

2006
COMMUNITY SURVEY

Prepared for:

City of Alexandria, VA



October 2006

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Center for Research & Public Policy (CRPP) is pleased to present the results of a *2006 Community Survey* conducted among residents of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

The survey was designed to provide resident input on quality of life, local issues, needs and satisfaction with community services. This survey tracks some of the results from a similar survey conducted in 2004.

The research study included a comprehensive telephone survey. Interviews were conducted among 1001 residents of the City of Alexandria by phone. CRPP, working together with City of Alexandria officials, designed the survey instrument to be used when calling City of Alexandria residents.

This report summarizes information collected from telephone surveys conducted September 12 – September 26, 2006.

The survey instrument employed in the *2006 Community Survey* included the following areas for investigation:

- Impressions of quality of life living in Alexandria;
- Reasons for living in Alexandria;
- Strengths of Alexandria today;
- Issues of most concern;
- Rating community services;
- The degree City services meet expectations;
- Impressions of the value of taxes paid;
- Service awareness, use and ratings;
- Use of City communication opportunities;
- Measuring community need;
- Preparation for emergencies; and
- Demographics

Section II of this report discusses the Methodology used in the study, while Section III includes Highlights derived from an analysis of the quantitative research. Section IV is a Summary of Findings for the residential telephone surveys - a narrative account of the data.

Section V is an Appendix to the report containing a crosstabulation table, a copy of the survey instrument, and the composite aggregate data.

METHODOLOGY

Using a quantitative research design, CRPP completed 1001 interviews among residents of the City of Alexandria.

All telephone interviews were conducted between September 12 and September 26, 2006. Residents were contacted between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. weekdays and 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on the weekend.

Survey input was provided by City of Alexandria officials.

Survey design at CRPP is a careful, deliberative process to ensure fair, objective and balanced surveys. Staff members, with years of survey design experience, edit out any bias. Further, all scales used by CRPP (either numeric, such as one through ten, or wording such as strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree) are balanced evenly. And, placement of questions is carefully accomplished so that order has minimal impact.

All population-based surveys conducted by CRPP are proportional to population contributions within States, towns, and known census tract, group blocks and blocks. This distribution ensures truly representative results without significant under or over representation of various geographic or demographic groups within a sampling frame.

CRPP utilized a “super random digit” sampling procedure, which derives a working telephone sample of both listed and unlisted telephone numbers. This method of sample selection eliminates any bias toward only listed telephone numbers. Additionally, this process allows randomization of numbers, which equalizes the probability of qualified respondents being included in the sampling frame.

One survey instrument was used to elicit information from all City of Alexandria residents. Respondents qualified for the survey if they confirmed they were heads of households, at least eighteen years of age, and were current residents of the City of Alexandria, or lived within the City limits.

Training of telephone researchers and pre-test of the survey instrument occurred September 12, 2006.

All facets of the study were completed by CRPP’s senior staff and researchers. These aspects include: survey design, pre-test, computer programming, fielding, coding, editing, data entry, verification, validation and logic checks, computer analysis, analysis, and report writing.

Completion rates are a critical aspect of any telephone survey research. Because one group of people might be easier to reach than another group, it is important that concentrated efforts are made to reach all groups to an equal degree. A high completion rate means that a high percentage of the respondents within the original sample were actually contacted, and the resulting sample is not biased toward one potential audience. CRPP maintained an 78% completion rate on all calls made during this *2006 Community Survey*. And, a high completion rate, many times indicates an interest in the topic.

Statistically, a sample of 1001 surveys represents a margin for error of +/-3.0% at a 95% confidence level.

In theory, a sample of City of Alexandria residents will differ no more than +/-3.0% than if all City of Alexandria residents were contacted and included in the survey. That is, if random probability sampling procedures were reiterated over and over again, sample results may be expected to approximate the large population values within plus or minus 3.0% -- 95 out of 100 times.

Readers of this report should note that any survey is analogous to a snapshot in time and results are only reflective of the time period in which the survey was undertaken. Should concerted public relations or information campaigns be undertaken during or shortly after the fielding of the survey, the results contained herein may be expected to change and should be, therefore, carefully interpreted and extrapolated.

Furthermore, it is important to note that all surveys contain some component of “sampling error.” Error that is attributable to systematic bias has been significantly reduced by utilizing strict random probability procedures. This sample was strictly random in that selection of each potential respondent was an independent event, based on known probabilities.

Each qualified household within the City of Alexandria had an equal chance for participating in the study. Statistical random error, however, can never be eliminated but may be significantly reduced by increasing sample size.

HIGHLIGHTS

On Quality of Life...

- Perceptions of quality of life, living in Alexandria, remain high. In 2006, 97.3% suggested their overall quality of life was very good or good. In 2004, this percent was 97.2%.
- And, 82.7% of residents surveyed reported their quality of life, compared to two years ago, was better or remained good. This is up somewhat from 79.5% in 2004.
- Similar to numbers recorded in 2004 (55.7%), 56.8% said they were better off financially than they were two years ago. Some, 36.2%, indicated they were not better off today than two years ago.
- The primary reasons respondents suggested they decided to live in Alexandria continue to be location, proximity to work, housing, town character and community feeling, nice neighborhoods and birthplace.
- Things liked best about Alexandria included: convenience, cultural diversity, size of the community, clean, Old Town, safe, peaceful, quality of life, cultural events and the Farmer's Market.

On Local Issues...

- In an open end format question, the issues surveyed residents are most concerned about included: traffic (30.0%), taxes (16.0%), school system quality (9.3%), crime (10.0%), and lack of affordable housing (8.5%).
- Researchers asked respondents how serious a problem they considered eight different issues. Majorities considered traffic, local real estate taxes, and lack of affordable housing. Approximately one quarter to one third considered the following issues serious: crime, safety and security, quality of public education, amount of parks/fields/open space, and availability of transportation alternatives.

On Community Services...

- Overall positive ratings for the fire department (89.9%), emergency medical services (87.3%), and the police department (84.5%) remained similar to ratings collected in 2004 – 91.5%, 89.9% and 84.9% respectively.

- Ratings improved somewhat for the performance of sanitary and storm sewer services – up to 70.1% from 66.0% in 2004. And, the overall positive rating for courtesy of City government staff and employees declined to 74.1% from 81.6% in 2004.
- Those suggesting the City meets their service expectations always or most of the time moved to 79.3% from 83.3% in 2004.
- In a new question for 2006, 84.9% indicated that services in relationship to the taxes paid was very good or good. Some, 10.7% suggested poor or very poor.
- Over half of all respondents, 56.8% suggested the City should keep service and taxes at about the level they are currently. Another 17.3% would like the City to decrease taxes even if it has to reduce services. And, 15.2% suggested taxes be increased with an associated increase in levels of service. Some, 10.7%, were unsure.

On Service Awareness, Use and Satisfaction...

- Researchers asked all respondents if they were aware of fourteen different City services. If they were aware of each, they were asked if they used the services. And, if they used the service, researchers asked each to rate their satisfaction.
- The highest satisfaction levels were recorded for City sponsored events, DASH, City maintained parks and athletic fields, Health Department services, the General Service Desk in the lobby of City Hall, refuse collection and the recycling program.
- More moderating ratings were recorded for tax payment services, the Department of Human Services, City Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services, The Office of Human Rights, and the City car sticker process.
- Lower ratings were recorded for Real Estate Assessment services, and building permit and other Code Enforcement Department services.

On Communications...

- Survey respondents are more likely, since 2004, to use the City web site, the internet and read the City newsletter to get information on City services. They are less likely to use City pamphlets/notices/flyers.
- A growing number of resident respondents reported visiting the City's web site. Up to 54.4% from 45.6% in 2004. And, of this group the overall average positive rating for the web site is 79.7%. The average positive rating (on differing characteristics measured) in 2004 was 75.6%.

- A declining number of respondents reported reading the City newsletter always or most of the time – down to 50.0% from 59.1%. The average overall positive rating for the newsletter was 82.1% -- up somewhat from 80.1% (on different characteristics measured in 2004).

On Emergency Preparedness...

- While half of all respondents, 50.2% said they did not have enough supplies to last two weeks in case of a major disaster, 47.5% indicated they did. Some, 2.3% were unsure.

On Community Needs...

- When asked about any unmet or under-met community needs, 35.3% said none and 20.1% said “don’t know.”
- The most frequently named needs centered on: street maintenance, more recreational centers, more law enforcement, more traffic control, more affordable housing, shelters for homeless, improved education, and preserving the environment.
- In total, 46 different community needs were named 1074 times. Less frequently cited needs are presented within this report.

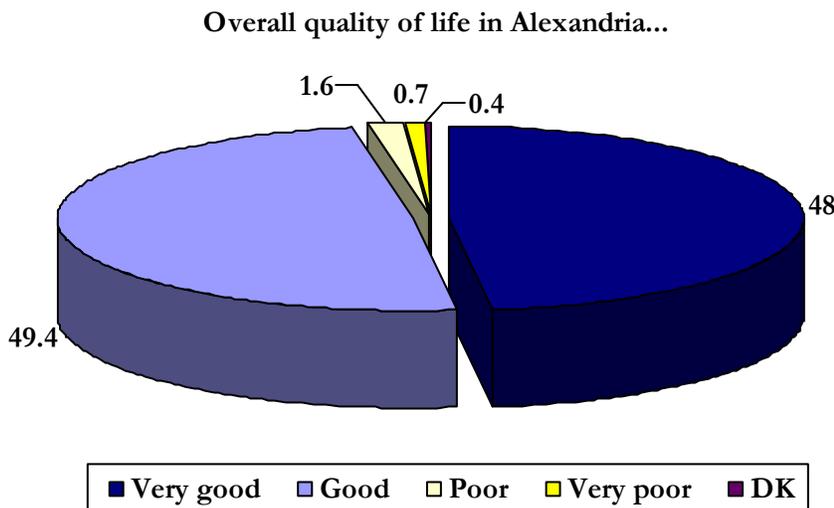
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Readers are reminded that the following section summarizes statistics collected from surveys among 1001 residents of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Researchers asked respondents a series of general questions regarding quality of life in Alexandria.

All resident respondents were asked how they would rate their overall quality of life in Alexandria. A large majority, 97.3% (97.2% in 2004), suggested overall quality life in Alexandria was either very good (48.0%) or good (49.4%). A few, 2.3%, indicated overall quality of life in Alexandria was either poor (1.6%) or very poor (0.7%). And, 0.4% did not know or were unsure



Respondents were asked how they would describe their overall quality of life in Alexandria today, compared to two years ago. More than four fifths, 82.7% (79.5% in 2004), said their overall quality of life was better (22.0%), or remained good (60.7%). Less than one eighth, 10.6%, suggested their overall quality of life remained poor (3.1), or was worse (7.5), than it was 2 years ago. And, 9.1% did not know or were unsure.

More than half of all respondents, 56.8% (55.7% in 2004), indicated being better off financially today, than they were two years ago. More than one third, 36.2% said they were not.

Further, all survey respondents were asked why they originally made the decision to live in, or why they continued to live in Alexandria.

The following table summarizes results. Multiple responses were accepted.

Reasons for living in Alexandria	2004	2006
Location (close to work/highways)	39.4%	40.2
Work (work in or near Alexandria)	13.9	23.6
Housing (nice house/affordable)	13.5	16.3
Community (town character/community feeling)	13.5	14.5
Nice neighborhoods	12.9	15.3
Birthplace (lived here all life)	6.3	9.2
Historic nature of City	4.6	4.5
Diversity	3.9	1.9
Quality education system	3.4	4.5
Recreational opportunities	2.1	1.7
Other	25.8	9.4

In an open-end format question, researchers asked respondents to mention what they liked most about Alexandria today.

The following table holds results to the top ten most frequently cited responses.

Things liked about Alexandria today	2004	2006
Convenient in general	10.2%	26.3
Proximity to D.C.	6.1	---
Friendly people	5.4	---
Cultural diversity	5.1	5.6
Town has personality	5.1	---
Convenient for work	4.6	---
Size of the community	4.0	8.1
Feels like a small town	3.8	---
Everything within walking distance	3.4	---
Town is wonderful	3.4	---
Clean environment	---	9.5
Old Town Alexandria	---	13.2
Safe environment	---	10.6
Peaceful	---	5.4
Overall quality of life	---	5.0
Cultural events	---	5.9
Farmers market	---	5.7

Other less-frequently cited responses included: good restaurants, good weather, school system, landscaping/appearance, small family like environment, diversity, senior citizen taxi service, cost of homes, inside the Beltway, responsiveness of the City, downtown area, waterfront/rivers, movie theatres, city government reps, good transportation, taxes are low, parks are great, dog friendly, Metro area, library, protection for gays.

LOCAL ISSUES

Researchers asked respondents, in an open-end format question, to name the issues they were most concerned about, on a local level, within Alexandria.

The table below holds 2004 and 2006 results to the most frequently cited responses. Multiple responses were accepted.

Issue of most concern	2004	2006
Traffic	15.4%	30.0
Taxes	12.1	16.0
Poor school systems	8.4	9.3
Crime problems	8.1	10.0
Over-development	5.7	7.2
Parking	5.0	---
Limited affordable housing	4.6	8.5
Over-population	3.2	---
Poor government efficiency	2.4	---
Open space diminishing	2.0	---
None / nothing / DK	9.3	17.5
Inadequate political representation	---	2.7

Other responses mentioned with less frequency included: need more outdoor restaurants, poor social workers, cost of living, quality of tap water, lack of employment, need more handicap access, need power plants, sidewalks/streets in bad condition, air quality, racism, Mirant Plant, Comcast is terrible, more community involvement, River maintenance, losing too many trees, train going by is too noisy, more affordable healthcare, more youth activities, affordability of Hunting Point project, immigration, stores should stay open later, remove fire equipment from Delray, need more Republicans, need strong law enforcement, lack of a public golf course, spiritual issues, flooding.

Researchers read respondents a number of issues, and asked how concerned they were about each. Respondents were asked to use a scale of one to ten, where one meant very concerned, while ten meant not at all concerned.

The following table holds the cumulative 2004 totals for “Concerned” (1 – 4), as well as for “Not concerned” (7 – 10). The same results are presented, without “Don’t Know” responses, in the fourth and fifth columns.

2004 Issues	With DK's		W/O DKs	
	Concerned (1-4)	Not Concerned (7-10)	Concerned (1-4)	Not Concerned (7-10)
Traffic within Alexandria	73.6%	11.8%	73.8%	11.8%
Local real estate taxes	62.8	18.9	67.1	20.2
Crime in the City	64.0	13.0	65.1	13.2
Lack of affordable housing	60.1	21.6	62.0	22.2
Safety and security	57.6	20.8	57.8	20.8
Quality of public education	48.3	26.9	53.9	30.0
Amount of parks, fields, and open space	50.8	32.5	52.0	33.2
Lack of transportation alternatives to the automobile	38.8	45.6	39.5	46.4

Readers should note that the wording was changed in 2006 and respondents were asked to rate how serious a problem they would consider each of the following issues.

Results from 2006 results are shown below.

2006 Issues	With DK's		W/O DK's	
	Very Serious Problem (1-4)	Not a Serious Problem (7-10)	Very Serious Problem (1-4)	Not a Serious Problem (7-10)
Traffic within Alexandria	61.8	17.9	62.2	17.9
Local real estate taxes	54.6	15.2	61.5	17.2
Crime in the City	34.3	31.3	35.7	32.5
* Availability of affordable housing	60.0	17.8	63.3	18.7
Safety and security	26.2	41.7	26.5	42.7
Quality of public education	25.2	34.2	33.7	45.9
Amount of parks, fields, and open space	27.1	50.9	27.5	51.7
* Availability of transportation alternatives to the automobile	21.9	54.7	22.9	57.4

* Wording was changed in 2006 survey instrument.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

All respondents were presented with a number of city services and asked to rate each based on all they knew or had heard. Respondents were asked to use a scale of one to ten, where one meant the service was very good and ten meant the service was very poor.

The table below depicts the cumulative totals for “Good” (1 – 4), and for “Poor” (7 – 10). Results without “Don’t know” responses are presented in the fourth and fifth columns.

2004 Community Service	With DK's		W/O DK's	
	Good (1-4)	Poor (7-10)	Good (1-4)	Poor (7-10)
Fire Department	78.5%	1.7%	91.5%	1.9%
Emergency medical services	68.8	2.3	89.9	3.0
Police Department	77.0	5.3	84.9	5.8
Courtesy of City government staff and employees	72.4	5.1	81.6	5.8
Performance of sanitary and storm sewer services	52.2	9.3	66.0	11.7
AVERAGE	69.8	4.7	82.8	5.6

2006 Community Service	With DK's		W/O DK's	
	Good (1-4)	Poor (7-10)	Good (1-4)	Poor (7-10)
Fire Department	80.6	4.3	89.9	4.8
Emergency medical services	70.3	4.6	87.3	5.8
Police Department	78.9	6.4	84.5	6.9
Courtesy of City government staff and employees	64.9	7.5	74.1	8.6
Performance of sanitary and storm sewer services	61.2	11.2	70.1	12.7
AVERAGE	71.2	6.8	81.2	7.8

Researchers read respondents the following statement: “Most everyone has expectations of service organizations and companies they do business with. Please think about the services provided by the City of Alexandria and tell me if the City meets your service expectations always; most of the time; sometimes; seldom; or never.”

How often do services meet your expectations?	2004	2006
Always	17.0%	20.1
Most of the time	66.3	59.2
Sometimes	10.4	14.4
Seldom	2.3	2.0
Never	0.8	0.9
Don't know/unsure	3.2	3.4
Total: Always and Most of the Time	83.3	79.3

Respondents were then asked to consider and then rate the services provided by the City of Alexandria and the taxes they pay to the City.

Services provided	2006
Very good	19.9
Good	64.9
Poor	7.7
Very poor	3.0
Don't know/unsure	4.5
Total Good	84.8

When asked to state which of the following reflects their own view of the relation between taxes and services, the following data was collected.

Which best reflects your own view...	2006
The City should decrease taxes even if it might have to decrease services as a result	17.3
The City should increase services even if it might have to increase taxes as a result	15.2
The City should keep services and taxes at about the level where they are now	56.8
Don't know/unsure	10.7

Those respondents who felt the City should decrease taxes even if it might have to decrease services as a result were then asked which services they would suggest be cut or reduced.

The results are presented in the table below. Multiple responses were accepted.

Services to be cut or reduced	2006
None/Don't know	50.9
Education	6.9
Sanitation	5.8
Salaried city employees	5.8
Different projects of no benefit	5.2
Social security	4.6
Property tax	4.6
Welfare	4.0

Other suggested reductions or cuts, mentioned with less frequency, included: service to immigrants, eliminate car sticker , real estate departments, law enforcement departments, less construction, mental health services, rental assistance, zoning office, cut affordable housing, all recreation.

SERVICE AWARENESS AND USE

Researchers read respondents a number of specific services, programs and facilities available to Alexandria residents, and asked if they were aware of each service. Respondents indicating awareness were asked if they or their family members had used each service. If a service was used respondents were asked to rate the service, using a scale of one to ten, where one was very good and ten was very poor.

The following table summarizes results for those indicating awareness and use.

Services/Programs/Facilities	2004 Aware? Yes	2004 Use? Yes	2006 Aware? Yes	2006 Use? Yes
DASH (bus service within Alexandria) (2004) DASH bus services (2006)	95.5	50.2	84.4	56.2
City-sponsored events, such as the July City Birthday/Fireworks celebration or the annual Jazz Festival (2004) City-sponsored events, such as the July fireworks, the annual Jazz Festival or other arts and cultural events (2006)	93.0	60.8	89.2	78.2
Building permit and other services of the Code Enforcement Department	83.5	30.0	60.6	50.6
Tax payment services	74.5	53.7	62.0	73.8
Department of Human Services programs, such as JobLink, child welfare, and programs for seniors and those with disabilities	73.7	19.0	59.4	29.6
Services related to the assessment of real estate taxes (2004) Services related to the assessment of real estate (2006)	72.9	39.9	57.6	58.6
City-maintained athletic fields (2004) City-maintained parks and athletic fields (2006)	71.9	29.6	90.2	80.2
Services provided by the Alexandria Health Department	68.9	19.3	53.4	43.2
City Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcohol and Drug Abuse services	63.3	8.7	51.0	22.3
Services of the City's Office of Human Rights	48.9	9.5	39.2	25.0
Getting a city sticker for your car	---	---	87.5	90.0
The general service office or desk in the lobby of City Hall known as Citizen Assistance	---	---	41.0	50.2
Refuse collection	---	---	81.1	81.5
Recycling Program	---	---	87.8	83.8

The following table indicates the cumulative total for “Good” (1-4) and “Poor” (7-10).

Services/Programs/Facilities	2004 Good (1-4)	2004 Poor (7-10)	2006 Good (1-4)	2006 Poor (7-10)
DASH (bus service within Alexandria) (2004) DASH bus services (2006)	93.8	1.8	83.6	7.6
City-sponsored events, such as the July City Birthday/Fireworks celebration or the annual Jazz Festival (2004) City-sponsored events, such as the July fireworks, the annual Jazz Festival or other arts and cultural events (2006)	87.9	1.7	90.0	3.7
Building permit and other services of the Code Enforcement Department	68.1	14.5	61.2	18.8
Tax payment services	84.6	1.9	74.5	7.6
Department of Human Services programs, such as JobLink, child welfare, and programs for seniors and those with disabilities	67.6	14.5	79.5	10.8
Services related to the assessment of real estate taxes (2004) Services related to the assessment of real estate (2006)	59.7	14.7	58.3	19.8
City-maintained athletic fields (2004) City-maintained parks and athletic fields (2006)	80.5	5.5	86.0	6.4
Services provided by the Alexandria Health Department	73.0	17.0	80.5	7.4
City Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcohol and Drug Abuse services	86.4	13.6	73.0	18.2
Services of the City’s Office of Human Rights	70.2	19.3	76.5	7.1
Getting a city sticker for your car	---	---	78.9	8.9
The general service office or desk in the lobby of City Hall known as Citizen Assistance	---	---	82.5	7.2
Refuse collection	---	---	84.1	6.7
Recycling Program	---	---	82.4	6.4

COMMUNICATIONS

Respondents were asked how they usually received information about City services.

The following table summarizes results. Multiple responses were accepted.

Source used to get information about City services	2004	2006
Newspapers	39.9%	40.1
City pamphlets, notices, flyers	32.9	20.0
Word of mouth	19.6	9.5
City newsletter: <i>FYI Alexandria</i>	18.4	21.1
Internet	18.1	23.2
Cable TV	12.4	10.1
Phonebook	9.7	8.2
City web site	6.5	11.1
Neighborhood associations	3.2	5.1
Churches	0.3	0.7

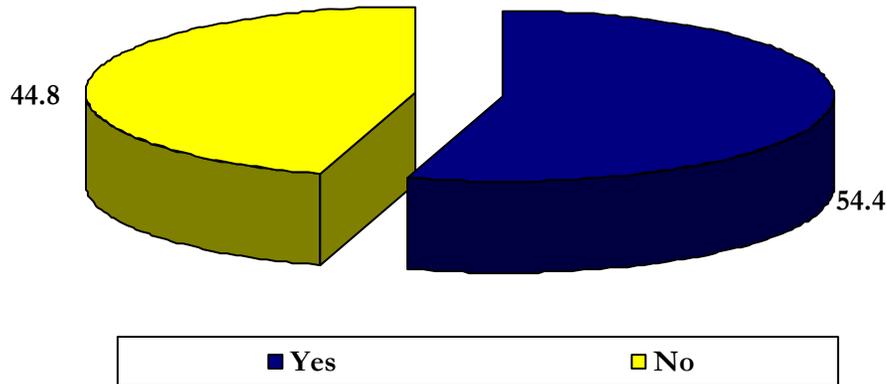
Further, respondents were asked where they usually got information on upcoming City-sponsored events and activities.

The table below holds results as collected. Multiple responses were accepted.

Source used to get information on City-sponsored events and activities	2004	2006
Newspapers	46.2%	52.6
City pamphlets, notices, flyers	31.7	20.2
City newsletter: <i>FYI Alexandria</i>	19.5	22.0
Word of mouth	18.6	10.5
Internet	12.0	13.6
Cable TV	11.5	11.2
City web site	4.6	6.6
Neighborhood associations	4.4	4.6
Phonebook	1.8	1.8

Further, more than two fifths of all respondents, 54.4 (45.6% in 2004), have visited the City’s website. (www.alexandriava.gov). Just over one half, 44.8% have not.

Visited City of Alexandria web site?



Respondents who had visited the City’s website (45.6%), were asked to rate the website on four characteristic using a scale of one to ten, where one is very good and ten is very poor.

The table below depicts the cumulative totals for “Good” (1 – 4), and for “Poor” (7 – 10). Results without “Don’t know” responses are presented in the fourth and fifth columns.

Website (2004)	With DK's		W/O DK's	
	Good (1-4)	Poor (7-10)	Good (1-4)	Poor (7-10)
Usability or navigability	72.4%	5.9%	76.9%	6.3%
Interesting content	70.8	7.0	76.0	7.5
Design or graphics	65.1	5.7	73.9	6.5
AVERAGE	69.4%	6.2%	75.6%	6.8%

Website (2006)	With DK's		W/O DK's	
	Good (1-4)	Poor (7-10)	Good (1-4)	Poor (7-10)
* Having useful information	81.3	4.6	83.9	4.8
* Visually pleasing	75.4	5.0	80.0	5.3
* Finding what you need quickly	73.0	8.5	75.2	8.8
AVERAGE	76.6	6.0	79.7	18.9

- Readers should note that the characteristics that were rated in 2006 were different than in 2004.

Half of all respondents, 50.0% (59.1% in 2004), suggested reading the City's newsletter *FYI Alexandria* always (28.7%), or most of the time (21.4%). One fifth, 20.0%, indicated reading the newsletter sometimes. And, 28.2% said they read the newsletter seldom (6.6%), or never (21.6%).

Respondents who indicated reading the newsletter always, most of the time, sometimes, and seldom were asked to rate the newsletter on several important characteristics. Respondents were asked to use a scale of one to ten, where one was very good and ten was very poor.

Newsletter (2004)	With DK's		W/O DK's	
	Good (1-4)	Poor (7-10)	Good (1-4)	Poor (7-10)
Interesting content	75.2%	4.4%	79.8%	4.8%
Design or Graphics	72.1	4.0	80.4	4.6
AVERAGE	73.7%	4.2%	80.1%	4.7%

Newsletter (2006)	With DK's		W/O DK's	
	Good (1-4)	Poor (7-10)	Good (1-4)	Poor (7-10)
* Having useful and interesting information	74.6	5.0	79.3	5.3
* Easy to read format	78.7	3.8	84.8	4.0
AVERAGE	76.7	4.4	82.1	4.7

* Readers should note that the characteristics that were rated in 2006 were different than in 2004.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Researchers asked respondents if they would have enough food, medicine and essential supplies at home to last two weeks in the case of a major disaster.

The results are presented in the table below.

Have enough supplies to last 2 weeks in case of major disaster?	2006
Yes	47.5
No	50.2
Don't know/unsure	2.3

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Finally, researchers read respondents the following: "Throughout this survey we've reviewed many services, programs and community facilities. Please tell me of any needs of Alexandria residents, or the Alexandria community, which you feel are unmet or under-met?"

The table below holds results to the most frequently cited responses.

Unmet/Undermet needs	2006
None / Don't know	55.4
More affordable housing	7.7
Traffic control	7.0
Need more recreational centers	4.6
Educational system needs improvement	4.5
Street maintenance	3.4
Law enforcement	2.5
Preserving the environment	2.1
Sewer and sanitation	2.0

Other responses cited with less frequency included: permit office, increase minimum wage, better explanation of the budget, transportation, better street signs, day care services, more dog parks, food banks, farmers market, building too many homes, more bike paths, more walking trails, precaution with pedestrians, more rights for gays, improve Dash Bus service, more supermarkets, more resources for the handicapped, more services for the elderly, more ethnic diversity, city workers are not helpful, meals on wheels, public assistance, not enough free medical services, cultural events for Hispanics, community outreach, club house needs work, Power Plant, new trucks for trash removal, availability of firearms, sewer and sanitation, transportation for the elderly, Wilson Bridge should be higher, taxes, needs of visitors are more important than residents.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Computer at home	2004	2006
Yes	79.0	82.3
No	20.0	16.8
Don't know	1.0	0.9

Send email or visit sites at least once per week	2006
Yes	77.8
No	22.2

Where you access the Internet	2004	2006
Home	19.5	60.3
Work	9.1	62.4
School	--	1.5
School child attends	--	0.3
Public location	--	2.9
Commercial location	--	0.5
Other	--	1.5
Don't know	--	0.3
Refused	--	0.6
Both	54.2	--

Primary reason you don't use Internet at home	2006
Don't want or need	41.5
Have access elsewhere	8.1
Don't know/Internet provider	1.3
Don't know/use computer	14.0
Think prices are too high	5.5
Can't afford	10.6
Internet is not safe	3.4
Other	15.7

Children under 18 living at home	2006
None	76.1
One	10.2
Two	7.0
Three	2.1
Four	0.6
Six	0.1
Don't know	0.9
Refused	3.0

Attending public schools in Alexandria	2004	2006
Yes	40.9	49.5
No	55.7	47.0
Split	3.5	2.0
Don't know	--	0.5
Refused	--	1.0

Years lived in Alexandria	2006
Less than 10 years	39.5
10 or more years	58.4
Refused	2.1

Rent or own	2004	2006
Own	59.9	52.7
Rent	37.0	44.7
Neither	1.2	0.6
Don't know	--	0.1
Refused	1.9	1.9

Type of home	2004	2006
Single family	38.2	45.5
Multi-family	1.1	2.3
Townhouse	20.0	17.2
Apartment	25.2	15.9
Condo	12.5	17.0
Mobile home	--	0.1
Don't know	0.5	0.2
Refused	2.3	1.9

Age	2004	2006
18 to 25	3.3	2.7
26 to 35	16.3	11.6
36 to 45	22.6	16.8
46 to 55	18.2	22.7
56 to 65	17.7	24.0
66 to 75	10.8	9.9
76 or older	7.4	8.0
Refused	3.8	4.4

Education	2004	2006
8 th grade or less	0.5	0.3
Some high school	1.9	2.3
High school graduate	11.9	9.9
Some technical school	--	0.4
Technical school graduate	1.0	0.6
Some college	10.8	13.4
College graduate	37.0	33.7
Post graduate	35.6	35.2
Refused	2.1	4.3

Income	2004	2006
Under \$25,000	7.8	2.9
\$25,000 to less than \$50,000	11.2	9.4
\$50,000 to less than \$100,000	22.0	21.0
\$100,000 to less than \$150,000	14.3	13.8
\$150,000 to less than \$250,000	7.8	12.6
\$250,000 or more	2.4	5.3
Don't know	1.5	2.7
Refused	32.9	32.4

Hispanic	2004	2006
Yes	12.0	10.1
No	85.6	89.0
Don't know	--	0.4
Refused	2.4	0.5

Arabic	2004	2006
Yes	2.8	2.5
No	94.4	94.0
Don't know	--	0.1
Refused	2.7	3.4

Race	2004	2006
White	69.2	73.6
African-American	23.4	19.6
Asian	1.5	1.9
Aleutian	0.2	0.2
Other	2.6	1.1
Don't know	--	0.1
Refused	3.2	3.5

Gender	2004	2006
Male	42.5	45.2
Female	57.5	54.8

5 APPENDIX

INTERPRETATION OF AGGREGATE RESULTS

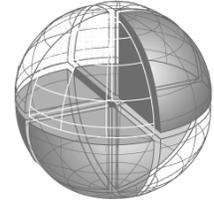
The computer processed data for this survey is presented in the following frequency distributions. It is important to note that the wordings of the variable labels and value labels in the computer-processed data are largely abbreviated descriptions of the Questionnaire items and available response categories.

The frequency distributions include the category or response for the question items. Responses deemed not appropriate for classification have been grouped together under the “Other” code.

The “NA” category label refers to “No Answer” or “Not Applicable”. This code is also used to classify ambiguous responses. In addition, the “DK/RF” category includes those respondents who did not know their answer to a question or declined to answer it. In many of the tables, a group of responses may be tagged as “Missing” – occasionally, certain individual’s responses may not be required to specific questions and thus are excluded. Although when this category of response is used, the computations of percentages are presented in two (2) ways in the frequency distributions: 1) with their inclusion (as a proportion of the total sample), and 2) their exclusion (as a proportion of a sample subgroup).

Each frequency distribution includes the absolute observed occurrence of each response (i.e. the total number of cases in each category). Immediately adjacent to the right of the column of absolute frequencies is the column of relative frequencies. These are the percentages of cases falling in each category response, including those cases designated as missing data. To the right of the relative frequency column is the adjusted frequency distribution column that contains the relative frequencies based on the legitimate (i.e. non-missing) cases. That is, the total base for the adjusted frequency distribution excludes the missing data. For many Questionnaire items, the relative frequencies and the adjusted frequencies will be nearly the same. However, some items that elicit a sizable number of missing data will produce quite substantial percentage differences between the two columns of frequencies. The careful analyst will cautiously consider both distributions.

The last column of data within the frequency distribution is the cumulative frequency distribution (Cum Freq.). This column is simply an adjusted frequency distribution of the sum of all previous categories of response and the current category of response. Its primary usefulness is to gauge some ordered or ranked meaning.



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

September 2006

& PUBLIC POLICY

Researcher: _____	Date: _____
Time start: _____	CB: _____
Time end: _____	Supervisor: _____

Hello. My name is _____. I am a research assistant at The Center for Research and Public Policy. We are talking to residents of Alexandria on behalf of the City about their quality of life, local issues, needs and satisfaction with community services. This is not a sales call. Your responses will be kept confidential.

SCREENER

A. Are you one of the heads of your household and eighteen years of age or older?

- 01 Yes (**Continue**)
- 02 No (**Ask for qualified respondent**)
- 03 DK (**Thank and terminate**)

B. Are you currently a resident of and pay your car taxes to the City of Alexandria?

- 01 Yes (**Continue**)
- 02 No (**Ask for qualified respondent**)
- 03 DK (**Thank and terminate**)

QUALITY OF LIFE

1. Please think about your overall quality of life in Alexandria. Please tell me if you consider your quality of life...

- 01 Very good;
- 02 Good;
- 03 Poor; or
- 04 Very poor
- 05 DK/Unsure

2. Which of the following best describes your overall quality of life in Alexandria today, compared to two years ago...

- 01 Better;
- 02 No change, but good;
- 03 No change, and poor; or
- 04 Worse
- 05 DK/Unsure

3. And, would you say you are better off financially today than you were two years ago?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 DK/Unsure

4. Please tell me why you originally made the decision to live or why you continue to live in Alexandria?

(RESEARCHERS: Accept multiple responses/Do not read)

- 01 Location (close to work/highways)
- 02 Housing (nice house/affordable)
- 03 Recreational opportunities
- 04 Quality education system
- 05 Nice neighborhoods
- 06 Community (town character/community feeling)
- 07 Historic nature of City
- 08 Birthplace (lived here all life)
- 09 Work (work in or near Alexandria)
- 10 Diversity
- 11 Other: (Specify) _____

5. Please tell me what you like most about Alexandria today?

LOCAL ISSUES

6. Please tell me the issues you are most concerned with on a local level, here in Alexandria?

(RESEARCHERS PROBE: “Is there anything else?”)

Now, I’ll name a number of local Alexandria issues. Some see these issues as problems while others do not. As I read each, tell me how great a problem each is, using a scale of one to ten where one is a very serious problem and ten is not at all a problem. **(RESEARCHERS: Read and rotate)**

Issues	VSP										NAAP	DK
7. Quality of public education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
8. Crime in the City	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
9. Availability of affordable housing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
10. Traffic within Alexandria	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
11. Local real estate taxes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12. Safety and security	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
13. Availability of transportation alternatives to the automobile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
14. Amount of parks, fields, and open space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	

COMMUNITY SERVICES

The following are a number of City services. As I read each, please rate each based on all you know or have heard using a scale of one to ten where one is very good and ten is very poor. **(RESEARCHERS: Read and rotate)**

Community Service	VG									VP	DK
15. Police Department	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
16. Fire Department	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
17. Emergency medical services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
18. Performance of sanitary and storm sewer services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
19. Courtesy of City government staff and employees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

20. Most everyone has expectations of service organizations and companies they do business with. Please think about the services provided by the City of Alexandria and tell me if the City meets your service expectations...

- 01 Always;
- 02 Most of the time;
- 03 Sometimes;
- 04 Seldom; or
- 05 Never
- 06 DK/Unsure

21. Please consider both the services provided by the City of Alexandria and the taxes you pay to the City as you rate the value as...

- 01 Very good
- 02 Good
- 03 Poor
- 04 Very poor
- 05 Don't know/unsure

22. Please tell me which of the following best reflects your own view...

- 01 The City should decrease taxes even if it might have to decrease services as a result **(Continue)**
- 02 The City should increase services even if it might have to increase taxes as a result **(Go to Q24)**
- 03 The City should keep services and taxes at about the level where they are now **(Go to Q24)**
- 04 Don't know/unsure **(Go to Q24)**

23. If taxes were decreased, please tell me which services you would suggest be cut or reduced.

SERVICE AWARENESS AND USE

Now, I'll read you a number of specific services, programs and facilities offered to Alexandria residents. Please tell me if you are aware of each service and if so, if you or your family members have used each.

If you have used the service, I'll ask you to report how satisfied you were using a scale of one to ten where a one is very good and ten is very poor. (**RESEARCHERS: Use 11 for DK/Unsure. Read and Rotate**).

Services/Programs/Facilities	Aware? <i>Yes</i>	Aware? <i>No</i>	Aware? <i>DK</i>	Use? <i>Yes</i>	Use? <i>No</i>	Use? <i>DK</i>	RATE <i>1-10</i> <i>DK=11</i>
24. City-maintained parks and athletic fields	01	02	03	01	02	03	
25. Building permit and other services of the Code Enforcement Department	01	02	03	01	02	03	
26. Services related to the assessment of real estate	01	02	03	01	02	03	
27. Getting a City sticker for your car	01	02	03	01	02	03	
28. City-sponsored events, such as the July fireworks, the annual Jazz Festival or other arts and cultural events	01	02	03	01	02	03	
29. Department of Human Services programs, such as JobLink, child welfare, and programs for seniors and those with disabilities	01	02	03	01	02	03	
30. Services of the City's Office of Human Rights	01	02	03	01	02	03	
31. The general service office or desk in the lobby of City Hall known as Citizen Assistance	01	02	03	01	02	03	
32. Services provided by the Alexandria Health Department	01	02	03	01	02	03	
33. Tax payment services	01	02	03	01	02	03	
34. DASH bus services	01	02	03	01	02	03	
35. City Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services	01	02	03	01	02	03	
36. Refuse collection	01	02	03	01	02	03	
37. Recycling Program	01	02	03	01	02	03	

COMMUNICATIONS

38. Please tell me how you usually get information about City services? (RESEARCHERS: Accept multiple responses/Do not read list)

- 01 Newspapers
- 02 Cable TV
- 03 Neighborhood associations
- 04 Phonebook
- 05 City pamphlets, notices, flyers
- 06 City newsletter: *FYI Alexandria*
- 07 Word of mouth
- 08 Internet
- 09 City web site
- 10 Churches
- 11 Other: _____

39. And, where do you usually get information on upcoming City sponsored events and activities? (RESEARCHERS: Accept multiple responses/Do not read list)

- 01 Newspapers
- 02 Cable TV
- 03 Neighborhood associations
- 04 Phonebook
- 05 City pamphlets, notices, flyers
- 06 City newsletter: *FYI Alexandria*
- 07 Word of mouth
- 08 Internet
- 09 City web site
- 10 Churches
- 11 Other: _____

40. Have you visited the City’s website?

(**Researchers: do not volunteer, but if asked, the website is www.alexandriava.gov**)

- 01 Yes (**Continue**)
- 02 No (**Go to Q44**)
- 03 DK/Unsure (**Go to Q44**)

Please rate the City’s website on the following characteristics using a scale of one to ten where one is very good and ten is very poor.

Website	VG										VP	DK
41. Having useful information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
42. Visually pleasing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
43. Finding what you need quickly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	

44. Please tell me if you read the City newsletter, *FYI Alexandria*, which is mailed to all residences several times a year?

- 01 Always;
- 02 Most of the time;
- 03 Sometimes;
- 04 Seldom; or
- 05 Never (**Go to Q47**)

06 DK/Unsure (**DO NOT READ**)

Please rate the newsletter on several important characteristics using a scale of one to ten where one is very good and ten is very poor.

Newsletter	VG									VP	DK
45. Having useful and interesting information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
46. Easy to read format	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

47. If you could not leave home in a major disaster, do you have enough food, medicine and essential supplies at home to last two weeks?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Don't know/unsure

COMMUNITY NEED

48. Throughout this survey we've reviewed many services, programs and community facilities. Please tell me of any needs of Alexandria residents, or the Alexandria community, which you feel are unmet or under-met?

(RESEARCHERS PROBE: "Is there anything else?")

DEMOGRAPHICS

49. Do you currently have a computer at home?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 DK

50. Do you send e-mail or visit Internet web sites, at least once per week?

- 01 Yes **(Continue)**
- 02 No **(Go to Q52)**

51. Please tell me where you have access to the internet. (Researchers: accept multiple responses)

- 01 Home **(If home is not selected, Continue)**
- 02 Work **(Go to Q53)**
- 03 A school you attend **(Go to Q53)**
- 04 A school your child attends **(Go to Q53)**
- 05 A public location (library, rec. center, city facility) **(Go to Q53)**
- 06 A commercial location (such as coffee shop) **(Go to Q53)**
- 07 Other: _____ **(Go to Q53)**
- 08 Do not access the internet **(Go to Q53)**
- 09 Don't know/unsure **(Go to Q53)**
- 10 RF **(Go to Q53)**

52. What is the primary reason why you don't use the Internet at home?
- 01 Don't want or need to use Internet
 - 02 Have access elsewhere
 - 03 Don't know how to find an Internet provider
 - 04 Don't know how to use computer or Internet
 - 05 Think prices are too high
 - 06 Can't afford prices of access
 - 07 Don't think Internet is safe
 - 08 Other: _____
53. How many children under the age of eighteen do you have living at home?
- 00 None (**Go to Q55**)
 - 01 # _____ (**Continue**)
 - 77 DK/Unsure (**Go to Q55**)
 - 99 Refused (**Go to Q55**)
54. Are they attending Public Schools in Alexandria?
- 01 Yes
 - 02 No
 - 03 Split – Some are, some are not
 - 04 Don't Know/Unsure
 - 05 Refused
55. How many years, have you lived in Alexandria?
- 01 # _____
 - 77 DK/Unsure
 - 99 RF
56. Do you own or rent your current residence?
- 01 Own
 - 02 Rent
 - 03 Neither
 - 04 DK/Unsure
 - 05 RF
57. What type of home do you currently have?
- 01 Single family detached
 - 02 Multi-family house
 - 03 Town house/Duplex
 - 04 Apartment/Apartment Building
 - 05 Condominium
 - 06 Mobile Home
 - 07 DK/Unsure
 - 08 RF

58. Which of the following best describes your age?
- 01 18-25
 - 02 26-35
 - 03 36-45
 - 04 46-55
 - 05 56-65
 - 06 66-75
 - 07 76 or older
 - 08 RF
59. What is your highest grade of school completed?
- 01 Eighth grade or less
 - 02 Some high school
 - 03 High school graduate or GED
 - 04 Some technical school
 - 05 Technical school graduate
 - 06 Some college
 - 07 College graduate
 - 08 Post-graduate or professional degree
 - 09 RF
60. Which of the following categories best describes your total family annual income before taxes?
- 01 Under \$25,000
 - 02 \$25,000 to less than \$50,000
 - 03 \$50,000 to less than \$100,000
 - 04 \$100,000 to less than \$150,000
 - 05 \$150,000 to less than \$250,000
 - 06 \$250,000 or more
 - 07 DK
 - 08 RF
61. Are you of Hispanic origin, such as Latin American, Puerto Rican, Cuban or Mexican?
- 01 Yes (**Go to Q64**)
 - 02 No (**Continue**)
 - 03 DK (**Continue**)
 - 04 RF (**Continue**)
62. Are you of Arabic origin?
- 01 Yes (**Go to Q64**)
 - 02 No (**Continue**)
 - 03 DK (**Continue**)
 - 04 RF (**Continue**)
63. What is your race?
- 01 White
 - 02 African-American
 - 03 Asian. Pacific Islander
 - 04 Aleutian, Eskimo or American Indian
 - 05 Other: _____
 - 06 DK
 - 07 RF

64. Please tell me your zip code?

01 _____
99 RF

Thank you very much for your time and participation.

65. Gender (by observation).

01 Male
02 Female