

Open Line

A Monthly Newsletter for City of Auburn Citizens

August 2020

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City of Auburn

A look into the 2020 Citizen Survey



We at the City mostly hear from residents when something has gone wrong. Being in the business of public service, we welcome each of your calls, emails, texts and comments at public meetings and in-person. We genuinely want to hear from you so that we can help fix issues across the city. But we also want to hear from the vast majority of you who don't contact us on a regular basis.

So how do we find out how the majority feels about life here in Auburn and the services we provide? Back in 1985, we started a Citizen Survey designed to reflect, as accurately as possible, general public opinion. We originally conducted the survey in-house, but in 2004 we hired ETC Institute, a professional survey organization out of Kansas, to develop and administer the survey on our behalf.

This year marked the 34th Citizen Survey to be conducted in the City of Auburn. While the survey was conducted annually in the past, we now send it out every other year to better align with our biennial budget process. The information gleaned from the survey informs budget priorities and shapes policy recommendations. Survey results also give us valuable trend data that allows staff to measure improvements or declines in key performance areas year over year.

What we're doing well

This year, residents rated Auburn higher than the national average in 57 out of 61 categories, including their satisfaction with the overall quality of city services. Nationally, 48% of residents are satisfied with their city's services, but here in Auburn, 84% of you are. More than just high marks in quality of life, you also told us that you're happy with the overall quality of the customer service that you receive when you interact with us—32% happier than the national average of 42%. On top of that, 76% of you were satisfied with the value of services received for your tax dollar, which is a significant jump from the national average of 37%. You also told us that:

- **You feel safe.** 92% of you were satisfied with the quality of police, fire and ambulance services.
- **Our schools are top-tier.** 92% were satisfied with the quality of the city's school system.
- **You love the Auburn Public Library.** 87% were satisfied with the quality of city library services.
- **You have fun here.** 77% were satisfied with the quality of parks and recreation services.

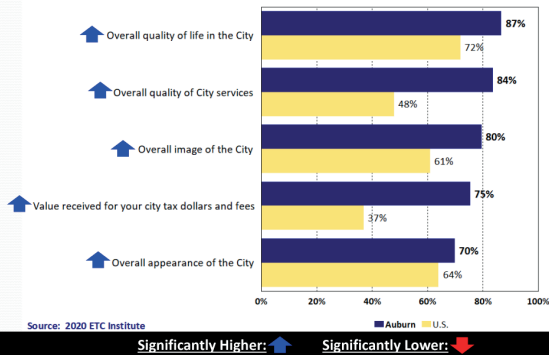
When we looked back at the 2018 and older Citizen Survey results, we saw significant increases in satisfaction in three major categories of city services, including the collection

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Satisfaction with Issues that Influence Perceptions of the City

Auburn vs. the U.S.

by percentage of respondents who rated the item 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale where 5 was "very satisfied" and 1 was "very dissatisfied" (excluding don't know)



Citizen Survey (continued)

of garbage, recycling and yard waste, which was up by 8% to 90%. In just two years, the satisfaction with our collection services went from 82% to 90%. When you break that down, 95% of you were satisfied with your garbage collection, 90% were satisfied with curbside recycling service and 88% were satisfied with yard waste collection. Since we launched our curbside recycling program, we've only seen these numbers increase.

The effectiveness of the city's communication with the public rose by 8% to 74%. Lastly, ratings on the flow of traffic and congestion management were up by 5%, reaching 47%. While satisfaction was up from 2018, we were still below the national average for the flow of traffic and congestion management. Improving the flow of traffic and reducing congestion citywide remains the City's top priority moving forward.

Where we can improve

The word has gotten out that Auburn is a great place to live through publications like Southern Living, Forbes and MONEY Magazine, and we've had more and more people come to our community. That means more cars, more traffic and more congestion. As mentioned above, we saw an increase in the flow of traffic and congestion management ratings compared to 2018, but we still rated 4% below the national average. We're working to improve this through resurfacing and road widening projects and by reworking some key intersections to improve traffic flow, safety and aesthetics. For example, we began work in June to widen Cox Road, and construction will soon begin on new traffic circles at the intersections of Cox Road/Wire Road and North College Street/Farmville Road. Improvements are in the works for the intersections of Samford Avenue at College and Gay streets, and the Wright Street Parking Deck is under construction, which will bring up to 350 new parking spaces to downtown.

Last year, we completed a comprehensive, citywide traffic study that evaluated key corridors and identified areas in need of improvements. Our

Engineering Services staff took that data and created a work plan to improve traffic flow at various pressure points throughout town including on College Street, Dean Road, Donahue Drive, East University Drive/Shug Jordan Parkway, Richland Road and more. The full recommendations are available at auburnalabama.org/engineering-services/traffic-study.

How do we know these results are accurate?

Since the survey is conducted using scientific survey principles, it provides a statistically valid measure of public opinion. The 2020 Citizen Survey provided a 95% level of confidence with a precision of plus or minus 3.8%. This means that if the survey was conducted 100 times using 100 different random samples, it would show the same results (plus or minus 3.8%) 95 out of 100 times. By following these scientific principles, we can be confident that the survey accurately measures the feelings and opinions of Auburn residents. On top of that, we use a third party, ETC Institute, to conduct the survey to protect the survey from bias and to provide an independent analysis of the results.

A full report of this year's survey results along with a video and PDF presentation is available at auburnalabama.org/survey.

Itty Bitty Auburn



Help us celebrate Auburn Parks and Recreation's 50th Anniversary. It's time to break out the thinking caps and magnifying glasses for Itty Bitty Auburn. Beginning Friday, July 31, participants can pick up a worksheet for the scavenger hunt at any Parks and Recreation facility or find

it on the City of Auburn website (auburnalabama.org/parks), printed in select newspapers and on Facebook (facebook.com/CityofAuburnAL).

The worksheet features 25 itty-bitty sites at various parks and recreation locations along with four bonus sites. Participants will find these sites and write the location on the worksheet. Completed worksheets must be turned in to the Harris Center by Monday, Aug. 31, at 5 p.m. To be eligible for prizes, the worksheet must have correct answers for ALL itty-bitty sites. Those who complete all 25 sites correctly and answer the four bonus questions correctly on the worksheet will be entered into the grand prize drawing. Winners will be announced and contacted on Friday, Sept. 4.

To stay up-to-date on the Itty Bitty Auburn scavenger hunt, join the Facebook event group at facebook.com/CityofAuburnAL. Hints regarding each of the sites will be published to the City's Facebook event group and on the City of Auburn's Instagram page (@CityofAuburnAL).

ONE AUBURN: Inviting conversations on diversity and equality

Mayor Ron Anders announced his ONE AUBURN initiative at the end of June, inviting the community to join him in a conversation on diversity and equality.

"I believe the Auburn family is defined by our hospitality and our willingness to go out of our way when a neighbor is in need," Mayor Anders said. "I'm calling on all of us to talk about how we can be the best community we can be. I personally am making an effort to stop and listen to each of you. Because we are all, together, one Auburn."

The goal of ONE AUBURN is to strengthen the community by encouraging discussion and exploring ways to further unite Auburn residents. Mayor Anders' program includes five components that are underway/will take place over the next few months:

ONE AUBURN: One Recognition

On Friday, June 19, Mayor Anders signed a proclamation commemorating Juneteenth, the date on which in 1865, Union Major General Gordon Granger announced in Texas the end of both the Civil War and slavery.

ONE AUBURN: One Read

Community members are invited to participate in a citywide reading program that aims to foster small group discussions. Mayor Anders has selected the book "Under our Skin" by Ben Watson as the primary title for One Read and has also selected a short list of alternative books. The Mayor will appoint a number of group leaders to organize book groups to discuss the books. Community members are also invited to create additional discussion groups or to incorporate one of these books into their existing small groups or book clubs. ONE AUBURN: One Read will kick off in July. Find details at news.auburnalabama.org

ONE AUBURN: One Conversation

Starting in July, Mayor Anders will facilitate conversations with different community members in a video series that will provide a platform for sharing experiences and discussing topics related to diversity in the community. Some may include opportunities for community questions.

ONE AUBURN: One Meeting

Mayor Anders will host a town hall panel discussion this fall where community members will discuss all aspects of One Auburn.

ONE AUBURN: One Project

The City has for several years had plans to build an African American heritage center dedicated to preserving the history and experiences of the black community in Auburn and Lee County. The heritage center will be located on an expansion of the Boykin

Community Center property in Northwest Auburn using city property that currently houses the Public Works and Environmental Services departments. The project will begin after the relocation of the Environmental Services and Public Works facilities. The building will be a commemorative replica of the Rosenwald schoolhouses, which were built in the early 1900s for black children in the rural South. The heritage center will include an archive documenting prominent local families, pioneers, churches and social and political organizations. The center will aim to tell an important story about perseverance and the importance of education. Plans are in the works to involve community members in the process.

More details will be announced at news.auburnalabama.org and on social media @CityofAuburnAL as each phase of ONE AUBURN progresses. Sign up for the City's eNotifier at auburnalabama.org/eNotifier to be alerted via text or email as plans are announced.



AUBURN



AUGUST UPCOMING EVENTS

Due to space considerations, we are unable to publicize events that are not directly affiliated with a City department.



Auburn Public Library
auburnalabama.org/library
(334) 301-3198

City Meeting Schedule
auburnalabama.org
(334) 301-7266

Parks and Recreation
auburnalabama.org/parks
(334) 301-2930

Programs and events are subject to change.
Please visit auburnalabama.org/coronavirus
for up-to-date information on program and
event cancellations.

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9	10	11	12	13	14	15	2
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29	4
30	31						5

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