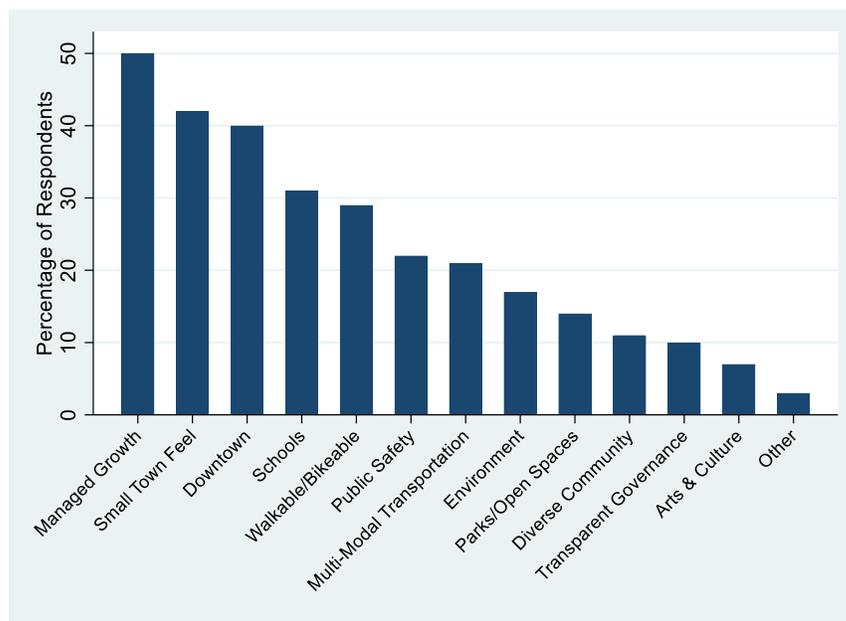
A. General Perceptions:

On average, survey respondents expressed highly positive perceptions of the Town of Matthews (Q2). Nearly all respondents (98%) either agreed or strongly agreed that “Matthews is a good place to live.” Large majorities also agreed or strongly agreed that Matthews is a “good place to raise children” (95%), is a “safe place to live” (94%), and is a “good place to retire” (73%). Majorities also agreed that Matthews “provides a good environment for business” (69%) and that the Town is

“responsive to the needs of citizens.” These general trends did not differ significantly when controlling for the respondents’ age group, race, gender, or income level, although those that reported living in Matthews for a longer period of time generally gave more positive assessments of the Town.⁶

Respondents also provided feedback on which issues or areas are the most important for Matthews (Q4). Respondents could check the boxes for up to 3 choices of 12 listed options or write in their own issue that needs to be addressed by Town leaders (see **Figure 3**). The most often selected options all involved some aspect of controlling development or keeping the “small town feel” of Matthews. As shown in Figure 3, half (50%) of the respondents noted that “properly managed growth and development” was one of their top three concerns, followed by the need to maintain a “small town feeling and identity” (42%), and then a “vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown” (40%).

Figure 3: Perceived Needs



Residents were also asked questions about acceptance of diverse individuals (Q5). Overall, a majority of respondents stated that the community is at least “somewhat” accepting of individuals of diverse races/ethnic groups (77%), various religions (77%), and those with disabilities (73%). Respondents overall were less certain concerning the community’s acceptability of diverse gender identities and/or diverse sexual orientations. The most common answer for acceptance of both of these groups was “neutral or unsure” (45% and 46%, respectively). Forty-five percent indicated that the community was either “very accepting” or “somewhat accepting” of those with diverse gender identities and 46% marked one of these choices for accepting those of diverse sexual orientations.

Overall, residents that reported living in Matthews for a longer period of time were statistically more likely to report that the community was more accepting of people of different races/ethnicities, religions, and those with disabilities, after controlling for other demographic factors. However, female respondents and older respondents felt that the community was less accepting of those with disabilities, after controlling for other factors. There were no statistically significant differences

⁶ Statistical analyses were conducted on survey responses using STATA, controlling for the respondents’ self-reported income levels, age groups, and gender. Throughout the paper, any differences related to these demographics are reported if they were statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval.

based on demographic factors for respondents' assessments of inclusion for those of varying gender identities or sexual orientations.

B. Town Job Performance

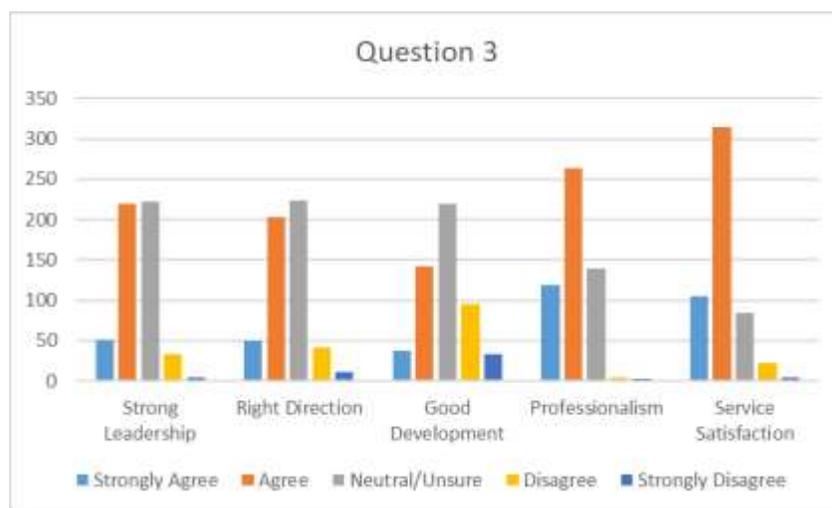
We asked respondents several questions about public services and leadership in Matthews, as shown in **Figure 4**. Concerning the performance of Town leadership (**Q3**), respondents were asked for their perceptions on positive statements made about the Town of Matthews. A majority of respondents (52%) either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that elected Town leaders showed strong leadership. When it came to whether elected Town leaders are guiding Matthews in the right direction, a plurality of respondents (48%) either “agreed” or “strongly agreed,” however, a large number (42%) were “neutral or unsure.” Respondents were less sure about whether Town leaders are “making good decisions about development,” with 34% indicating that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” while another 24% either “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed.” A majority of respondents (72%) agreed that the Town leadership acts in a professional manner. In the last statement in **Question #3**, a large majority (79%) are satisfied with the Town’s current level of public services.

As far as different groups, those respondents that reported living in Matthews for a long period of time gave more positive answers when asked about “strong leaders,” “town employee professionalism,” and “satisfaction with the town’s level of public services” in **Question #3**. Female respondents, however, were statistically more likely to have negative responses concerning Town employee professionalism and reported lower levels of service satisfaction, after controlling for other factors. Demographic differences such as age, income, and race did not appear to influence respondents' answers to the series of statements in **Question #3**.

In **Question #6**, residents of Matthews were asked to provide their opinion regarding many facilities operated by Matthews Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Resource Department. Respondents were allowed to indicate whether they “Have not Visited/No Opinion,” believed the location to be “Satisfactory,” or thought it “Needs Improvement.” It was clear town residents were not using some resources. Majorities within the survey indicated that they either had

not used or had no opinion about the Crews Road Recreation Center, the Fullwood Theatre, and the McDowell Arts Center. Overall, those that used the various facilities reported high levels of satisfaction. Only those outdoor facilities related to green spaces and parks (9%), picnic shelters (10%), and playgrounds (10%) received any substantial responses of “needs improvement.”

Figure 4: Leadership Opinions



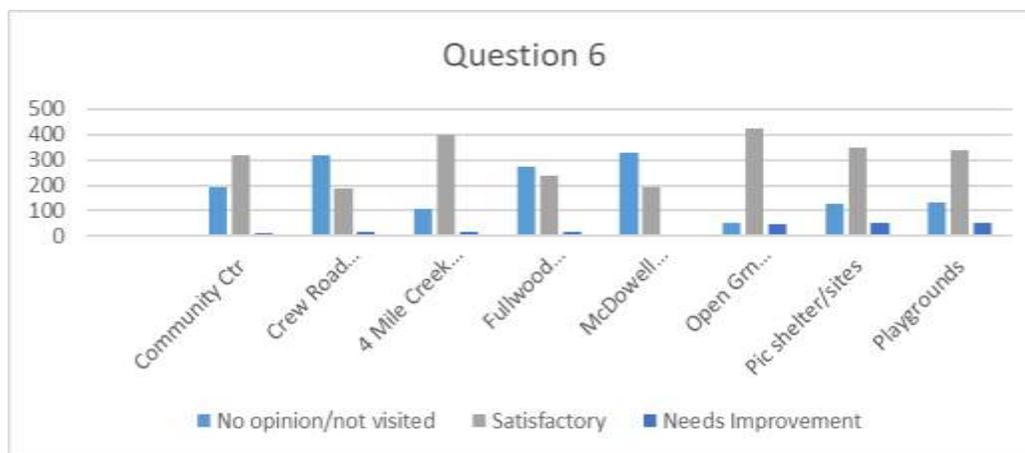
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As “open spaces/parks,” “picnic shelters/sites,” and “playgrounds” had the highest reported levels of needing improvements, it may be valuable to examine these questions in more detail. Older respondents were more likely to report the need for improvement of all three of these types of facilities, after controlling for other demographic factors. The only other demographic factor that matter with these facilities involved gender, as female respondents were more likely to report that the playgrounds need improvement.

Figure 5: Park Facilities



Residents were asked how satisfied they were with the job performance of each department/office in the Town of Matthews (Q7). Residents had the option of responding “no interactions,” “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” “somewhat dissatisfied,” and “very dissatisfied.” Specifically, respondents were at least “somewhat satisfied” with Garbage/Recycling services (98%), Police (80%), and Fire/EMS departments (72%).

A majority of respondents (58%) had no interactions with the town manager’s office. Of the 42% that did have an interaction, the majority of these (90%) were at least “somewhat satisfied” with the town manager and staff’s job performance with about 10% of those that shared an opinion indicating some dissatisfaction. Similarly, most respondents (54%) have not interacted with the Animal Control department, but of those that had, most (89%) were at least “somewhat satisfied.” Only 11% of those that had interactions with Animal Control noted they were at least “somewhat dissatisfied.”

Conversely, while respondents, generally, were satisfied with most departments’ services, respondents seem to have more issues “Planning and Development” and “Streets/Traffic/Sidewalks” services. Of those that reported interactions with Planning and Development, a majority (69%) reported they were at least “somewhat satisfied” while nearly one-third (31%) reported they were at least “somewhat dissatisfied.” Similarly, of those that reported an opinion on “Streets/Traffic/Sidewalks,” 79% noted they were at least “somewhat satisfied” while 21% noted they were at least “somewhat dissatisfied.” While not indicative of extreme dissatisfaction, these two areas appeared as the highest categories of concern for residents. In assessing respondents’ answers for the “Planning and Development” and

“Streets/Traffic/Sidewalks,” female respondents were statistically more likely to report that they were unsatisfied with the “Planning and Development Office,” but other demographic factors did not appear to influence opinions. For assessments of “Streets/Traffic/Sidewalks,” no demographic factors appeared to influence respondent opinions.

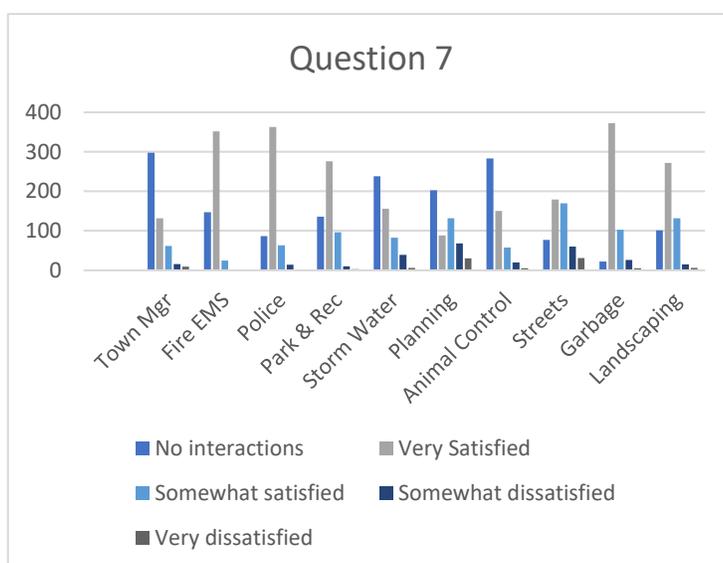
Residents were also asked specific questions about how satisfied they are with the curbside recycling, garbage, and yard waste services they receive through Republic Services (Q8). Residents had the option of responding “no interactions,” “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” “somewhat dissatisfied,” or “very dissatisfied.” Satisfaction ratings were high for these services. Approximately 95% of respondents were at least “somewhat satisfied” with their curbside recycling service, with nearly 83% of those being “very satisfied.” Similarly, approximately 98% of respondents were at least “somewhat satisfied” with their garbage service, with nearly 84% of those being “very satisfied.” Yard waste service had a slight drop-off in favorability, with approximately 91% of respondents were at least “somewhat satisfied” with their yard waste service, with almost 78% of those being “very satisfied.”

Residents were asked how they would rate the physical condition of town-maintained streets within the Town of Matthews (Q12). Residents had the option of responding “excellent,” “good,” “average,” “needs minor improvement,” or “needs major improvement.” A plurality of respondents (41%), believed the physical condition of Matthews’ roads to be “good,” 13% of respondents believed they were in “excellent” condition, 25% believed their physical condition to be “average,” 15% believed they require “minor improvements,” and 6% believed they require “major improvements.” There were no statistically significant differences in responses to this question based on age, race, gender, time living in Matthews, or income level.

Lastly, concerning town services, respondents were asked their willingness to pay higher property taxes to support improvements in seven different areas (Q13). This question should best be thought of as a means to assess respondents’ priorities and may not represent an accurate portrayal of respondents’ willingness to accept tax increases. For example, the potential improvements were not set comparatively related to each other (such as street improvements *or* increased police service). However, a general willingness to pay a higher tax rate in support of some services and an unwillingness for higher tax rates for other services likely shows respondents’ preferences, similar to **Question #4**.

With this qualification in mind, **Question #13** may be examined in further detail. One means of analysis may be to look at the number of respondents that were willing to accept *any* tax increases

Figure 6: Opinions of Services



for certain improvements. As we look across all the choices, “no tax increase” was the most often selected category in six of the seven listed improvements. Respondents provided the most support for “increasing greenways, multi-use paths and sidewalks throughout town” as 73% of respondents were willing to accept at least some tax increase for these improvements. The least support came for “making the streets look more attractive,” as only half (50%) of the respondents were willing to accept any tax increase for this improvement.

Table 1 lists the improvements mentioned in the survey and ranks them by the percentage of respondents willing to accept any tax increases to improve those services or infrastructure issues. The first numeric column notes the percentage of respondents that are accepting of some level of tax increase. The second numerical column noted the average amount of tax increase that is supported overall by the respondents, including those that selected no tax increase. Again, Table 1 and the responses to **Question 13** must be taken with some pause, as the listed improvements were not compared to each other, but may be viewed as one measure of residents’ priorities.

Improvement	Percentage Accepting of Some Tax Increase	Average Tax Increase Rate Supported	Demographic Differences⁷
Increasing greenways, multi-use paths and sidewalks throughout town for pedestrians and bicyclists	73%	0.84 cent	Older Residents (-)
Improving condition of streets/pavement	70%	0.62 cent	None
Increased fire and rescue services	70%	0.75 cent	Older Residents (+) Females (+)
Increased police service	70%	0.78 cent	Older Residents (+) Females (+)
Development of new parks or increased amenities within existing parks	69%	0.78 cent	Females (+)
Increasing street network through town to improve connectivity	55%	0.63 cent	None
Making streets look more attractive	50%	0.57 cent	None

⁷ This column represents those demographic groups that showed a statically significant influence (95% confidence interval) on the willingness to accept increase tax rates for each improvement, controlling for all the other demographic factors. An ordered logit model was used, with the dependent variable being the willingness for increased taxes (from “none” to “2 cents”) and the demographic characteristics serving as the independent variables. A plus sign (“+”) indicates those demographic groups what were willing to accept higher tax rates while a negative sign (“-“) indicates that group was less supportive of increased taxes when compared to others.

There were some statistically significant differences among respondents' willingness to accept increased taxes for some (but not all) improvements when controlling for the respondent's race, age, gender, length of residency in Matthews, and self-reported income level. There were no statistically significant differences between respondents based on age, race, time living in Matthews, gender, or income level as to the improvements dealing with "improving street conditions," "street connectivity," and "street attractiveness." For the improvement concerning increasing greenways and multi-use paths, older respondents were less supportive of tax increases for these improvements than were younger respondents. For both fire/rescue and police, older respondents were more willing than younger respondents to accept increased taxes as were female respondents when compared to male respondents, after controlling for other factors. The only other difference based on demographics involved the development of new parks and adding park amenities, where female respondents were statistically more likely to support increased taxes than were male respondents, controlling for other factors.

C. Citizen Community Involvement

A last series of questions involved citizen involvement within the Matthews community. Two questions focused on the downtown area. The first asked about the frequency of visitation to downtown. Overall, 70% of respondents indicated that they visited downtown at least weekly, with another 20% once a month, and about 11% visiting downtown every few months or less. Respondents were also asked their reasons for visiting the downtown area (Q10). The respondents could select up to three choices from nine listed reasons or provide their own reason in an open-ended response. Overall, private businesses were a key reason for a downtown visit, as respondents noted restaurants (83%), stores (57%), and drinking establishments (38%) as a reason to visit downtown. Also noted by respondents were government services, such as the Post Office (76%), Library (61%), and Special Events (57%). Half of the respondents listed the Farmers Market as a reason for visiting downtown, while fewer respondents included Town Hall (10%) or private offices (4%) as reasons. About 5% of respondents wrote in their own answers, with the most frequent responses being walking for exercise and attending church.

Question #11 asked respondents to rate a series of special events that occurred in Matthews. While large majorities of respondents did not attend many of the events, those that did were generally satisfied with their experiences. Table 2 breaks down the responses based on just those residents that reported attending the event. The rows are also ranked from highest to lowest reported attendance, with an important note that only "Matthews Alive" and "Food Truck Fridays & Concert Series" were above 50% with reported attendance by respondents. As viewed from the left two numerical columns, very few respondents that reported attending the event reported dissatisfaction. Indeed, for those that reported attending, "very satisfied" was the most often given answer.

Two other questions asked respondents their preferred way to receive information from the Town and their awareness of opportunities for involvement with the Town. For receiving information, a plurality of respondents (36%) indicated that "direct mailings" were still their preferred way of receiving Town information. Electronic means such as email newsletters (19%), social media outlets (15%), the Matthews' web page (14%), and CharMeck Alerts (5%) were also noted. More traditional methods such as flyers/pamphlets (3%), newspapers (3%), street banners (2%), and radio/television (1%) were selected less often.

Table 2: Satisfaction with Town Events					
Event	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Percentage Attending
Matthews Alive	<1%	2%	16%	82%	79%
Food Truck Friday & Concert	1%	3%	22%	75%	63%
Beach Festival	1%	1%	16%	82%	43%
Hometown Holiday	<0%	1%	25%	75%	32%
Charlotte Symphony Night	<1%	1%	10%	88%	31%
Pawsitively Matthews	1%	<1%	22%	77%	17%
Earth Day & Kids in Nature Day	3%	<1%	23%	73%	11%
Not so Spooky Halloween	2%	2%	29%	68%	11%

For participation methods, majorities of respondents indicated they were aware of public meetings (74%) and public hearings (62%). Smaller numbers of respondents indicated awareness of citizen advisory boards (41%), other volunteering opportunities (38%), information sessions/open houses (28%), and less than one-fifth (19%) were aware of Matthews 101.

III. Conclusions and Moving Forward

Overall, the respondents to this survey presented a positive picture of Matthews. Satisfaction across all areas and services was generally high. Most respondents expressed positive opinions of Town leadership. While many respondents did not attend the various Town events, those that did attend reported high levels of satisfaction. In general, there is much for the Town to be proud of, based on respondents' opinions.

Concerns from respondents appeared most often with issues of development or keeping the “small town feel.” Residents in the survey noted problems with traffic and a fear of development causing other issues. This, in part, may explain the somewhat lower satisfaction of respondents when asked about “Planning and Development” and “Streets/Traffic/Sidewalks.” We would encourage Town leadership to continue to monitor this issue and be responsive to residents' concerns, which were also noted in the open-ended comments as well, such as one respondent that wrote:

Stop all of the runaway development!!! Neighborhoods, etc. look like Charlotte. Matthews is barely holding on to town-like feel. Definitely heading in the WRONG direction. If we wanted to live in a crowded, over developed place, we would live in Charlotte. Developers own Charlotte City Council, and it looks like they are buying ours more every day!!

Another respondent noted:

Approving multiple apartment complexes without road improvements is a huge mistake. Traffic is not very good and getting worse. We love Matthews [sic] and it feels like it is in jeopardy of changing in ways that will lose the small town feel.

Respondents also reported low levels of participation in several town events and low levels of use for some park and recreation facilities. For town events, some of this is may be expected as these events likely target specific types of residents (such as those with children for “Earth Day & Kids Nature Day” or those with pets for “PAWSitively Matthews”). For many of these events, there could be capacity issues where it is not possible to include more participants as well. It is important to note that those attending these events reported high levels of satisfaction, but Town leadership may want to examine ways to include more participation or combine events to appeal to a wider audience of Town residents. Similarly, many of the parks facilities may be underutilized. Perhaps improvements to Town park facilities may be helpful, but again, capacity issues may also be at play.

The downtown area appears vibrant, as a majority (70%) reported visiting downtown at least weekly. Respondents noted using a mix of both private businesses and government services. While a specific question was not asked, one often-mentioned concern from the open-ended responses noted concerns over parking. As with any commercial areas, access to nearby parking can be a difficult matter, and Matthews is certainly not alone in this issue. Town leaders may want to examine parking access and infrastructure in the downtown area. As one respondent noted:

Downtown Matthews needs more and better parking. Somehow the town seems to think everyone is going to walk/bike into town. Ain't [sic] happening! Over time this has driven many small businesses out of downtown Matthews. Sometimes it seems all the town wants is restaurants and bars downtown.

As far as interacting with its residents, a plurality of respondents noted that “direct mailings” were still a preferred means of communication, but perhaps this is due to less knowledge by residents of electronic means. Further, most respondents were not aware of opportunities to interact with the Town through volunteering opportunities, committees, and Matthew 101. Perhaps information efforts about these opportunities may help residents be aware of these opportunities and increase participation.

Lastly, the limitations of this study should be noted. Moving forward, Town leaders should continue to seek input from groups that may not be fully represented in this survey, particularly renters, those of varying races and ethnicities, and those middle to lower income residents. Their voice matters as well and may not be fully exemplified in these results. While precautions were taken to create a representative sample, such as stratified sampling methods, no population sample is 100% accurate.

The Public Policy Staff appreciated the change to work with the Town of Matthews on this survey. We applaud the Town leadership in seeking direct involvement from its citizens in the policy-making process. We sincerely hope that this survey is a useful tool in future policy decisions.

APPENDIX I: Question Wording and Results

(Values may not equally 100% due to rounding)

Q1 Which of the following best describes your connection with the Town of Matthews?

<i>Full-time Resident</i>	98%
<i>Part-Time Resident</i>	1%
<i>Matthews Business Owner</i>	<1%
<i>Work in Matthews but not a resident</i>	<1%

Q2 Please select your level of agreement with the following statements:

Your General Perceptions of Matthews:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral or Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Matthews is a good place to raise children.	63%	32%	5%	<1%	0%
Matthews is a good place to live.	68%	31%	1%	<1%	0%
Matthews provides a good environment for businesses to succeed.	29%	40%	28%	2%	0%
The town is responsive to the needs of citizens.	24%	45%	26%	4%	1%
Matthews is a good place to retire.	38%	35%	24%	3%	<1%
Matthews is a safe place to live.	45%	49%	4%	1%	<1%

Q3 Please select your level of agreement with the following statements:

Your Perceptions of Town Leadership:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral or Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Elected town leaders show strong leadership.	10%	42%	42%	6%	1%
Elected town leaders are guiding Matthews in the right direction.	9%	39%	42%	8%	2%
Elected town leaders are making good decisions about development.	7%	27%	42%	18%	6%
Town employees do their job in a professional manner.	22%	50%	27%	1%	1%
I am satisfied with the town's current level of public services.	20%	59%	16%	4%	1%

Q4 Which of the following do you think are the most important areas of focus for the Town of Matthews?

(Note: Respondents could select up to three choices from 12 listed options or write in their own area of focus. Percentages represent the percent of total respondents that selected each option. The options are ranked from most selected to least):

<i>Properly Managed Growth and Development</i>	50%
<i>Small Town Feeling and Identity</i>	42%
<i>Vibrant, Pedestrian-Friendly Downtown</i>	40%
<i>Quality, Community Serving Schools</i>	31%
<i>Walkable and Bikeable Community</i>	29%
<i>Community Dedicated to Public Safety</i>	22%
<i>Well-Planned, Multi-Modal Transportation System</i>	21%
<i>Healthy, Sustainable Environment</i>	17%
<i>Expanded Park and Open Space System</i>	14%
<i>A Diverse Community</i>	11%
<i>Transparent Governance/Engagement</i>	10%
<i>Destination for Arts and Culture</i>	7%
<i>Other</i>	3%

Q5 How accepting do you think Matthews is as a community towards the following:

	<u>Very Accepting</u>	<u>Somewhat Accepting</u>	<u>Neutral or Unsure</u>	<u>Somewhat Unaccepting</u>	<u>Very Unaccepting</u>
Individuals of diverse races/ethnic groups	44%	33%	18%	5%	1%
Individuals of various religions	47%	30%	19%	3%	1%
Individuals with disabilities	47%	26%	24%	2%	<1%
Individuals of diverse gender identities	27%	18%	47%	8%	1%
Individuals of diverse sexual orientations	28%	18%	46%	8%	1%

Q6 What is your opinion regarding facilities operated by Matthews Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resource Department?

Facility	Have not visited/ no opinion	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Community Center	38%	60%	2%
Crews Road Recreation Center	62%	36%	3%
Four Mile Creek Greenway	21%	75%	3%
Fullwood Theatre	53%	45%	3%
McDowell Arts Center	63%	36%	1%
Open Green Spaces/Parks	11%	80%	9%
Picnic Shelter/ Picnic Sites	25%	65%	10%
Playgrounds	26%	64%	10%

Q7 How satisfied you are with the job performance of each department/office in the Town of Matthews?

Office/Department	No Interactions	Very Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Town Manager & Staff	58%	26%	12%	3%	2%
Fire/EMS	28%	67%	5%	>1%	<1%
Police Department	16%	68%	12%	3%	<1%
Parks, Recreation, Cultural Resources	26%	53%	18%	2%	1%
Storm water	45%	30%	16%	7%	1%
Planning & Development	39%	17%	25%	13%	6%
Animal Control	54%	29%	11%	4%	1%
Streets/Traffic/Sidewalks	15%	35%	33%	12%	6%
Garbage/Recycling	4%	70%	19%	5%	1%
Landscaping	19%	52%	25%	3%	1%

Q8 How satisfied are you with the following services provided by Republic Services?

Service	No Interactions	Very Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Curbside RECYCLING collection	1%	79%	17%	4%	0%
Curbside GARBAGE collection	1%	82%	16%	1%	0%
Curbside YARD WASTE collection	4%	68%	20%	6%	2%

Q9 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, how often did you visit downtown Matthews?

Several times per week	30%
Once a week.....	40%
Once a month.....	20%
Every Few Months	9%
Yearly	1%
Never	<1%

Q10 What are your reasons for visiting downtown Matthews? (Mark all that apply)

(Note: Respondents could select as many choices as they wanted from 10 listed options or write in their own reason for visiting downtown. Percentages represent the percent of total respondents that selected each option. The options are ranked from most selected to least):

Restaurants.....	83%
Post Office.....	76%
Library	61%
Special Events.....	57%
Stores and Shopping.....	57%
Farmers Market	50%
Drinking establishments	38%
Town Hall	10%
Other:	5%
Private, non-commercial offices	4%

Q11 How would you rate your overall experience at town events you attended in the past 24 months?

	Did Not Attend	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Earth Day and Kids in Nature Day	89%	8%	3%	0%	<1%
Not So Spooky Halloween	89%	7%	3%	<1%	<1%
Hometown Holiday Celebration	68%	24%	8%	<1%	0%
Beach Fest	57%	35%	7%	<1%	1%
Matthews Alive	21%	64%	13%	2%	<1%
Charlotte Symphony Night	69%	27%	3%	<1%	0%
Pawsitivley Matthews	83%	<1%	13%	4%	<1%
Food Truck Fridays & Concert Series	37%	47%	14%	2%	1%

Q12 How would you rate the physical condition of town-maintained streets within the Town of Matthews? (Reminder: NCDOT maintains most of the larger roadways in Matthews, such as I-485, Independence Boulevard, Highway 51, Idlewild Road, Margaret-Wallace Road, Sam Newell Road, South Trade Street, John Street, Weddington Road and McKee Road). Most subdivision streets are maintained by the Town of Matthews.

Excellent..... 13%
 Good 41%
 Average..... 25%
 Needs minor improvement 16%
 Needs major improvement..... 6%

Q13 The current Town property tax rate is 28 cents/\$100. A 1 cent increase generates approximately \$500,000 in revenue and raises taxes on a home valued at \$300,000 by \$30 annually. How much additional property tax per \$100 are you willing to pay for the specific services, projects, facilities listed below?

Improvement	None	½ cent	1 cent	1.5 cents	2 cents	More than 2 cents
Improving condition of streets/pavement	30%	28%	28%	4%	6%	2%
Increasing street network through town to improve connectivity	45%	20%	21%	4%	7%	2%
Making streets look more attractive	50%	23%	17%	4%	5%	2%
Increasing greenways, multi-use paths and sidewalks throughout town for pedestrians and bicyclists	27%	24%	29%	5%	10%	6%
Increased fire and rescue services	30%	28%	27%	5%	8%	3%
Increased police service	30%	26%	27%	5%	8%	4%
Development of new parks or increased amenities within existing parks	31%	26%	26%	5%	7%	5%

Q14 What is the best way for the Town of Matthews to get in contact with you?

(Note: Respondents were instructed to pick one choice. The options are ranked from most selected to least):

- Direct mailings 36%
- Town email monthly newsletter 19%
- Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor, Instagram..... 15%
- Town website (www.matthewsnc.gov) 14%
- CharMeck Alerts 5%
- Information flyers/pamphlets 3%
- Local newspapers/magazines..... 3%
- Other 2%
- Street Banners..... 2%
- Radio/Television..... 1%

Q15 The Town of Matthews offers multiple avenues for residents to become involved in town decision-making. Please indicate if you were aware of any of the following.

(Note: Respondents could select as many choices as they wanted from 6 listed options. Percentages represent the percent of total respondents that selected each option. The options are ranked from most selected to least):

Public meetings	74%
Public hearings	62%
Serving on citizen advisory committees	41%
Volunteer opportunities.....	38%
Information sessions or open houses	28%
Matthews 101.....	19%

Q16 How long have you lived and/or owned a business in Matthews?

Less than a year	1%
1-5 years.....	19%
6-10 years	13%
11-15 years	12%
More than 15 years	55%

Q17 What is your gender?

Male	59%
Female	37%
Non-binary.....	1%
Prefer not to respond.....	2%

Q18 What is your age?

18-22	<1%
23-35	6%
36-45	15%
46-55	19%
56-65	26%
65+	33%

Q19 How would you describe yourself?

American Indian/Alaskan Native.....	1%
Arab/Middle Eastern	<1%
Asian	2%
Black/African American.....	5%
Hispanic/Latino	3%
Pacific Islander/ Hawaiian	0%
White/Caucasian.....	87%
Other	3%

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<http://www.wcu.edu/about-wcu/centers-institutes-affiliates/public-policy-institute/>

Q20 What is your total household income?

Under \$40,000	7%
\$40,000 - \$69,999	15%
\$70,000 - \$99,999	19%
\$100,000 - \$129,999	19%
\$130,000 - \$159,999	13%
\$160,000 - \$199,999	11%
More than \$200,000	16%

Q21 What is your employment status?

Employed full-time	55%
Employed part-time	4%
Self-employed	6%
Retired	32%
Unable to work	<1%
Full time Student	<1%
Unemployed and currently looking for work	1%
Unemployed and not currently looking for work	1%