

# **City of College Park Resident Satisfaction Survey 2014**

## **Report on Responses February 17, 2015**

### **Introduction**

The City of College Park conducts a Resident Satisfaction Survey every two years to assess resident satisfaction with city services, receive suggestions for improvements or new services, and to better understand how residents perceive their neighborhoods and the City.

The 2014 Resident Satisfaction Survey contained 43 questions and 10 opportunities for the respondent to write in responses. Most of the questions were the same or similar to questions asked in the 2012 survey. The survey was available online in English and Spanish from November 1, 2014 to December 19, 2014. Paper copies of the survey (in both languages) were available at City facilities, Attick Towers, and Spellman House.

The survey was advertised via the following communication means:

- College Park Connected (announcement and reminders)
- Municipal Scene in the Gazette
- City website homepage
- City Cable TV channel
- Civic association leaders
- Weekly City Council meeting announcements
- City Council emails to constituents
- Outreach to the University of Maryland Office of Off-Campus Housing and the Student Government Association

### **2014 Survey Respondents**

A total of 772 residents completed the survey (five in Spanish) in 2014, compared to 324 responses in 2012; this was the highest number of responses of any year with the exception of 2002 (944 responses). The high response rate is probably due to allowing multiple members of the same household complete the survey, as well as the regular reminders via College Park Connected, the Municipal Scene, civic association lists, and Council members.

The 2014 respondents are younger and have lived in the City fewer years compared to the respondents in 2012. Nearly 45% of the 2014 respondents were between 18 and 44 years of age; in 2012, only 30% were in this age range. In 2014, 36% of the respondents lived in College Park for less than five years, compared to 26% in 2012. Approximately 17% of the 2014

respondents were students (overwhelmingly graduate students)--almost triple the percentage in 2012.

As was the case in 2012, about 75% of the 2014 respondents lived in one of five neighborhoods (out of 16 listed): Calvert Hills, Hollywood, Daniels Park-Oak Springs-Branchville, Berwyn, and College Park Woods. These five neighborhoods comprise approximately 33% of the total residents in College Park. The largest change in 2014 was that Berwyn doubled its percentage from 2012 (11.61% from 5.0%), while Lakeland's percentage dropped from seven percent to two percent.

### ***A Note about the Responses***

Most of the survey questions about City service quality use the categories of "excellent", "good", "neutral", "fair", "poor", or "don't know". The percentage rated as excellent, good, neutral, fair, poor, or don't know includes the "don't know" responses as part of the total responses. In some cases, the "don't know" responses are very high, perhaps indicating that a service impacts fewer of the respondents, or that the respondents are not aware of the service. All responses are weighted to give an average number between 1 (excellent) and 5 (poor). Ideally, the responses would be between 1 and 2 (excellent and good). This can be slightly confusing because higher ratings indicate lower levels of satisfaction. The "don't know" responses are not included in the weighted averages.

Some of the responses have been analyzed by neighborhood or age group, and following the overall rating by all respondents, the best rating and lowest rating by neighborhood (if at least 10 responses were provided) or age group is provided. Staff can review the ratings and determine why differences may be noted among neighborhoods.

The 2014 weighted averages generally are slightly lower for all departments compared to the 2012 results. This could indicate a change in the quality of services provided, or it could indicate that this group of respondents (generally younger, newer to College Park, with higher student composition than in 2012) provides lower marks than the 2012 respondents. ***The 2012 and 2014 surveys cannot be used to establish trends because the survey respondents were not representative samples of city residents.***

## **Survey Questions and Analysis**

### **City Services**

#### **Department of Public Works (Q1):**

Twelve specific DPW services were rated, and DPW's overall responsiveness was rated (1.95). In general, the ratings are slightly lower (not as good) than in 2012. The highest rated services (all between excellent and good) were regular trash collection, recycling collection, and bulk collection. The lowest rated services were downtown cleanliness, street lighting, and street maintenance, all with ratings between good and neutral. The compost program received high marks, although 49% of respondents checked "don't know".

**Best Rating:** College Park Estates (1.40) and Daniels Park-Oak Springs-Branchville (1.69).  
**Lowest Rating:** Hollywood, 1.93 (still above “good”) and Old Town (2.58)

**Parking Enforcement (Q2):**

Forty-percent of the respondents checked “don’t know” in response to the question about Parking Enforcement’s overall responsiveness. Of those who responded, 51% rated it excellent or good, with an overall score between “good” and “neutral” (2.67 overall). Enforcement in commercial areas rated better than in residential areas.

**Best Rating:** Calvert Hills, College Park Estates (both 2.39), and College Park Woods (2.66)

**Lowest Rating:** Camden-Wynfield Park (3.60), Daniels Park-Oak Springs-Branchville (3.00), and Hollywood (2.88)

**Animal Control (Q3):**

Fifty-four percent responded “don’t know”, an increase from 47% in 2012. The overall weighted average was 2.26.

**Best Rating:** College Park Estates (1.75) and College Park Woods (1.81)

**Lowest Rating:** Berwyn (2.47) and Hollywood (2.40)

**Code Enforcement (Q4):**

Code Enforcement’s best rating was property maintenance in commercial areas (2.70). Compared to 2012, it received slightly better ratings in noise enforcement and overall responsiveness, but the weighted rating was nearly neutral (2.90). Sixty-one percent (compared to 54% in 2012) felt that the amount of code enforcement was “enough”. Forty-two percent of respondents selected “don’t know” regarding Code Enforcement’s overall responsiveness. Removing those responses, 47% rated Code Enforcement as excellent or good.

**Best Rating:** College Park Woods (2.24) and Lakeland (2.55)

**Lowest Rating:** Old Town (3.39), Daniels Park-Oak Springs-Branchville (3.03), and Calvert Hills (2.97)

**Youth and Family Services (Q9):**

Youth and Family Services received an overall responsiveness of 2.46, and its marks for both counseling and events and senior services were 2.34 in 2014. However, of the 269 respondents who completed this section (only residents who are seniors or who have small children), 64% marked “don’t know” regarding YFS programs and 76% marked “don’t know” regarding senior services.

**Overall Quality and Value of City Services (Q6):**

Respondents gave the City marks for quality and value of 2.12 and 2.42 respectively. In 2012, 83% of respondents indicated the City provided excellent or good quality of services, and 74% indicated the City provided excellent or good value. For 2014, the responses were 75% and 60%, respectively.

**Quality of City Services:**

**Best Rating:** College Park Estates (1.70), College Park Woods (1.75), and Calvert Hills (1.89)

**Lowest Rating:** Camden-Wynfield Park (2.67); Old Town (2.55); and Autoville-Cherry Hill (2.29)

**Value of City Services:**

**Best Rating:** College Park Woods (2.00); Calvert Hills (2.10) and College Park Estates (2.12)

Note: Yarrow rated the City very high, but only 10 people responded.

**Lowest Rating:** Camden-Wynfield Park (3.07), Old Town (3.03)

**How would you improve our City Services? (Q7):**

Nearly 350 respondents provided more than 400 suggestions on nearly everything from animal control to zoning. Twenty responses gave kudos to city government and staff. The top categories of responses are as follows:

Code enforcement (some reference)	100 comments
Parking Issues	45 comments
Lighting	22 comments
Quality of Streets	20 comments
Police	16 comments
Safety	14 comments
Landscaping or Beautification	15 comments
Personnel	15 comments

Composting, recycling, customer service, communications, pedestrian safety, traffic, and taxes each received between five and 10 comments.

**Information and Communication (Q10):**

Several survey questions asked respondents to rate City communication tools; indicate how they usually obtain City information; and indicate how they would prefer to receive City information.

Thirty-nine percent of respondents in 2014 found the usefulness of the Municipal Scene as “excellent” or “good”, a decrease from 50% in 2012. Thirty-eight percent of respondents marked “don’t know” regarding the usefulness of the Municipal Scene, and 56% of respondents marked the same for College Park Connected. Seventy-six percent of respondents had never viewed the College Park Cable Channel (68% in 2012). Eighty-four percent of respondents had never used College Park Central (Q38).

Sixty-five percent of respondents gave an “excellent” or “good” rating to the City website (a new question in 2014), and 21% of the respondents had never visited the website (Q38).

The City website, word-of-mouth, and the Gazette remain the top three most frequently cited sources of information about the City (Q11). For 2014, Civic groups, blogs, and the *Diamondback* were the next most frequently cited.

The most frequently cited *preferred* methods (Q12) for receiving information about the City remain email (64%), website (46%), the newspaper (25%), and postal mail (21%). Social media was cited by 17% in 2014, an increase from 10% in 2012.

Email / College Park Connected received the highest number of total responses (358) and led each age category with the exception of the 75 and over group (11 selected it, and 12 selected newspaper). The website was the second most preferred method of receiving information (245 responses), followed by the newspaper (138) and postal mail (111). Social media was one of the top three preferred methods for respondents 44 and younger.

Across all categories (Municipal Scene, website, resident guide, and College Park Connected), and all age groups, the Resident Guide scored the best (2.01, or “good”), followed by the website (2.35), College Park Connected (2.36), and the Municipal Scene (2.42). Of the approximately 550 people who responded to this question, the “don’t know” responses were as follows: College Park Connected (301); Municipal Scene (206); and 107 for both the Resident Guide and website.

### **Analysis by Age Group**

The Municipal Scene, website, and College Park Connected received almost equal scores within each age group. The ratings for all four information sources were approximately 1 point better by those in the 75 and up age group compared to the 18-24 age group. A high percentage of respondents in the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups gave “Don’t Know” responses for all four categories of information sources (Municipal Scene, website, resident guide, and College Park Connected).

### **Recommend College Park (Q13):**

In 2012 the City added a question regarding whether the respondent was likely to recommend living in College Park to a friend, and whether the respondent was likely to remain in College Park for the next three years. In 2014, the first question was split into two questions—recommend living in College Park to a *friend*, and recommend living in College Park to a *family*.

In 2014, 63% of the respondents (slightly lower than in 2012) indicated they were very likely or likely to recommend living in College Park to a friend. Fifty-five percent indicated the same regarding a family. Three-quarters of all respondents in 2012 indicated they were planning to remain in College Park for the next three years, while two-thirds of the respondents said the same in 2014. This change likely reflects the higher percentage of students and younger respondents in 2014.

### **Recommend living in College Park to a friend**

Average Rating: 2.24. (between “Likely” and “Neutral”)

**Neighborhoods with the highest likelihood** of recommending College Park to a friend: College Park Estates (1.59), Calvert Hills (1.90), College Park Woods (1.95), and Berwyn (2.05).

**Neighborhood with lower likelihoods** of recommending College Park to a friend: Camden-Wynfield Park (3.16), Old Town (2.95), Autoville-Cherry Hill (2.85), and Lakeland (2.79)

**Recommend living in College Park to a family**

Average Rating: 2.53 (between “Likely” and “Neutral”)

**Neighborhoods with the highest likelihood** of recommending College Park to a family:

College Park Estates (1.81), College Park Woods (2.13), Calvert Hills (2.17), and Berwyn (2.36)

**Neighborhood with lower likelihoods** of recommending College Park to a family: Camden-Wynfield Park (3.63), Old Town (3.38), Autoville-Cherry Hill (3.20), Lakeland (3.07)

**Public Safety (Q14):**

Two questions addressed how safe respondents feel, and how respondents rate the City’s public safety services. In both 2012 and 2014, the weighted average of all situations and locations except one (Greenbelt metro in 2012) were rated between “safe” and “neutral”.

The top three categories rated as “**very safe**” or “**safe**” in 2014 were in your immediate neighborhood, in the downtown commercial area, and at local parks and playgrounds. The three categories in 2014 with the highest “**unsafe**” and “**very unsafe**” percentages were as a cyclist, near the Greenbelt metro, and as a pedestrian.

The public safety service ratings were basically unchanged between 2012 and 2014, with almost all categories with a weighted average between “good” and “neutral”.

**The neighborhoods with responses indicating higher levels of perceived safety are:** Yarrow (1.30); College Park Estates (1.54); College Park Woods (1.83); and Calvert Hills (1.94).

**The neighborhoods with responses indicating lower levels of perceived safety** (not including UMD campus or neighborhoods with fewer than 10 responses) are: Camden-Wynfield Park (2.74); Autoville-Cherry Hill (2.65); Old Town (2.60); and Lakeland (2.57).

**Specific comments on Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services or how you would improve public safety (Q16):**

There were 200 responses, and of these, 24 were kudos for current services. About 100 responses mentioned the police, in some cases suggesting a city department, in other cases requesting more patrols, and others commenting on what was perceived to be poor services. Twenty-five responses noted pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure; 12 mentioned lighting; and 11 mentioned communication.

**Rate Your Neighborhood (Q17):**

This question asked respondents to rate their neighborhood regarding the condition of housing, access to parks, walking distance to a bus stop, availability of sidewalks, access to shopping, tree canopy cover, and overall quality.

Access to parks and open spaces was again the highest rated, with a weighted average of 2.08 (2 = good). Interestingly, open space was also the top desired neighborhood resource (Q23). Availability of sidewalks was again the lowest rated, with a weighted average of 3.10 (3 = neutral). Seventy-one percent of respondents rated their neighborhood overall as either excellent or good, down from 76% in 2012.

**Condition of Housing:**

Average Rating: 2.53

Neighborhoods with low ratings: Old Town (3.28), Daniels Park (2.84), Hollywood (2.81)

**Access to Parks and open spaces:**

Average Rating: 2.07

Neighborhoods with low ratings: Camden-Wynfield Park (2.53), Daniels Park-Oak Springs-Branchville (2.32), Hollywood (2.28).

**Availability of Sidewalks:**

Average Rating: 3.08 (“Neutral”)

Neighborhoods with low ratings: College Park Woods (4.03), College Park Estates (3.96), Berwyn (3.29)

**Tree Canopy:**

Average Rating: 2.31

Neighborhoods with low ratings: Camden-Wynfield Park (2.92), Lakeland (2.58), Berwyn (2.49). Three people rated Crystal Springs at 3.67.

**Overall neighborhood as a Place to Live:**

Average Rating: 2.26

Neighborhoods with low ratings: Camden-Wynfield Park (3.00), Old Town (2.77), Autoville-Cherry Hill (2.60)

**What do you like best about your neighborhood (Q18):**

**What do you like least about your neighborhood (Q19):**

The written responses have been assembled by neighborhood and by district, and provided electronically to Council. This information and all of the survey data will be provided on the City’s website.

**What types of businesses do you most frequently leave College Park to patronize (Q20):**

Nearly 1,700 specific responses were provided by 572 people. The top categories of businesses respondents left the City to patronize are:

Dining establishments	366 responses
Grocery stores	305 responses
Shopping (Clothes)	155 responses
Entertainment	120 responses
Health care	66 responses
Bars	43 responses

### **Economic Development News (Q21)**

In 2014, a higher percentage of respondents are receiving economic development news via Facebook / Twitter and the economic development website than in 2012, and lower percentages are receiving this information from Council meetings and newsletters.

### **City Parks and Events (Q22):**

City parks, playgrounds, and athletic fields received a weighted average score of 2.14. Sixty-five percent of respondents rated them excellent or good, compared to 71% in 2012. For City events and recreation programs (new question in 2014), 35% of respondents gave an excellent or good rating, and 33% of respondents indicated they don't know.

### **Quality of neighborhood parks:**

Neighborhoods with low ratings: College Park Estates (2.46), Daniels Park – Oak Springs – Branchville (2.40)

### **Quality of events and recreation programs:**

Neighborhoods with low ratings: Hollywood (2.72)

### **Community Amenities (Q23):**

Respondents were asked to indicate which of a list of amenities they would like to see in their neighborhood. The top two choices in 2014—open or green space and a community garden, respectively—repeated the top choices in 2012, but in reverse order. Fitness trails and off-road bike trails again were the third and fourth most popular. There were not significant differences by neighborhood.

### **Desired recreational activities and events in the City (Q24):**

Two-hundred thirty-three respondents provided nearly 500 suggestions. The top categories are the following:

Sports	152 responses
(swimming, running, yoga, biking, walking, adult leagues, etc.)	
Events	80 responses
Music concerts, music festivals	46 responses
Arts (including dance and theatre)	41 responses

### **Desired recreational activities and events in the City (Q24), continued:**

Movies	21 responses
Biking (including trails)	18 responses
Food events	18 responses

**Energy Efficiency (Q25; new questions):**

Sixty-nine percent of respondents said the City should invest in energy efficiency for municipal buildings, and 51% indicated they would like to know more about solar energy and how to make a residence more energy efficient.

**Recycling (Q26):**

Two new questions were included in 2014. Respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of their household trash volume that is currently recycled, and to estimate the percentage that could be recycled (five options, each with a percentage range). The responses were similar, with 81% of respondents choosing categories from 26% to 100% of trash that is recycled, and 78% of respondents stating the same range could be recycled. **“Unsure of what can be recycled” was the option most frequently cited as a barrier to recycling.**

**Sustainability programs the City should pursue (Q29):**

Two-hundred thirty-five respondents gave suggestions on what sustainability programs the City should pursue. The top categories are the following:

Recycling (wide range of materials)	73 responses
Composting	72 responses
Solar Energy	46 responses
Community Garden and related	43 responses
Environmental programs	29 responses
Stormwater and rainbarrels	26 responses
Energy Efficiency	20 responses
Tree-related	17 responses

**Transportation (Q30):**

The survey included several questions about use of transportation options, commuting distances, and bicycle usage. Fifty-one percent of respondents indicated that walking to the metro was one of the two most typical means, and 40% indicated driving a car (both slight increases from 2012). More respondents selected Shuttle-UMD than in 2012, probably reflecting the higher number of student respondents. Eleven percent stated they do not use metro, down from 16% in 2012. A higher percentage of respondents (7% versus 3% in 2012) said they use a bicycle for commuting, but the most typical use remained recreation. In 2014, 72% of the respondents commuted nine miles or less, significantly higher than the 54% in 2012. Slightly higher percentages of respondents indicated use of the metro, metrobus, and the County bus systems in 2014 compared to 2012.

**Overall Quality in College Park (Q34):**

The 2014 weighted averages of vibrancy of downtown, shopping opportunities, dining opportunities, recreation opportunities, and cultural opportunities were 3.13 and 3.75 (between neutral and fair), and almost all were rated slightly worse than in 2012. Overall, College Park received a 2014 weighted average score of 2.60. The score was 2.40 in 2012.

By age group, the lowest overall ratings for the City were 18-24 (2.95), 25-34 (2.76), and 35-44 (2.68). The vibrancy of downtown was rated lowest by the 25-34 age group (3.68) and the 35-44 age group (3.55). Shopping opportunities, dining opportunities, recreational opportunities were all rated lowest by the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups.

**Rate the City in terms of housing, downtown vibrancy, parking, shopping, dining, recreation, culture, transportation, and overall. Responses grouped by neighborhood. (Q34 with Q43)**

**Recreation Opportunities**

Average Rating: 3.13

**Neighborhoods with the lowest rating:** Old Town (3.61) and Daniel's Park-Oak Springs-Branchville (3.39)

**Transportation Network**

Average Rating: 2.49

**Neighborhoods with lowest rating:** Autoville-Cherry Hill (3.17), College Park Woods (3.00), and Camden-Wynfield Park (2.94)

**College Park Overall**

Average Rating: 2.60

**Neighborhoods with lowest ratings:** Old Town (3.25), Camden-Wynfield Park (3.22), Autoville-Cherry Hill (2.95)

**What do you like BEST about College Park? (Q35)**

There were about 445 separate responses. Nearly 300 responses noted accessibility to such things as transportation (metro and I-95), D.C. and Baltimore, the University of Maryland, great neighborhoods, Lake Artemesia and trails. About 70 responses commented on some aspect of the community or people, and about 30 noted some aspect of services. Eighteen responses noted the parks and recreation facilities. Affordability was mentioned in 20 responses.

**Q36 What do you like LEAST about College Park?**

Just over 400 respondents provided comments. About 100 comments mentioned the lack of amenities. Traffic / transportation / Rt. 1 was noted 91 times, and safety (crime and pedestrian-related) was mentioned 57 times. Students or the University of Maryland were mentioned 34 times. Parking was noted 22 times. The following issues were mentioned

between 10 and 20 times: rentals, development, cleanliness, code enforcement/compliance, schools, downtown, and noise.

**What improvements or changes would you like to see in College Park in the next five years?  
(Q37)**

Four-hundred people responded to this question. The most frequent responses can be categorized as follows:

Development (shopping, downtown center, other)	215 responses
Transportation	83 responses
Dining and Entertainment	41 responses
Bike and pedestrian infrastructure	40 responses
Safety	39 responses
Code enforcement	38 responses
Better relations with University / community involvement	13 responses
Environmental improvements	11 responses