

2024 City of Norfolk Resident Survey

Executive Summary



Purpose

ETC Institute administered a resident survey to residents of the City of Norfolk between May and June of 2024. The purpose of the survey was to gather resident opinion and feedback about City priorities and the quality of programs and services. This is the second resident survey ETC Institute has administered for the City of Norfolk; the first was conducted in 2022.

Methodology

The five-page survey, cover letter, and postage-paid return envelope were mailed to a random sample of households in Norfolk. The cover letter explained the purpose of the survey and gave residents the option of returning their survey by mail or completing it online. After the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute sent a follow-up to households that received the survey to encourage participation.

The goal was to obtain surveys from at least 750 residents. This goal was far exceeded, with a total of 917 residents responding to the survey. The overall results for the sample of 917 households have a precision of at least $+/-3.2\%$ at the 95% level of confidence.

This report contains:

- An executive summary of the methodology for administering the survey and major findings,
- charts showing the overall results for all questions on the survey, as well as comparisons to the 2022 survey results,
- benchmarking data that show how the results compare to other communities,
- Importance-Satisfaction analysis that determines priority actions for the City to address,
- tables that show the results of the random sample for each question on the survey,
- a copy of the survey instrument.

The percentage of “don’t know” responses has been excluded from many of the charts shown in this report to facilitate valid comparisons of the results from the City with the results from other communities where ETC Institute has conducted a community survey. Since the number of “don’t know” responses often reflect the utilization and awareness of City services, the percentage of “don’t know” responses have been provided in the tabular data section of this report. When the “don’t know” responses have been excluded, the text of this report will indicate that the responses have been excluded with the phrase “*who had an opinion.*”

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Perceptions of the City

Fifty percent (50%) of the residents surveyed, *who had an opinion*, were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” (ratings of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) with the overall quality of life in Norfolk; 35% were satisfied with the overall appearance of the City, and 27% were satisfied with the overall feeling of safety in Norfolk.

Quality of Life in Norfolk

Fifty-five percent (55%) of the residents surveyed, *who had an opinion*, rated the City “excellent” or “good” (ratings of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) as a place to live; 53% gave the City ratings of “excellent” or “good” as a place to work, and 49% rated Norfolk “excellent” or “good” as a place to visit.

Major City Services

The major City services that had the highest levels of satisfaction, based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents who had an opinion, were: quality of fire and ambulance services (75%), value of Norfolk libraries (71%), quality of water and sewer services (58%), quality of customer services from City employees (44%), and quality of police services (44%).

Based on the sum of their top three choices, the major City services that residents thought were most important to improve were: 1) quality of public schools, 2) flow of traffic on Norfolk streets, and 3) quality of police services.

Public Safety Services

The public safety services that had the highest levels of satisfaction, based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents who had an opinion, were: response time for fire services personnel (70%), response time for ambulance/emergency medical services personnel (62%), and ability to engage with police in crime prevention activities (46%).

Based on the sum of their top three choices, the public safety services that residents thought were most important to improve were: 1) visibility of police in neighborhoods, 2) visibility of police in commercial and retail areas, and 3) amount of information Norfolk Police shares with the public.

Perceptions of Safety

More than three-fourths (77%) of the residents surveyed, *who had an opinion*, felt “very safe” or “safe” (ratings of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) in their neighborhood during the day; 61% felt safe overall in neighborhoods, 46% felt safe in their neighborhood at night, and 42% felt safe in retail areas.

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Transportation

The categories of transportation that had the highest levels of satisfaction, based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents who had an opinion, were: walkability (46%), light rail (the Tide) service (43%), and parking availability (41%).

Maintenance and Appearance of the City

Fifty-four percent (54%) of the residents surveyed, *who had an opinion*, were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” (ratings of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) with animal control; 52% were satisfied with the condition of street signs and traffic signals, 47% were satisfied with mowing and tree trimming along streets/public areas, and 42% were satisfied with the adequacy of lighting on Norfolk streets.

Based on the sum of their top three choices, the maintenance and appearance items that residents thought were most important to improve were: 1) condition of major City streets, 2) stormwater management and flood control on City streets, and 3) overall cleanliness of streets.

Utilities and Solid Waste Services

The utilities and solid waste services that had the highest levels of satisfaction, based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents who had an opinion, were: bulky item pickup services (79%) and trash collection services (79%).

Parks and Recreation Services

The parks and recreation services that had the highest levels of satisfaction, based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents who had an opinion, were: the condition of City parks, trails, and outdoor facilities (54%) and the condition of trees and open spaces (53%).

Cultural, Leisure, and Engagement Opportunities

The cultural, leisure, and engagement opportunities that had the highest levels of satisfaction, based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents who had an opinion, were: City attractions (84%), outdoor City festivals (67%), City performance venues (59%), and opportunities to volunteer with community organizations (57%).

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Libraries and Recreation

The availability of libraries or recreation programming that had the highest levels of satisfaction, based upon the combined percentage of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses among residents who had an opinion, were: availability for children (63%), availability for adults (59%), and availability for senior citizens (54%).

Additional Findings

- More than half (51%) of residents surveyed believe the City of Norfolk is headed in the right direction; 33% feel the City is headed in the wrong direction, and 15% did not have an opinion.
- Sixty-five percent (65%) of residents surveyed use social media to obtain/receive information about the City of Norfolk; 63% use the City website, 58% use local television, and 42% obtain/receive information by word of mouth. *Multiple selections could be made for this question.*

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Trends Since 2022

Satisfaction ratings for the City of Norfolk were **the same as or above the 2022 survey results in 33 of the 81 areas** that were assessed. The City rated significantly higher than the 2022 results (difference of 5% or more) in 20 of these areas. The tables below and on the following page show the comparisons between the 2022 and 2024 results.

City Service	2024	2022	Difference	Category
For children	62.6%	45.3%	17.3%	Libraries & Recreation
For teens	46.0%	31.8%	14.2%	Libraries & Recreation
For persons with disabilities	41.9%	28.5%	13.4%	Libraries & Recreation
In Downtown Norfolk	37.2%	24.2%	13.0%	Feeling of Safety
For adults	59.4%	46.5%	12.9%	Libraries & Recreation
For senior citizens	54.3%	42.0%	12.3%	Libraries & Recreation
Overall feeling of safety in neighborhood	61.4%	49.9%	11.5%	Feeling of Safety
In neighborhood at night	45.6%	35.2%	10.4%	Feeling of Safety
Overall feeling of safety in Norfolk	26.5%	16.4%	10.1%	Perceptions of the City
In retail areas	42.0%	32.3%	9.7%	Feeling of Safety
In neighborhood during the day	76.8%	67.2%	9.6%	Feeling of Safety
Visibility of police in neighborhoods	32.5%	23.1%	9.4%	Public Safety Services
Visibility of police in commercial & retail areas	36.9%	27.9%	9.0%	Public Safety Services
Quality of police services	43.6%	35.2%	8.4%	Major City Services
Ability to engage with police in crime prevention activities	45.5%	37.3%	8.2%	Public Safety Services
Opportunities to participate in city sponsored activities and workshops	49.2%	42.0%	7.2%	Cultural, Leisure, & Engagement
In community parks	38.9%	32.0%	6.9%	Feeling of Safety
From being victim of violent crime	31.6%	25.0%	6.6%	Feeling of Safety
From being victim of property crime	24.6%	19.0%	5.6%	Feeling of Safety
Overall image or reputation of Norfolk	24.0%	19.0%	5.0%	Perceptions of the City
Overall quality of life in Norfolk	50.0%	45.9%	4.1%	Perceptions of the City
Quality of recreation programs	43.6%	39.6%	4.0%	Parks & Recreation Services
Job opportunities that match your skills	40.2%	37.1%	3.1%	Service Accessibility
Enforcement of codes/ordinances	23.3%	20.2%	3.1%	Major City Services
As a place to live	54.8%	52.9%	1.9%	Quality of Life
As a place to start a business	26.4%	24.5%	1.9%	Quality of Life
Bus service	30.3%	28.4%	1.9%	Transportation
Bulky item pickup services	79.2%	78.1%	1.1%	Utilities & Solid Waste Services
Value of Norfolk libraries	71.0%	70.5%	0.5%	Major City Services
Quality of public schools	19.7%	19.5%	0.2%	Major City Services
Parking availability	41.1%	41.0%	0.1%	Transportation
Quality of human services provided by city	24.9%	24.9%	0.0%	Major City Services
Adequacy of lighting on Norfolk streets	42.4%	42.4%	0.0%	Maintenance & Appearance of the City
Amount of information Norfolk Police shares with public	30.8%	30.9%	-0.1%	Public Safety Services
As a place to raise children	27.3%	27.5%	-0.2%	Quality of Life
Opportunities to volunteer with the city	44.7%	45.3%	-0.6%	Cultural, Leisure, & Engagement
Trash collection services	79.1%	79.8%	-0.7%	Utilities & Solid Waste Services
Effectiveness of city communication with public	27.7%	28.6%	-0.9%	Major City Services

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Trends Since 2022 (Cont.)

City Service	2024	2022	Difference	Category
Overall transparency regarding actions of the City	15.0%	16.2%	-1.2%	Perceptions of the City
Quality of fire and ambulance services	75.1%	76.6%	-1.5%	Major City Services
As a place to work	53.2%	54.8%	-1.6%	Quality of Life
As a place to retire	35.8%	37.5%	-1.7%	Quality of Life
Walkability	46.1%	47.9%	-1.8%	Transportation
Mowing & tree trimming along streets/public areas	46.6%	48.4%	-1.8%	Maintenance & Appearance of the City
Light rail (the Tide) service	43.3%	45.1%	-1.8%	Transportation
Response time for ambulance/emergency medical services personnel	62.4%	64.3%	-1.9%	Public Safety Services
Opportunities to volunteer with community organizations	56.9%	59.0%	-2.1%	Cultural, Leisure, & Engagement
Quality mental health care you can afford	22.1%	24.4%	-2.3%	Service Accessibility
Response time for fire services personnel	69.9%	72.2%	-2.3%	Public Safety Services
Quality of services provided by the city	37.2%	39.6%	-2.4%	Major City Services
Overall value received for City tax dollars	19.3%	22.4%	-3.1%	Perceptions of the City
Quality of drinking water	73.6%	76.7%	-3.1%	Utilities & Solid Waste Services
Value of parks and recreation programs/facility	41.2%	44.4%	-3.2%	Major City Services
On-street bike lanes and signage	30.9%	34.1%	-3.2%	Transportation
As a place to find affordable housing	21.0%	24.3%	-3.3%	Quality of Life
As a place to visit	49.4%	52.7%	-3.3%	Quality of Life
Condition of city beaches	53.1%	56.7%	-3.6%	Cultural, Leisure, & Engagement
Overall appearance of Norfolk	35.1%	38.8%	-3.7%	Perceptions of the City
Exterior maintenance of residential property	36.3%	40.5%	-4.2%	Maintenance & Appearance of the City
Healthy food you can afford	33.3%	37.8%	-4.5%	Service Accessibility
Overall cleanliness of streets	33.7%	38.3%	-4.6%	Maintenance & Appearance of the City
Animal control	53.9%	58.6%	-4.7%	Maintenance & Appearance of the City
Condition & quality of indoor recreation centers	40.7%	45.4%	-4.7%	Parks & Recreation Services
Exterior maintenance of commercial/business property	37.4%	42.2%	-4.8%	Maintenance & Appearance of the City
Quality childcare you can afford	9.3%	14.1%	-4.8%	Service Accessibility
Flow of traffic on Norfolk streets	31.4%	36.4%	-5.0%	Major City Services
Condition of City parks/trails/outdoor facilities	53.9%	59.0%	-5.1%	Parks & Recreation Services
Quality of water and sewer services	57.5%	62.7%	-5.2%	Major City Services
Quality healthcare you can afford	33.5%	38.8%	-5.3%	Service Accessibility
Crossing City streets	36.9%	42.4%	-5.5%	Feeling of Safety
Accessibility of streets, sidewalks, and buildings for people with disabilities	40.3%	45.8%	-5.5%	Maintenance & Appearance of the City
Condition of trees & open spaces	53.4%	59.1%	-5.7%	Parks & Recreation Services
Condition of street signs and traffic signals	51.7%	58.0%	-6.3%	Maintenance & Appearance of the City
Stormwater management & flood control on city streets	18.9%	25.4%	-6.5%	Maintenance & Appearance of the City
Quality of customer services from city employees	44.4%	52.3%	-7.9%	Major City Services
9-1-1 dispatch services	35.0%	43.0%	-8.0%	Public Safety Services
Maintenance of public buildings and facilities	40.8%	50.3%	-9.5%	Maintenance & Appearance of the City
Scooter and e-bike services	32.7%	42.5%	-9.8%	Transportation
Recycling services	61.3%	71.8%	-10.5%	Utilities & Solid Waste Services
Condition of major city streets	24.9%	35.7%	-10.8%	Maintenance & Appearance of the City
Outdoor city festivals	67.1%	87.1%	-20.0%	Cultural, Leisure, & Engagement

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Investment Priorities

Recommended Priorities. In order to help the City identify investment priorities, ETC Institute conducted an Importance-Satisfaction (I-S) analysis. This analysis examined the importance residents placed on each City service and the level of satisfaction with each service. By identifying services of high importance and low satisfaction, the analysis identified which services will have the most impact on overall satisfaction with City services. If the City wants to improve its overall satisfaction rating, the City should prioritize investments in services with the highest Importance Satisfaction (I-S) ratings. Details regarding the methodology for the analysis are provided in Section 3 of this report.

Overall Priorities for the City by Major Services. This analysis reviewed the importance of and satisfaction with major City services. This analysis was conducted to help set the overall priorities for the City. Based on the results of this analysis, the major services that are recommended as the top priorities for investment in order to raise the City's overall satisfaction rating are listed below:

- Quality of public schools (I-S Rating = 0.3854)
- Flow of traffic on Norfolk streets (I-S Rating = 0.2360)

The table below shows the Importance-Satisfaction rating for all 13 major City services that were rated.

Service	Most Important %	Most Important		Satisfaction Rank	Importance-Satisfaction Rating	I-S Rating Rank
		Rank	Satisfaction %			
Very High Priority (IS >20)						
Quality of public schools	48%	1	20%	13	0.3854	1
Flow of traffic on Norfolk streets	34%	2	31%	9	0.2360	2
High Priority (IS .10-.20)						
Enforcement of codes/ordinances	26%	5	23%	12	0.1994	3
Quality of human services provided by city	25%	6	25%	11	0.1840	4
Quality of services provided by the city	29%	4	37%	8	0.1827	5
Effectiveness of city communication with public	24%	7	28%	10	0.1742	6
Quality of police services	30%	3	44%	6	0.1715	7
Value of parks and recreation programs/facility	21%	8	41%	7	0.1252	8
Medium Priority (IS <.10)						
Quality of customer services from city employees	10%	9	44%	5	0.0573	9
Quality of water and sewer services	10%	10	58%	4	0.0438	10
Quality of waste management services	8%	11	60%	3	0.0317	11
Value of Norfolk libraries	6%	12	71%	2	0.0174	12
Quality of fire and ambulance services	6%	13	75%	1	0.0137	13