

RESEARCH AND TRAINING SPECIALISTS, INC
Concord, North Carolina



**2017 CITIZEN SATISFACTION SURVEY
Report**

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Executive Summary

The Town of Matthews conducted a community survey to determine citizen perceptions, attitudes, needs and expectations. This year the survey was on-line between September 5 and October 8, 2017. The Town took considerable effort through multiple venues to inform residents about the survey to assure a good response rate. Hard copies were also made available.

The survey structure permitted only one response from each IP address. It was possible for more than one person within a family to answer the survey, but it would have had to have been done on a different computer or device. There were 737 on-line responses and no paper survey responses. 35 did not answer after the first two questions. 702 is considered the valid number of responses although only 73% (538) answered most of the questions. Results are presented based on the number of “valid” responses, i.e. the percent who answered each specific question. The survey is Appendix I.

- Based on the overall valid response of 702 from an estimated 23,653 residents over the age of 18 (75.1% of 31,495) the results offer 95% confidence that they are within $\pm 3.64\%$ and 99% confidence that they are within $\pm 4.8\%$.

Response Demographics

- 98.7% (n=693) are Matthews Residents.
 - Of the 9 non-residents, 5 (55.4%) are business owners.
- 8.8% (n=61) of respondents are business owners in Matthews.
- Female residents were more likely to answer than males: 69.1% female, 30.9% male.
- 19.4% of respondents are under 35 while 15% are over 65.
- 32.4% have been residents of Matthews for five years or less; 42.5% have lived in the town over 15 years.

Perceptions of Matthews

The percent of residents agreeing with each of the positive statements about the town has not changed significantly.

- 96.0% of respondents agree that Matthews is a *good place to live* (96.9 in 2015; 96.9% in 2013);
- 90.6% of respondents agree that Matthews is a *good place to raise children* (92.6% in 2015 & 2013);
- 66.6% of respondents agree that Matthews provides a *good environment for business to succeed* (63.5% in 2015; 57.4% in 2013);
 - 75.0% of business owners agree that Matthews provides a good environment for business to succeed;
- 64.3% of respondents agree that Matthews is responsive to citizen needs (69.1% in 2015; 70.6% in 2013);
- 92.0% of respondents agree that Matthews is a *safe place to live*; (9.3% in 2015; 91.8% in 2013);
- 66.5% agree that Matthews *police officers/personnel are visible in their neighborhood*.
- 64.9% would recommend Matthews as *a place to open or relocate a business*.
 - Of business owners only, 63.3% would recommend Matthews as a place to open a business; 28.3% were not sure.

Small Town Feel

In past surveys many residents said they liked the “small town” feel of Matthews. This year the survey included statements about the town and respondents were asked to check the ones that reflected their feelings. Other reasons given for the “small-town feel” are in Appendix II.

- 8.8% responded that Matthews does not have a small-town feel.
- The largest proportion (75.6%) responded that a walkable downtown with interesting shops and restaurants is what gives Matthews a small-town feel.
- The smallest proportion said the small-town feel came from neighbors and friends.

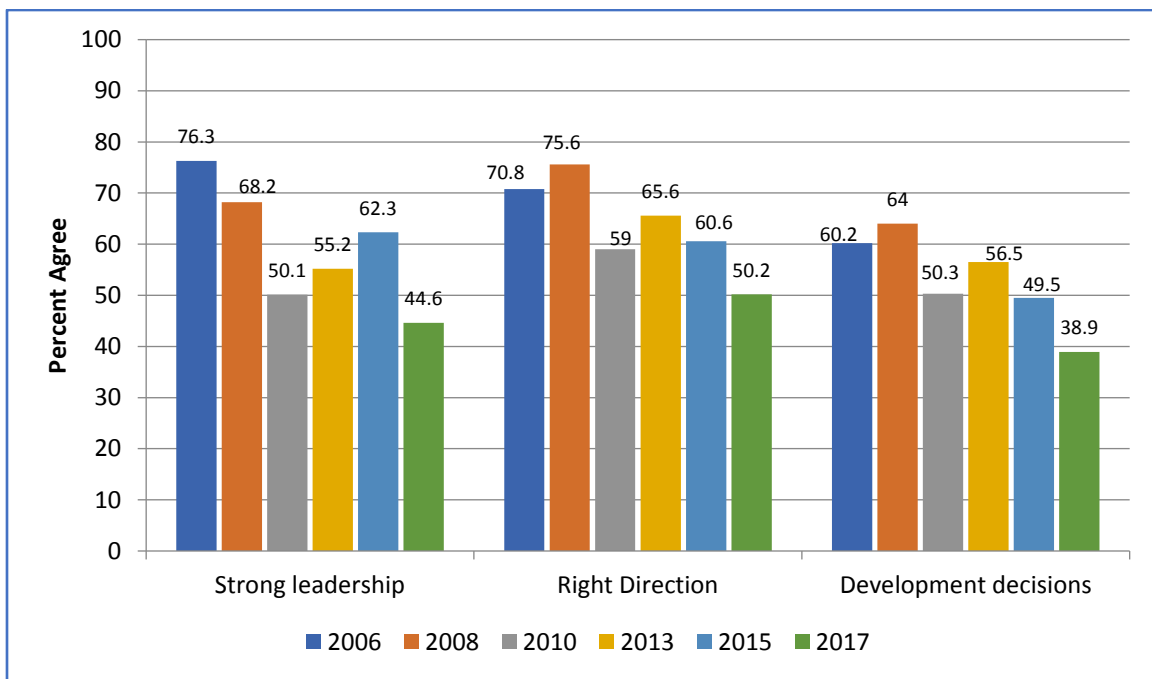
Percent	Reason
75.6	Walkable downtown with interesting shops and restaurants
72.6	Farmer's Market

Perceptions of Town Management

Five questions were asked to measure citizen perceptions of town management. These were the same questions asked each survey since 2006. (Satisfaction with the level of services was first asked in 2013).

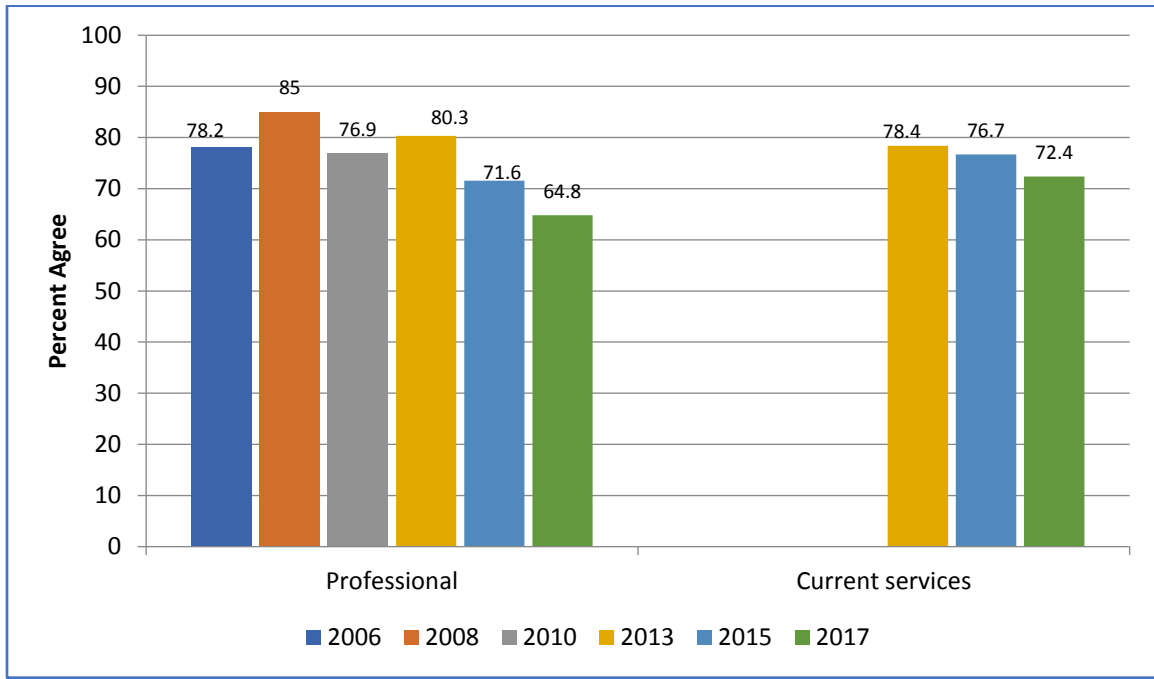
The percent of residents agreeing with each of the positive statements about town leadership, management and decision *making is the lowest* since the 2006 survey

- 44.6% perceive that that elected Town **leaders show strong leadership**. The previous *lowest* percent on this statement was 50% in 2010. It was 55% in 2013 and 62.3% in 2015
- 50.2% perceive that Town **leaders are taking Matthews in the right direction** – *down* from 60.6% in 2015 and 65.5% in 2013
- 38.9% perceive that the **Town is making good decisions about development** –*down* from 49.5% in 2015 and 56.5% in 2013.



- 64.8% perceive that **Town employees do their jobs in a professional manner** – *down* from 71.6% in 2015 and 80.3% in 2013.

- 72.4% are **satisfied with the Town’s current level of services** – down from 76.7% in 2015 and 78.4% in 2013.



Job Performance

Residents were asked their level of satisfaction with the job performance of different offices and departments of the town. The response options were either Very Satisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Somewhat Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied.

The 2017 responses show little variance from the 2015 responses in terms of overall satisfaction (Very and Somewhat Satisfied combined).

2017	2015	Office/Department
99.0	99.0	Fire/EMS
96.9	96.9	Parks, Recreation, Cultural Resources
95.8	94.9	Landscaping
94.2	97.1	Police
92.8	95.8	Garbage/Recycling
91.8	90.7	Storm Water
91.2	90.3	Animal Control
89.5	94.6	Town Manager & Staff
72.8	79.9	Planning & Development
70.8	69.6	Streets, Traffic, Sidewalks

Contact Experience

It is valuable to know how those who have had contact with a department within the past year evaluate that department. As is common when contact is controlled, the percent satisfied tends to be less.

- The biggest difference is for Storm Water, 98.1% satisfied if no contact and 58.1% satisfied if there was contact.
- There is a 21% difference for the Animal Control and Planning departments.
- Around 1% fewer citizens were satisfied with Fire/EMS and with Parks. 6.2% for Police.

Parks and Recreation

Parks/Community Centers Visitation

- 92.0% of respondents say they have visited a Town park or recreation facility. (82.7% in 2015 and 84.6% in 2013).
 - 88.9% visit Stumptown Park at least once a year.
 - 81.9% visit Squirrel Lake Park at least once a year.
 - 78.0% visit Four Mile Creek Greenway at least once a year.
- The percent visiting all parks/greenways has increased while the percent visiting the Arts Center, Community Center and Crews Road Recreation Center has decreased.

Assessment of Amenities and Facilities

Residents were requested to assess the amenities and facilities at the different park and recreation centers operated by Matthews Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resource Department. The options for those who indicated they had visited a specific location were “Good as is,” “Need Improvement,” or “No Opinion.”

Facility	Good as is	Needs Improvement	No opinion
Community Center	66.1	7.5	26.3
Crews Recreation Center Gymnasium	40.1	6.3	53.5
Four Mile Creek Greenway	76.5	10.2	13.3
Fullwood Theater	50.2	6.6	56.8
McDowell Arts Center	50.0	3.6	46.4
Open green spaces	68.7	13.5	17.8

59.1% of residents say they have noticed POSITIVE changes in the parks and recreation centers over the past two years

7.7% say they have noticed NEGATIVE changes

Downtown Matthews

- 89.7% of residents visit Downtown Matthews at least once a month (94.8% in 2015).
- 42.7% visit more than five times a month (45.6% in 2015).
- Only 9 (1.5% of the 583 who answered say they never go downtown; 5.2% in 2015).
- The most frequently selected reason for visiting downtown Matthews is for restaurants (63.2%). This is slightly up from 61.7% in 2015.
- The percent selecting stores & shopping is the lowest since 2006 – 39.7%.
- Post Office is the second most frequently selected reason (56.8%) followed by the Library (53.6%).

Reason	2006	2008	2010	2013	2015	2017
Stores & shopping	46.4	47.7	55.8	54.4	49.4	39.7
Restaurants	61.9	57.0	60.3	60.5	61.7	63.2
Town Hall/ Library	66.7	69.9	64.6	64.3	61.4	x
Town Hall						13.8
Library						53.6
Private offices	11.5	9.1	8.0	10.9	8.3	4.0
Farmers' Market	41.7	43.3	39.9	48.3	46.1	45.6
Post Office						56.8
Special Events	50.8	59.4	56.8	60.2	52.1	45.7
Fast Food Fridays & Concerts						39.9
Access Transit (catch bus)	X	4.1	3.1	4.4	3.0	1.4
Commute through town	x	36.5	24.5	42.9	43.6	28.3

Satisfaction with Solid Waste and Recycling

- 96.3% of residents are satisfied with curbside garbage collection (97.3% in 2015).
- 93.7% of respondents are satisfied with curbside recycling (95.8% in 2015).
- 91.4% of respondents are satisfied with curbside yard/lawn waste collection (95.7% in 2015).

Events

- Matthews Alive is the most frequently attended town event – 89.0% (89.3% in 2015 and 91.1% in 2013).

A question was asked about attendance: **Has any of the following stopped you from attending a Matthews Town event? (Mark all that apply):** 1. Lack of services for people with disabilities, 2. Event does not feel welcoming, 3. Event not of interest.

- 4.4% selected “Lack of services for people with disabilities” (n= 24 of 541).
- 4.7% selected “Event does not feel welcoming” (n=25 of 537).
- 45.3% selected “Event not of interest” (n=247 of 545)

EVENT	YES 2013	YES 2015	YES 2017
Matthews Alive	91.1%	89.3%	89.0
Concert & Movie Series	64.4%	60.3%	x
Concerts/Food Truck Fridays	x	x	74.6
BeachFest	48.8%	53.9%	56.7
Tree Lighting Celebration	47.2%	48.5%	39.1
Pawsitively Matthews	x	22.7%	22.8
Earth Day	35.8%	26.8%	22.7
Easter Eggstravaganza	x	x	19.5
Matthews Haunted Trail	x	x	19.4
Not So Spooky Halloween	x	x	17.9

The survey asked respondents to select the different types of music they prefer at concerts. They could answer more than one type.

- 42.6% selected Variety/Top 40 and 42% selected Beach. The most frequently given music preference of the ones not listed was Classical.

Music Preference	Percent
Variety/ Top 40	42.6
Beach	42.0
Country	33.8
Pop	31.3
Bluegrass	30.9
Jazz	26.8
Rhythm & Blues	23.4

Streets, Traffic, and Other Improvements

- 62.3% of respondents rate Matthews streets as Good (50.2%) or Excellent (12.1%).
 - This is a substantial increase from 2015 when 32.4% rated Matthews streets as Good and only 2.2% rated them as Excellent.

Tax Increase

Residents were asked, specifically, how much additional tax per \$100 evaluation they were willing to pay for seven different services/improvements. 525 answered these questions. For these questions alone, the response rate offers a 95% confidence that the findings are within $\pm 4.23\%$.

- 73.3% are willing to pay at least ½ Cent/\$100 evaluation for *increased police service*; 71.1% would pay at least ½ Cent/\$100 evaluation for *increased fire and rescue service*.
- 67.4% would pay at least ½ Cent/\$100 evaluation to *improve the condition of streets*; 67.2% would pay at least ½ Cent/\$100 evaluation to *develop new parks or increase amenities at existing parks*.
- 61.0% would pay at least ½ Cent/\$100 evaluation to *increase street network throughout town to improve connectivity*.
- 55.0% would pay at least ½ Cent/\$100 evaluation to *make streets look more attractive*.

Service/Improvement	½ Cent	1 cent	1.5 cents	2 cents	More than 2 Cents	None
Improving condition of streets/pavement	24.0	28.8	3.2	7.6	3.8	32.6
Increasing street network throughout Town to improve connectivity	19.6	21.7	3.2	10.1	6.3	39.0
Making streets look more attractive (e.g. landscaping, mast arm traffic signals, etc.)	27.4	17.2	2.5	4.0	3.8	45.0
Increasing multi-use paths and sidewalk throughout Town for pedestrians and bicyclists	24.8	20.8	4.4	8.4	9.0	32.8
Increased fire and rescue service	23.9	26.6	4.8	8.1	7.7	28.9
Increased police service	23.8	26.1	6.7	10.0	6.7	26.7
Development of new parks or increased amenities within existing parks	24.4	20.8	5.0	4.6	7.9	37.3

Significant Variances in Willingness to Pay Increase Taxes

There is a statistically significant¹ difference in who is and who is not willing to pay at least ½ Cent/\$100 evaluation given services/improvements.

- Female residents are more willing than male residents to pay at least ½ Cent increase for increased fire and rescue service (p<.017) and increase police service (p<.016).
- Residents of Matthews for more than 15 years are less likely than others to support any tax to increase street network throughout town to increase connectivity (p<.033).
- Residents 45 or younger are more likely than those over 45 to support any tax to increase street network throughout town to increase connectivity (p<.000).

Communications

- 57.0% of respondents indicate that Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor) is a good way to communicate with them.
 - Only 10.5% indicate that radio/TV is a good way and 11.7% feel information flyers and pamphlets are good ways to communicate.
- 45.3% feel that the town website is a good means of communication.

Text-messaging and announcements at Town Events were mentioned as “other” good means of communication.

Website

- 22.1% indicate that they have not been to the website.
- Of those using the website, 95.7% found it “somewhat easy” (43.3%) or “easy” (52.4%) to use.

Citizen Participation

Citizens were asked if they were aware of various ways they could participate or be involved in the town’s decision-making process.

- 84.1% are aware of public meetings and 80.2% are aware of public hearings.
- 65.5% are aware of opportunities to serve on citizen committees.

¹ Statistical significance means that one can have 95% confidence that this finding is not a random chance. The level is usually set at p<.05 which means it could happen by chance 5 times in 100; p<.02 means 2 times in 100; p<.017 means 17 times out of 1,000 surveys and p<.000 means zero times in 1,000 surveys etc. Significant tests have controls if there are small numbers in some categories.

- 59.3% are aware of volunteer opportunities; 58.0% are aware of information sessions and open houses.
- 42.2% are aware of Matthews 101.

Looking to the Future

A list of issues that were identified in previous studies to be of concern to residents was provided and respondents were asked to mark all that they felt were the “biggest issues facing Matthews in the future.”

- 62.1% selected “Traffic” as one of the biggest issues in the future; 73.9% in 2015.
- “Development and Growth” was the second most frequently selected issue -50.1%; only 15.4% selected this issue in 2015.
- The issue selected by the fewest was “Jobs-Employment Opportunities – 11.3%.

Issue	2017	2015
Traffic	62.1	73.9
Development/Growth	50.1	15.4
Downtown Development	32.1	42.4
Road Maintenance	25.2	42.9
Safe Pedestrian/Biking Areas	24.6	x
Crime/Police	22.2	32.0
Diverse & Affordable Housing	18.1	x
Higher Taxes	17.4	29.4
Greenways, green spaces	14.8	18.5
Jobs/Employment	11.3	19.0
Animal Control	x	6.6

Diversity

For the first time, a question on diversity was included in the survey. The question asked how “accepting” did the respondent feel that Matthews, as a community, was to diverse populations. Options were: “Very Accepting,” Somewhat Accepting,” Somewhat Unaccepting,” or “Very Unaccepting.” A neutral option was not offered.

- 95.3% feel that Matthews, as a community, is *accepting of those with disabilities*.
- 92.8% feel that Matthews, as a community, is *accepting of different races*.
- 90.2% feel that Matthews, as a community, is *accepting of different ethnic groups*.
- 85.3% feel that Matthews, as a community, is *accepting of non-Christian religions*.

- 80.9% feel that Matthews, as a community, is *accepting of different sexual orientations*.
- 79.1% feel that Matthews, as a community, is *accepting of different gender identities*.

Additional Comments

There were over 170 additional comments offered. An attempt was made to classify them according to the dominant theme, but it was not always clear. Some, when there was more than one issue mentioned were divided if the statements were specific. Other comments included multiple issues and were not divided to help keep the tone of the comments. These were placed in a category identified as “Other/Mixed.” All comments are listed in Appendix VIII.

Overall, the breakdown of comments is as follows:

- 27.2% Roads, Streets, Traffic
- 13.3% Generally Positive
- 10.4% Other/Mixed
- 9.2% Development
- 8.7% Town Facilities, Services, Events
- 6.4% Town Management/Communications
- 6.4% The Survey
- 5.8% Diversity
- 5.2% Downtown
- 4.6% Matthews Atmosphere
- 2.9% Police