

City of Aiken Citizen Benchmark Study, 2017: A Survey of Citizen Opinion on Living in Aiken, City Services and Taxes, Development, and Communication with City Government

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Executive Summary

This study of the opinions of adult City of Aiken residents has several purposes. The study establishes a benchmark of the perceived quality of services and activities performed by city departments and offices along with suggestions on improvements that could be made. We also explore why citizens choose to reside in the city along with feelings about development, growth—especially in the downtown area, the balance between services and taxes, and finally citizen/government communications, transparency and responsiveness.

The survey used a probability sample of 607 residents of the City of Aiken. These individuals were chosen at random from our sampling frame and thus residents in the city had an approximately equal probability of being asked to conduct the survey. The law of large numbers means that under these conditions, over the course of the hundreds of interviews conducted, the sample of Aiken residents closely resembles the makeup of the city at large. To correct any residual imbalances, weighting was employed to approximate Census Bureau estimates of race, age and gender in the city. Trained live interviewers were used to increase response rates and the survey was completed between mid-March and mid-April 2017.

Life in Aiken

Aiken has a nucleus of established residents; the average length of time residents have lived in the city is over two decades. Individuals choose to live here for a variety of reasons beyond simply work or birth. A majority or near majority of residents cited every reason we asked about as “very important” in their decision to live in the city. In addition to cost of living and work reasons, individuals were drawn by the beauty of the area, the climate and what the city has to offer.

Residents are generally satisfied with life in Aiken. The vast majority of residents (over 85%) rate life in Aiken as either “good” or “excellent”. Aiken residents were also more likely to say that life in Aiken is improving rather than getting worse. In addition, on the subject of crime, a majority of residents felt “very safe” or “extremely safe”. Though no group was overwhelmingly dissatisfied with life in Aiken on any of these measures, differences did exist among subgroups within the city. Black residents and those on the Northside were less likely to say life in Aiken was “excellent” compared to white residents and those living elsewhere in the city. They were also less likely to rate the city as “very” or “extremely” safe compared to other groups.

Taxes and Services

Residents in Aiken were generally happy with the value in the services they received for the taxes they paid. Most residents rated this value as “good” or “very good”. Residents were happy with the balance of taxes and services they receive, although a much larger number was willing to sustain a tax increase for additional services compared to those who wished taxes and services to be cut. When asked to compare Aiken’s taxes to those of nearby cities, residents were uncertain, with most saying they did not know or that they were similar. However, more residents claimed taxes were lower than claimed they were higher.

Black residents were the one demographic group that perceived the value of services for taxes less favorably. Those on the Northside also more in favor of tax cuts compared to residents elsewhere in the city.

Services/Activities and Citizen Satisfaction

Among the seventeen services and activities provided by the City of Aiken that we asked residents about, we found residents to be generally satisfied. Roads were the only area where more residents were dissatisfied than satisfied. Residents were most satisfied with the public safety fire and police protection as well as yard waste removal, garbage and recreation/athletics—services provided by city personnel. Residents were least satisfied with roads, sidewalks and safe bicycle paths and lanes—areas of physical infrastructure.

Differences did exist among groups in the city in satisfaction with these services, especially on ethnic lines. Young people were also more likely to say report dissatisfaction with city services and activities. However, even among these groups, more residents were satisfied than dissatisfied.

Development and Growth

A majority of residents were happy with the guidance of the city government on growth and development. Most were satisfied with where current growth is taking place, although those who were not lived in areas other than the Southside and most suggestions to where development should be shifted wanted it to move to other areas of the city, especially the Northside.

Residents believed that economic development was possible in Aiken without sacrificing the small town character of the city. A majority of residents preferred pursuing this course: maintaining Aiken's historic small town character of Aiken while pursuing economic development.

Downtown

The downtown area is a key piece of Aiken's identity. The area remains popular with residents, with the average resident visiting downtown four times a month. Visits to the area were a bit skewed towards older, better educated and more affluent residents and those living closer to the geographic heart of the city.

Residents most frequently suggested adding additional parking as an improvement to the area as well as additional businesses. Restaurants were the most popular suggested business and suggestions from residents indicate that many people in the city would like to see businesses with a broader appeal move into the downtown.

Communication with City Government

Residents in Aiken are generally happy with communication between the city government and residents, although some room exists for improvement along ethnic lines. Residents were asked about various common ways information is passed along about the city. All nine were used by a

majority of residents, with the exception of neighborhood associations and elected leaders. Majorities of residents also cited each source as a preferred source of information. Included was a source not currently used: informational meetings about important issues. Among residents, 63% said they would prefer to get information this way and among those interested, a majority reported greater interest than in standard city council meetings.

A key takeaway from our analysis is that different sources are used by different groups within the city. Among younger residents, electronic formats dominate, while older residents favor newspapers and traditional media. Black residents favor cable TV and elected leaders as an information source. This is an important point for the City of Aiken to consider in realizing that a one-size-fits-all approach to communication with residents does not work in Aiken.

Transparency and Responsiveness of the City Government

A majority of residents perceive that the city government is at least somewhat transparent and interested in hearing from residents. City residents also believe that Aiken is working on problems that are important to them and their families. Among individuals who did not feel that city was working on important problems, the general sense was that the city had different priorities or ignored problems. However, only a minority of residents felt this way.

Personal Contacts with City Government

Residents most frequently contact Aiken city government regarding questions, complaints or requests for service. A majority of residents reportedly had no contacts with city government. There were differences among groups, with high socioeconomic status residents more likely to make contacts, suggesting other residents may not feel comfortable.

Those who did have contacts rated city employees quite high in courtesy, training, professionalism, and ease in getting help. Though not perfect on any of these, the area in which there was the most some room for improvement was getting help. Perhaps employees can be trained to be more attentive in making quick referrals for problems they cannot handle.

Overview of Key Findings

- A majority of residents rated the quality of life in Aiken as “excellent” or “good”. Black residents were less likely to rate quality of life as “excellent” and more likely to rate it as “fair” compared to white residents. Older residents were also more satisfied with quality of life in the city.
- A plurality of residents believe that the quality of life in Aiken has not changed over the past five years. Among the balance, more residents felt quality of life had improved rather than gotten worse.
- A majority of residents felt “very safe” or “extremely safe” in Aiken. Black residents and those on the Northside were more likely to say they were only “somewhat safe”.
- Residents are broadly happy with the value of services for the taxes they pay. 60% of residents rate this value as “good” or “excellent”.
- Residents are generally happy with taxes where they are (58% want them kept at current levels). Among the remainder, more residents actually want more services, even if it means an increase in taxes compared to those wishing for a cut in taxes and services.
- Among city services and activities, the only service where residents were dissatisfied was roads. More residents were dissatisfied than satisfied. Poor repair (largely outside the purview of the city government) was the most common complaint, with traffic also cited as a problem. This represents an opportunity for the city.
- Over two-thirds of residents were satisfied with the city’s efforts to stimulate economic development. Among those few who were dissatisfied, suggestions were general and included encouraging more growth and jobs.
- The vast majority of Aiken residents believe economic development is possible in Aiken without compromising the small town character of the city.
- Most residents would like to see Aiken preserve its small town character while also pursuing a course of economic development.
- Among residents asked about the most desired change to downtown, the most frequent suggestion was improving parking.

Methodology

The target population for the survey upon which this report rests was the adult population living within the legal limits of the City of Aiken. That excludes those living in “donut holes” that are surrounded by the city and those living in the urban-like areas adjacent to the city. That adult population totals about 25,000 people, based on the latest estimates of the U.S. Census.¹

The survey was a telephone survey with live interviewers lasting about fifteen to twenty minutes drawn from telephone numbers provided by Survey Sampling International. The company guaranteed 75% coverage of all residents in the city who have cell numbers and/or landline numbers. The balance between landline numbers and cell numbers was 12%/88% respectively. This is in keeping with findings that over 95% of adults in the United States have a cell phone.²

The survey was performed in the USC Aiken Social Science and Business Research Laboratory (SSBRL) that has six calling stations with noise suppression mikes and monitoring capabilities. The survey began on Thursday, March 16, and ended on Thursday, April 13. Each number was called three times before being discarded. On those calls that rolled over to voice mail or an answering machine, messages were left that they would be called again, and at least one more attempt was made to contact the person at that number.

Each potential respondent was screened to minimize interviews with non-city residents and those under eighteen. Potential respondents were asked their age and if they were a legal resident of the city. Those who were unsure about the latter were asked who picked up their garbage and recycling. Those stating they were over eighteen, and answering yes to residence in Aiken or yes to the City of Aiken (as opposed to other methods) city garbage and recycling were accepted for interviews.

A total of 4,047 numbers were called. Eliminating those potential respondents who were determined to not live in the city, the response rate was 15.4%. This compares favorably to typical response rates of 9% obtained by national organizations such as the Pew Center. The sample resulting from this process consisted of 607 adults, 20% African American, 52% Women, with an average age of 51, and a good balance of geographical areas and city council districts. While the sample yielded good representation of all relevant demographic groups, we employed what is called a “raking” weighting procedure to improve the sample.³ This weighted the data to be in accordance with the Census Bureau’s estimate of the City of Aiken’s composition in terms of age, race and gender. The table below compares the characteristics of the unweighted sample and the weighted sample after the raking procedure was applied.

¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/4500550>

² <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/mobile/>

³ Deming, W. Edwards/Frederick F. Stephan. 1940. On a Least Squares Adjustment of a Sampled Frequency Table When the Expected Marginal Totals Are Known, in: *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics* 11 (4):427-444.

Sample Composition Before and After Weighting

Groups	Sampled	Weighted Sample
ALL	607	607
ETHNICITY		
White	73.3%	69.7%
Black	19.9%	24.8%
GENDER		
Men	47.3%	47.2%
Women	52.0%	52.1%
AGE		
< 36	25.9%	27.2%
36-64	40.7%	44.8%
65+	33.4%	28.0%
INCOME		
< \$60k	39.7%	41.0%
\$60-100k	29.2%	28.3%
> \$100k	31.1%	30.7%
EDUCATION		
HS or Less	23.4%	24.2%
Some Coll.	23.4%	23.7%
college	36.7%	36.2%
College +	16.5%	15.9%
AREA		
Northside	20.0%	22.1%
Southside	59.2%	57.7%
Eastside	3.4%	3.4%
Westside	6.2%	6.0%
Downtown	8.6%	8.1%

On questions answered by all 607 respondents, the expected sampling error is plus or minus 3.93 percentage points. The sampling error increases for smaller subsamples.

Many questions had a list of referents to which each respondent was asked for an evaluation of some kind. For example, we asked respondents their levels of satisfaction to a list of services and activities. The order in which the referents were presented was rotated so that order of presentation would not have any systematic impact on evaluations.

USC Aiken students performed the surveys after undergoing extensive training by SSBRL staff. The Eidex Group LLC coded and loaded the data into a format for the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program. Open-ended responses were coded into categories by the authors.

Interpreting the Results

Most of the tables in this report show percentages. These represent the percentage of the particular row (e.g. “Black”, “Men”, “Downtown”) answering the question a particular way, as described by the column header. In presenting the data, tables show percentages to the nearest tenth of a percent, while in discussions of the tables percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent for reasons of simplicity.

For open ended questions, percentages may total greater than 100%. This is because some residents made multiple suggestions or their suggestions fell into different categories.

Asterisks also appear in the tables next to some demographic factors such as ethnicity. These indicate the probability that the differences between the groups observed in the survey exist among the City of Aiken residents overall. Because all surveys are random approximations of the overall group (in this case the City of Aiken residents) called the population, they will almost always differ slightly from the population. This means that the differences among, say, black and white residents on opinion questions in the survey may be due either to actual differences in the opinion of black and white city residents overall or due to the unavoidable inaccuracy of the random sample (sampling error).

Statistics were used to calculate the probability that the differences were due to sampling error and do not really exist in the population. The asterisks represent the following:

* represents a $p < 0.1$ which means that there is less than a 10% probability that the differences in the survey are due to random chance and over a 90% probability these differences observed exist in the city population.

** represents a $p < 0.05$ which means that there is less than a 5% probability that the differences in the survey are due to random chance and over a 95% probability these differences observed exist in the city population.

*** represents a $p < 0.01$ which means that there is less than a 1% probability that the differences in the survey are due to random chance and over a 99% probability these differences observed exist in the city population.

**** represents a $p < 0.001$ which means that there is less than a 0.1% probability that the differences in the survey are due to random chance and over a 99.9% probability these differences observed exist in the city population.

Life in Aiken

Overview: We asked a number of questions about living in Aiken and how that has changed. The average resident has lived in the City of Aiken for slightly more than two decades. Aiken is not simply a bedroom community where people choose to live in order to work, nor is it just a place where people live because it is where they were born. People live in Aiken for a wide range of reasons. Majorities or near majorities cited every reason we listed as “very important.” In descending order, residents cited cost of living, work, beauty of the area, climate, pace of life, cultural opportunities, recreation, and finally having been born here—the only reason at under 40%. When asked to volunteer additional reasons for living here that respondents felt were very important, residents cited schools in Aiken, the people and organizations here and the amenities the city offers.

When asked about the quality of life in Aiken, a clear majority of all residents and all subgroups rated it as “good” or “excellent”. All groups were more likely to feel that life is improving rather than getting worse. When asked about fear of crime, clear majorities of all groups feel at least “somewhat safe” from crime.

However, all of these positives were not evenly spread across all demographic subgroups. Ethnicity played a significant dampening role in the overall quality of life and in fear of crime. Black residents were relatively less likely than white residents to see life in Aiken as “excellent” and more likely to see it as only “fair.” Black residents did not feel as safe from crime. While life is seen as generally good and safe, some significant ethnic inequality exists within these overall positive ratings.

Years in Aiken

3. How many years have you lived in the City of Aiken?

Groups	Mean	SD
ALL	21.1	16.9
ETHNICITY		
White	20.4	16.8
Black	22.7	17.2
GENDER**		
Men	19.2	16.0
Women	22.5	17.3
AGE****		
< 36	14.1	9.1
36-64	20.4	15.7
65+	29.1	21.0
INCOME		
< \$60k	21.5	16.5
\$60-100k	22.8	18.1
> \$100k	19.3	16.4
EDUCATION		
HS or Less	21.1	19.1
Some Coll.	22.3	17.2
College	20.2	15.7
College +	21.3	15.7
AREA***		
Northside	22.1	16.9
Southside	19.1	15.6
Eastside	24.2	17.0
Westside	26.8	24.5
Downtown	26.5	18.6

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: The average resident has lived in Aiken about two decades, with no important differences among subgroups, though we do see a little lower average for the Southside, suggesting that residents are a little more likely to move in or out of that large sector in the community than other areas. That women are a little more likely to have lived in Aiken longer is almost certainly a function of women living longer than men. Of course that is the trivial explanation for age groups being significantly different in average years lived in Aiken—the older you are the more likely you will have lived in Aiken longer. The takeaway here is that Aiken is a community in which most people live long enough to establish a variety of familial and social ties to the community. It is a town in which most people are likely to have a strong sense of community.

Why Living in Aiken

9. People choose to move to or continue to live somewhere for a variety of reasons. Here are some of the most typical reasons. How important is each of these in your living here? Very important, somewhat important, or not important? (Note: table below is arranged in descending order of percentage who rated the factor as “very important.”)

Reason	Very Important	Somewhat Import	Not Important	DK/NS
Cost of living	60.6%	34.5%	4.1%	0.8%
Work reasons	55.7%	22.7%	20.5%	1.0%
Beauty of area	54.3%	40.2%	5.2%	0.3%
City Reputation	51.1%	38.2%	9.6%	1.1%
Climate	45.6%	41.6%	11.5%	1.3%
Pace of life	45.2%	45.0%	8.9%	0.9%
Cultural opportunities	43.9%	41.2%	13.9%	1.0%
Recreation	43.7%	44.9%	10.7%	0.7%
Born here and/or family here	40.5%	22.2%	35.9%	1.3%

Discussion: Majorities of residents cite cost of living, work, beauty, and general reputation of the city as “very important” reasons for living in Aiken, but all the other factors had pluralities listing them as “very important,” except for recreation, which had a virtual tie between “very” and “somewhat important.” All areas were on the important side of the scale with strong majorities rating them as at least “somewhat important.” In short, people come to live in Aiken for a wide variety of reasons. That so many reasons were rated so highly is noteworthy. It suggests that Aiken is not a bedroom community in which people come mainly for reasons of work. Nor is it a place where most people live here for reasons of birth and family ties. In fact, birth/family was the reason most likely to be chosen as “not important.” Aiken has a range of factors that make it attractive to strong majorities of its residents, giving it the ability to attract and retain people with diverse interests and tastes.

In the tables below we explore any differences among demographic subgroups in why they chose to move to or continue to live in Aiken.

Cost of living? Demographic Breakdown

Groups	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	DK/NS
ALL	60.6%	34.5%	4.1%	0.8%
ETHNICITY**				
White	57.4%	37.9%	3.9%	0.7%
Black	69.7%	24.6%	4.9%	0.7%
GENDER				
Men	59.4%	33.9%	5.9%	0.7%
Women	62.7%	34.3%	2.6%	0.3%
AGE				
< 36	62.0%	31.6%	5.7%	0.6%
36-64	62.0%	34.6%	3.4%	
65+	57.1%	36.8%	3.7%	2.5%
INCOME				
< \$60k	63.4%	31.0%	4.2%	1.4%
\$60-100k	57.1%	37.4%	5.4%	
> \$100k	61.6%	34.6%	3.1%	0.6%
EDUCATION				
HS or Less	60.4%	34.0%	4.2%	1.4%
Some Coll.	60.1%	36.4%	2.8%	0.7%
College	61.0%	33.0%	5.0%	0.9%
College +	61.4%	35.2%	3.4%	
AREA*				
Northside	68.5%	29.2%	2.3%	
Southside	60.9%	34.4%	3.8%	0.9%
Eastside	42.1%	47.4%	10.5%	
Westside	58.3%	38.9%	2.8%	
Downtown	41.7%	45.8%	10.4%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Cost of living was uniformly cited as a “very important” reason by strong majorities of all subgroups, with the possible exception of those who said that they live in the Eastside and Downtown areas. Black residents and those residing on the Northside of town were statistically more likely to rate cost of living as very important compared to white residents and those living in other parts of the city, respectively. Cost of living was the factor most likely to be rated as “very important.” Clearly this is a major selling point for living in Aiken.

Work reasons? Demographic Breakdown

Groups	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	DK/NS
ALL	55.7%	22.7%	20.5%	1.0%
ETHNICITY***				
White	53.3%	21.2%	24.0%	1.5%
Black	64.1%	24.6%	11.3%	
GENDER				
Men	57.5%	21.2%	20.1%	1.1%
Women	53.0%	24.8%	20.9%	1.3%
AGE****				
< 36	56.7%	32.5%	10.8%	
36-64	64.0%	18.8%	16.5%	0.8%
65+	42.3%	19.6%	35.6%	2.5%
INCOME**				
< \$60k	49.8%	27.7%	20.2%	2.3%
\$60-100k	60.0%	22.8%	16.6%	0.7%
> \$100k	65.2%	14.6%	20.3%	
EDUCATION				
HS or Less	55.6%	27.8%	16.0%	0.7%
Some Coll.	54.2%	24.6%	19.0%	2.1%
College	56.4%	19.7%	22.9%	0.9%
College +	56.2%	18.0%	24.7%	1.1%
AREA				
Northside	66.4%	20.3%	12.5%	0.8%
Southside	56.0%	21.4%	21.1%	1.5%
Eastside	42.1%	26.3%	31.6%	
Westside	51.4%	28.6%	20.0%	
Downtown	40.8%	34.7%	22.4%	2.0%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Work reasons were rated as “very important” by a majority (or near majority in the case of those with lower incomes) of every subgroup except those over 65, who are likely to be retirees, and those saying that they live on the Eastside of town (a relatively small proportion of the sample), and those living Downtown, who are more likely to also be older and retired. Thinking about what sociologists call the “hierarchy of needs” for living, paid employment is an essential factor in the ability to survive, so this must be considered as “very important” for any community to survive. That this was not the only factor that was seen as “very important” by high proportions of the population suggests that Aiken provides more than just the necessities of life.

Beauty of area? Demographic Breakdown

Groups	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	DK/NS
ALL	54.3%	40.2%	5.2%	0.3%
ETHNICITY				
White	52.1%	42.3%	5.4%	0.2%
Black	60.3%	35.5%	4.3%	
GENDER***				
Men	48.2%	43.8%	8.1%	
Women	59.6%	36.8%	3.0%	0.7%
AGE****				
< 36	39.2%	53.8%	6.3%	0.6%
36-64	54.0%	40.3%	5.3%	0.4%
65+	69.5%	26.8%	3.7%	
INCOME				
< \$60k	58.3%	36.5%	4.7%	0.5%
\$60-100k	49.7%	42.9%	7.5%	
> \$100k	53.2%	43.0%	3.8%	
EDUCATION				
HS or Less	61.8%	34.0%	3.5%	0.7%
Some Coll.	54.2%	42.3%	3.5%	
College	49.5%	42.2%	7.8%	0.5%
College +	52.8%	42.7%	4.5%	
AREA				
Northside	60.3%	36.6%	3.1%	
Southside	53.5%	40.6%	5.6%	0.3%
Eastside	57.9%	36.8%	5.3%	
Westside	44.4%	50.0%	5.6%	
Downtown	50.0%	43.8%	6.3%	

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: Beauty of the area was more likely to be cited as most important by women (60%) and the elderly (70%). Gender differences are probably explained by living in a culture in which women learn to value aesthetics more highly than men. That the elderly are more likely to rate beauty as “very important” is probably explained by Aiken being a retirement destination. The elderly are more likely to be retired and chose to live in Aiken in part because it is an attractive place. We might also see these two groups as associated because women have longer life expectancies than men, so a higher percentage of women are in the older group.

City reputation? Demographic Breakdown

Groups	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	DK/NS
ALL	51.1%	38.2%	9.6%	1.1%
ETHNICITY****				
White	45.2%	42.2%	11.7%	1.0%
Black	64.8%	29.6%	4.2%	1.4%
GENDER**				
Men	46.3%	39.7%	13.2%	0.7%
Women	54.7%	36.9%	7.0%	1.3%
AGE***				
< 36	44.9%	37.2%	17.3%	0.6%
36-64	50.0%	41.5%	7.3%	1.2%
65+	58.5%	34.8%	5.5%	1.2%
INCOME**				
< \$60k	55.9%	35.5%	6.6%	1.9%
\$60-100k	48.3%	35.9%	15.9%	
> \$100k	48.1%	42.4%	9.5%	
EDUCATION*				
HS or Less	56.3%	35.2%	5.6%	2.8%
Some Coll.	54.9%	34.5%	9.9%	0.7%
College	47.7%	41.2%	10.6%	0.5%
College +	44.3%	40.9%	14.8%	
AREA***				
Northside	60.8%	30.8%	7.7%	0.8%
Southside	48.7%	41.5%	9.5%	0.3%
Eastside	57.9%	36.8%		5.3%
Westside	44.4%	36.1%	19.4%	
Downtown	44.9%	34.7%	14.3%	6.1%

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: City reputation might be seen as a rather general idea, which could tap a range of other ideas in the minds of those answering this question. Reputation was more likely to be cited as “very important” by black residents, women, the elderly, those with lower incomes, less education and those in the Northside (which is strongly related to race). Most probably, the elderly who are retired came to Aiken in large part because of what they heard others say about Aiken. Black residents were not only the group that most frequently rated city reputation as “very important,” and they were also the group that have the highest overall ratings on this factor with over 95% saying that they chose to move to or live in Aiken because the city’s reputation was either “somewhat” or “very important.” This is important to keep in mind as we later examine areas in which black residents were not as positive as white residents in their evaluations.

Climate? Demographic Breakdown

Groups	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	DK/NS
ALL	45.6%	41.6%	11.5%	1.3%
ETHNICITY				
White	43.7%	42.5%	12.6%	1.2%
Black	50.0%	40.7%	7.9%	1.4%
GENDER				
Men	45.0%	41.0%	11.4%	2.6%
Women	45.8%	41.5%	12.3%	0.3%
AGE****				
< 36	30.8%	45.9%	22.0%	1.3%
36-64	46.0%	44.4%	9.2%	0.4%
65+	60.6%	30.9%	6.1%	2.4%
INCOME**				
< \$60k	45.2%	42.4%	10.0%	2.4%
\$60-100k	40.8%	40.1%	19.0%	
> \$100k	48.4%	41.5%	8.8%	1.3%
EDUCATION				
HS or Less	43.1%	44.4%	10.4%	2.1%
Some Coll.	45.4%	42.6%	11.3%	0.7%
College	49.3%	36.9%	12.9%	0.9%
College +	42.0%	45.5%	10.2%	2.3%
AREA				
Northside	43.4%	45.7%	8.5%	2.3%
Southside	45.9%	41.4%	12.1%	0.6%
Eastside	50.0%	27.8%	16.7%	5.6%
Westside	50.0%	36.1%	13.9%	
Downtown	37.5%	45.8%	14.6%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Climate was most likely to be cited as a “very important” reason for moving to or continuing to live in Aiken by the elderly and those with higher incomes. Elderly retired residents probably find the moderate climate quite appealing. For northerners, Aiken enjoys mild winters. For those who retired to extremely warm climates like that in Florida and chose to come half way back toward the North (often called “half-backs”), Aiken has four distinct seasons, is not as hot as Florida, and is far less likely to be hit by a hurricane than coastal communities in Florida or up the Atlantic seaboard. Elderly retirees who move here for the climate are also likely to have higher incomes, so the two groups that stand out in this table are probably related.

Pace of life? Demographic Breakdown

Groups	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	DK/NS
ALL	45.2%	45.0%	8.9%	0.9%
ETHNICITY				
White	43.7%	44.9%	9.9%	1.5%
Black	47.1%	45.7%	7.1%	
GENDER***				
Men	46.3%	40.7%	13.0%	
Women	45.2%	47.2%	5.7%	2.0%
AGE				
< 36	40.1%	47.1%	12.1%	0.6%
36-64	44.4%	45.2%	9.6%	0.8%
65+	53.1%	40.6%	5.0%	1.3%
INCOME				
< \$60k	40.7%	49.3%	8.1%	1.9%
\$60-100k	42.2%	44.9%	12.2%	0.7%
> \$100k	52.6%	39.1%	7.7%	0.6%
EDUCATION				
HS or Less	47.5%	48.2%	3.5%	0.7%
Some Coll.	48.3%	43.4%	7.7%	0.7%
College	44.2%	42.9%	12.0%	0.9%
College +	40.2%	46.0%	11.5%	2.3%
AREA				
Northside	49.6%	44.2%	6.2%	
Southside	45.7%	44.5%	8.9%	0.9%
Eastside	33.3%	66.7%		
Westside	50.0%	36.1%	11.1%	2.8%
Downtown	36.7%	42.9%	18.4%	2.0%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Pace of life is a quality of life factor that might be attractive to some and not to others. Clearly most people living in Aiken see its pace of life as a positive factor in their choice to live here. Pace of life was cited as “very” or “somewhat important” rather uniformly among all groups, the only major significant difference being between men and women, with the former being slightly more likely to rate pace of life as “not important”.

Cultural opportunities? Demographic Breakdown

Groups	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	DK/NS
ALL	43.9%	41.2%	13.9%	1.0%
ETHNICITY****				
White	37.6%	45.5%	16.0%	1.0%
Black	59.2%	31.7%	7.7%	1.4%
GENDER***				
Men	39.3%	41.2%	17.6%	1.8%
Women	47.5%	42.2%	10.2%	
AGE*				
< 36	38.6%	46.2%	13.9%	1.3%
36-64	42.4%	40.8%	16.4%	0.4%
65+	52.8%	36.2%	9.2%	1.8%
INCOME				
< \$60k	45.8%	40.6%	11.8%	1.9%
\$60-100k	44.2%	40.1%	15.0%	0.7%
> \$100k	40.0%	45.0%	15.0%	
EDUCATION**				
HS or Less	54.2%	34.0%	9.0%	2.8%
Some Coll.	39.9%	41.3%	18.2%	0.7%
College	39.7%	44.3%	15.5%	0.5%
College +	44.3%	45.5%	10.2%	
AREA***				
Northside	56.6%	31.0%	10.1%	2.3%
Southside	39.9%	44.0%	15.8%	0.3%
Eastside	55.6%	33.3%	5.6%	5.6%
Westside	44.4%	50.0%	5.6%	
Downtown	32.7%	49.0%	16.3%	2.0%

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: Cultural opportunities are not a necessity for living but are necessary for living well. Most people living in Aiken consider cultural opportunities to be an important factor in moving to or choosing to live in the city. Of course precisely what people think of when they hear the term culture covers many things, including the arts and perhaps even religion as part of the community’s culture. Culture was more likely to be cited as “very important” by black residents, women, older residents, those with less education and those living in the Northside. This was balanced by the other groups being more likely to list cultural opportunities as “somewhat important.” No group clearly stood out in the “not important” rating.

Recreation? Demographic Breakdown

Groups	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	DK/NS
ALL	43.7%	44.9%	10.7%	0.7%
ETHNICITY****				
White	37.8%	48.9%	12.5%	0.7%
Black	59.2%	33.1%	7.0%	0.7%
GENDER				
Men	39.3%	48.9%	11.0%	0.7%
Women	47.2%	40.9%	11.2%	0.7%
AGE				
< 36	39.9%	49.4%	9.5%	1.3%
36-64	44.9%	43.0%	11.8%	0.4%
65+	46.6%	41.7%	11.0%	0.6%
INCOME				
< \$60k	45.8%	41.0%	12.3%	0.9%
\$60-100k	40.1%	46.9%	12.2%	0.7%
> \$100k	43.0%	47.5%	8.9%	0.6%
EDUCATION				
HS or Less	47.6%	40.7%	11.0%	0.7%
Some Coll.	43.0%	45.8%	9.9%	1.4%
College	40.3%	47.7%	11.6%	0.5%
College +	47.7%	42.0%	10.2%	
AREA***				
Northside	58.5%	33.8%	6.9%	0.8%
Southside	40.1%	47.2%	11.8%	0.9%
Eastside	57.9%	36.8%	5.3%	
Westside	41.7%	50.0%	8.3%	
Downtown	25.0%	52.1%	22.9%	

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Like culture, beauty, and pace of life, recreation is not essential to existence, though ancient Greek philosophers considered physical recreation as essential for a balanced and meaningful life. Aiken residents were roughly divided between rating recreation as “very” and “somewhat important.” Black residents were more likely to be on the “very” side and white residents on the “somewhat” side of importance, and white residents were about twice as likely to see recreation as “not important” than black residents. Residents on the Northside rated recreation as significantly more important than those on the Southside or Downtown which is unsurprising given the different opportunities for recreation available in different areas of the city.

Born here and/or family here? Demographic Breakdown

Groups	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	DK/NS
ALL	40.5%	22.2%	35.9%	1.3%
ETHNICITY****				
White	35.1%	21.1%	42.0%	1.7%
Black	56.3%	22.5%	20.4%	0.7%
GENDER				
Men	39.0%	22.1%	37.1%	1.8%
Women	41.6%	22.8%	34.7%	1.0%
AGE***				
< 36	40.9%	30.8%	28.3%	
36-64	41.4%	20.2%	37.6%	0.8%
65+	37.8%	17.1%	41.5%	3.7%
INCOME**				
< \$60k	49.5%	22.6%	26.4%	1.4%
\$60-100k	37.0%	22.6%	39.0%	1.4%
> \$100k	33.3%	22.0%	44.0%	0.6%
EDUCATION*****				
HS or Less	48.6%	27.8%	22.9%	0.7%
Some Coll.	45.1%	23.9%	31.0%	
College	36.4%	17.5%	44.2%	1.8%
College +	29.2%	20.2%	47.2%	3.4%
AREA****				
Northside	58.5%	23.1%	17.7%	0.8%
Southside	35.6%	19.7%	43.2%	1.5%
Eastside	33.3%	44.4%	22.2%	
Westside	33.3%	27.8%	36.1%	2.8%
Downtown	32.7%	26.5%	38.8%	2.0%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Being born here was more significantly more likely to be “very important” for black residents, those with lower income, the less educated and those living on the Northside (which is strongly associated with race). We might speculate that at least for those with a lower level of education and lower income, the ability to move elsewhere for a higher paying job is more limited. Strong familial ties among African American families might explain why they tend to rate birth/family relatively so high. At the other extreme, older residents are the most likely to rate birth/family as “not important.” This is most likely a reflection of a significant group of retirees who move to Aiken for lifestyle reasons rather than family reasons.

Additional Reasons for Living in Aiken

The survey also asked respondents to volunteer additional very important reasons why they live in Aiken. These reasons were coded by the authors into one of several broad categories.

Additional Reasons	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Additional Reasons
Schools	6.4%	26.9%
Social Capital (Churches, People, Etc.)	3.0%	12.4%
Amenities/Facilities/Businesses	3.0%	12.4%
Location/Transportation/Access	2.5%	10.3%
Services/Management/Government	1.8%	7.6%
Activities/Events	1.6%	6.9%
General Atmosphere	1.6%	6.9%
Young People/Youth	1.2%	4.8%
Economy/Jobs	1.2%	4.8%
Cost of Living	0.2%	0.7%
Other	1.5%	6.2%

Number of individuals volunteering additional reasons: 145 (23.8% of the sample)

Discussion: Almost a quarter of those taking the survey volunteered additional reasons for living in Aiken that they felt were very important. The most popular reason volunteered was the schools in Aiken. This response was volunteered by over a quarter of those suggesting an additional reason and over 6% of the sample overall. There was regional variation in this answer: individuals living on the Southside of Aiken were more likely to report schools were very important than those living in other areas of the city. Also rated as important was social capital (i.e. the people, groups and organizations making up Aiken) and the amenities, facilities and businesses available in Aiken such as particular stores and medical care.

Quality of Life

2. How would you rate the overall quality of life in Aiken?

Groups	1. Very Poor	2. Poor	3. Fair	4. Good	5. Excellent	DK/NS
ALL	1.0%	2.1%	11.0%	53.0%	32.6%	0.3%
ETHNICITY****						
White	0.5%	1.2%	6.1%	51.0%	40.7%	0.5%
Black	0.7%	3.4%	19.3%	64.1%	12.4%	
GENDER						
Men	0.4%	1.8%	10.8%	54.2%	32.5%	0.4%
Women	1.3%	2.6%	10.8%	51.5%	33.4%	0.3%
AGE***						
< 36	1.2%	1.9%	16.1%	55.9%	24.2%	0.6%
36-64	0.8%	2.7%	9.9%	57.0%	29.7%	
65+	0.6%	1.2%	6.0%	45.2%	46.4%	0.6%
INCOME*						
< \$60k	0.5%	2.4%	15.1%	56.1%	25.0%	0.9%
\$60-100k	1.3%	2.0%	10.1%	53.7%	32.9%	
> \$100k		1.3%	6.3%	54.1%	38.4%	
EDUCATION*						
HS or Less	0.7%	1.4%	8.8%	63.9%	24.5%	0.7%
Some Coll.	1.4%	2.1%	15.5%	55.6%	25.4%	
College	0.5%	1.8%	10.0%	47.5%	39.7%	0.5%
College +		3.4%	9.1%	47.7%	39.8%	
AREA****						
Northside	2.3%	2.3%	19.1%	58.0%	17.6%	0.8%
Southside	0.3%	1.2%	8.2%	55.1%	35.0%	0.3%
Eastside		14.3%	4.8%	47.6%	33.3%	
Westside			11.1%	50.0%	38.9%	
Downtown		4.1%	10.2%	40.8%	44.9%	

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: Life is “good” to “excellent” for residents, especially those living Downtown, but less likely to be seen as “excellent” among black residents, the young, poor, less educated, or those living in the Northside. While a clear majority of black residents see the quality of life as “good” or “excellent”, they were much less likely to see it as “excellent” than white residents (12% and 41% respectively), and about three times more likely to rate it as only “fair” as white residents (6% and 19% respectively). We see a similar relationship for area with those living in the Northside (which is strongly associated with race) being less likely to see life as “excellent” than those living in other areas, especially those living in the Downtown area. While money and education may not be able to buy happiness, they do seem to be strongly associated with the perception of an “excellent” quality of life.

Changing Quality of Life (asked only to those who reported living in Aiken 5 or more years)

4. How has the quality of life changed in Aiken over the past five years?

Groups	1. Worse	2. Same	3. Improved	DK/NS
ALL	18.0%	41.8%	39.2%	1.1%
ETHNICITY				
White	18.3%	43.8%	37.0%	0.9%
Black	14.4%	37.9%	46.2%	1.5%
GENDER*				
Men	18.9%	46.2%	33.2%	1.7%
Women	16.7%	38.3%	44.3%	0.8%
AGE				
< 36	15.4%	41.2%	42.6%	0.7%
36-64	18.9%	43.2%	37.4%	0.5%
65+	18.6%	40.4%	38.5%	2.5%
INCOME*				
< \$60k	18.3%	37.1%	44.1%	0.5%
\$60-100k	22.1%	44.3%	33.6%	
> \$100k	12.5%	43.8%	40.6%	3.2%
EDUCATION				
HS or Less	14.9%	38.8%	43.8%	2.5%
Some Coll.	19.8%	38.9%	39.7%	1.6%
College	18.0%	43.3%	38.1%	0.5%
College +	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%	
AREA				
Northside	19.1%	40.9%	40.0%	
Southside	15.6%	42.4%	40.3%	1.7%
Eastside	17.6%	35.3%	41.2%	5.9%
Westside	20.7%	51.7%	27.6%	
Downtown	19.6%	41.3%	39.1%	

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: Residents were almost evenly divided between feeling that the quality of life was getting better (39%) or staying the same (42%). While the feeling that quality of life has been “staying the same” might be interpreted as suggesting room for improvement, we should remember that residents rated the existing quality of life rather highly. So “staying the same” is probably more positive than negative. We saw few significant differences in how demographic subgroups answered this question, though women were more likely to say that the quality of life has improved compared to men.

Fear of Crime

26. As far as crime is concerned, how safe do you feel in the City of Aiken?

Groups	1.Not at all safe	2.Not so Safe	3.Somewhat safe	4.Very Safe	5.Extremely safe	DK/NS
ALL	1.6%	4.0%	34.4%	42.1%	15.5%	2.5%
ETHNICITY***						
White	1.2%	2.9%	30.0%	47.6%	17.3%	1.0%
Black	2.7%	6.8%	44.9%	34.0%	9.5%	2.0%
GENDER						
Men	1.4%	3.3%	35.1%	39.5%	18.8%	1.8%
Women	1.6%	4.9%	32.9%	46.4%	13.5%	0.7%
AGE						
< 36	1.2%	1.9%	29.8%	46.0%	19.3%	1.9%
36-64	2.3%	4.9%	39.6%	36.6%	15.8%	0.8%
65+	1.2%	4.8%	29.7%	50.3%	12.7%	1.2%
INCOME						
< \$60k	2.3%	5.1%	41.9%	38.1%	12.1%	0.5%
\$60-100k	2.0%	4.1%	27.7%	48.6%	16.2%	1.4%
> \$100k	0.6%	3.1%	33.3%	43.4%	18.9%	0.6%
EDUCATION						
HS or Less	1.4%	6.8%	37.4%	42.2%	11.6%	0.7%
Some Coll.	2.8%	3.5%	40.3%	36.1%	17.4%	
College	1.8%	3.7%	31.5%	46.1%	15.1%	1.8%
College +		2.2%	28.9%	45.6%	21.1%	2.2%
AREA****						
Northside	5.3%	9.9%	39.7%	29.0%	16.0%	
Southside	0.3%	2.0%	30.3%	49.3%	16.6%	1.5%
Eastside		4.8%	47.6%	38.1%	9.5%	
Westside		5.4%	45.9%	35.1%	10.8%	2.7%
Downtown	4.1%	2.0%	38.8%	40.8%	14.3%	

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: A clear majority of all residents generally feel “very safe” or “extremely safe.” That is not true of all subgroups. While a majority of black residents (along with those living in the Northside, which is strongly associated with race) say they feel at least “somewhat safe,” black residents were significantly less likely to feel “very safe” or “extremely safe” from crime relative to white residents. More than two thirds of white residents felt “very” or “extremely safe” while slightly under half of black residents shared those feelings. Relatively more black residents felt only “somewhat safe”. In addition, although the percentages were small, more than twice as many black residents as white residents said they felt “not so safe” (7% and 3% respectively) or “not at all safe” (1% and 3% respectively). The same pattern existed for those living on the Northside relative to other areas where 15% of those living in the Northside felt either “not so safe” or “not safe at all”. No other area was close to that level of fear. Though the overall picture in fear of crime is positive, Aiken clearly fails to provide equality across all groups in feeling safe from crime.

Taxes and Services

Overview: Students of government have long struggled with a central dilemma in the relationship between services and taxes: citizens almost always want more services but are unwilling to pay for them with higher taxes and fees. The dilemma is particularly difficult for local governments in our federal system. National and state political leaders often provide services through mandates they impose on lower level governments without providing the necessary financial support. This allows those running for offices to take credit for providing services and pass the blame for higher taxes and fees on to lower levels of government. To compound the burden on local leaders, state governments limit the taxing powers by local governments, and state level politicians take credit for lowering taxes. In addition, states routinely reduce promised funds for local governments, which enables them to minimize state taxes. All of this creates great stress on local governments. Voters often rationalize their unrealistic desires by thinking that more services can be paid for by reducing waste. But of course waste is often like beauty—in the eye of the beholder. And finding waste often requires expensive oversight, which may cost more than what is saved.

We asked several questions to ascertain how Aiken citizens view the services and taxes. We began with asking if they feel that they receive good value for the taxes they pay. Then we asked about their preferences in the balance, whether they preferred fewer services and lower taxes, the current balance, or more services and higher taxes to pay for them. Finally, we asked their perception of how high city taxes are in Aiken relative to other cities in the region.

Most residents felt that they receive “good” or “very good” value in services for the taxes they pay. However, with more than a third rating the value as “fair” or worse, room exists for improvement. Black residents were the one demographic group that saw the value as more likely to be “fair” than “good.” Moreover, black residents were far more likely than white residents so see the value as “poor” or “very poor,” and far less likely to see the value as “very good.” Clearly more effort is needed to address this serious disparity.

While a majority of residents prefer the existing balance between services and taxes, the remainder prefer more services over lower taxes by a margin of three to one. Though all subgroups had roughly the same trends, a few groups were even more in favor of additional services over less taxes: women, those with more education, and those living in the South, East, and Westside of town. However, general support for additional services over tax cuts does not mean that support would be there for some specific service.

Aiken residents perceive that city taxes are about the same compared to taxes in similar cities in the region. In reality taxes are lower, but politically speaking, perception is reality. Results from residents indicate that many individuals were unsure how to answer this question. Thus, the city may wish to better inform residents of the excellent value they are receiving.

Value of Services for Taxes/Fees

7. Thinking about the services provided by the City of Aiken and the taxes you pay, how would you rate the value of the services you receive for the taxes and fees you pay?

Groups	1. Very Poor	2. Poor	3. Fair	4. Good	5. Very Good	DK/NS
ALL	1.5%	7.2%	29.4%	42.8%	17.7%	1.3%
ETHNICITY****						
White	1.2%	5.4%	23.0%	45.1%	24.0%	1.2%
Black	2.1%	12.5%	45.1%	34.0%	4.2%	2.1%
GENDER						
Men	2.6%	7.0%	29.4%	39.7%	20.2%	1.1%
Women	1.0%	6.6%	29.6%	45.4%	15.8%	1.6%
AGE****						
< 36	3.2%	3.2%	38.2%	45.2%	8.3%	1.9%
36-64	1.1%	9.4%	30.2%	42.3%	15.8%	1.1%
65+	1.2%	7.9%	17.7%	41.5%	30.5%	1.2%
INCOME*						
< \$60k	1.4%	10.3%	34.6%	39.3%	13.1%	1.4%
\$60-100k	1.4%	8.1%	28.4%	44.6%	16.2%	1.4%
> \$100k	1.9%	3.8%	23.4%	45.6%	24.7%	0.6%
EDUCATION						
HS or Less	2.8%	9.7%	31.9%	38.9%	14.6%	2.1%
Some Coll.	0.7%	8.5%	28.2%	45.1%	15.5%	2.1%
College	1.8%	6.4%	27.9%	43.8%	19.6%	0.5%
College +		3.4%	30.7%	42.0%	22.7%	1.1%
AREA***						
Northside	2.3%	13.1%	41.5%	33.8%	8.5%	0.8%
Southside	1.2%	5.6%	26.7%	45.7%	19.9%	0.9%
Eastside	5.0%	10.0%	30.0%	30.0%	25.0%	
Westside		10.8%	32.4%	35.1%	16.2%	5.4%
Downtown		2.1%	16.7%	54.2%	22.9%	4.2%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: A strong plurality of all residents (43%) see the value of services received for taxes and fees paid as “good” in value. And a clear majority (61%) see the value as “good” or “very good.” Less than one in ten (9%) see it as poor or very poor. However, with almost a third (29%) seeing the value as “fair,” room exists for improvement.

Black residents are the one demographic group that stands out as seeing the value as more likely to be “fair” (45%) than “good” (34%). Moreover, black residents were more than twice as likely as white residents to see the value of the services they receive as “poor” or “very poor” (15% and 7% respectively) and at the other extreme six times less likely than white residents to see the value “very good” (4% and 24% respectively). Much room for improvement exists here.

Preferences on Balance Between Taxes and Services

8. Which of the following would you prefer?

Groups	Cut Taxes	Keep Same	Increase Services	DK/NS
ALL	9.4%	58.3%	29.4%	2.9%
ETHNICITY				
White	8.4%	57.7%	30.5%	3.4%
Black	10.4%	61.1%	27.1%	1.4%
GENDER***				
Men	11.8%	56.6%	27.9%	3.7%
Women	7.2%	59.3%	31.5%	2.0%
AGE				
< 36	13.4%	59.2%	24.8%	2.5%
36-64	9.1%	57.6%	31.1%	2.3%
65+	4.9%	60.1%	31.3%	3.7%
INCOME				
< \$60k	11.7%	60.3%	25.7%	2.3%
\$60-100k	8.2%	59.9%	29.3%	2.7%
> \$100k	6.3%	52.2%	38.4%	3.1%
EDUCATION*				
HS or Less	12.3%	61.0%	24.0%	2.7%
Some Coll.	11.3%	62.7%	24.6%	1.4%
College	6.4%	55.7%	32.9%	5.0%
College +	9.1%	51.1%	38.6%	1.1%
AREA**				
Northside	14.0%	62.8%	20.9%	2.3%
Southside	7.9%	58.2%	32.1%	1.8%
Eastside	10.0%	55.0%	30.0%	5.0%
Westside	2.8%	52.8%	38.9%	5.6%
Downtown	8.2%	61.2%	20.4%	10.2%

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: A strong majority want to keep the current balance between services and taxes (58%), but the remainder strongly prefer more services over lower taxes by about three to one (29% and 9% respectively). A few subgroups differed significantly in their preferences. Women, those with more education, and those in the Southside (along with the Eastside and Westside, both relatively small subgroups) are relatively more likely than those living in the Northside to be in favor of more services over lower taxes. However, all subgroups have majorities favoring the current balance.

Resident Perception of Taxes

18. Would you say that taxes in the City of Aiken are higher, about the same, or lower than other cities in the area?

Groups	Lower	About the Same	Higher	DK/NS
ALL	22.6%	40.1%	13.9%	23.5%
ETHNICITY				
White	23.1%	40.2%	12.2%	24.6%
Black	18.4%	44.0%	14.9%	22.0%
GENDER				
Men	21.3%	37.3%	14.6%	26.9%
Women	24.0%	42.3%	13.3%	20.0%
AGE				
< 36	23.2%	47.7%	12.9%	16.1%
36-64	21.5%	37.9%	15.7%	24.5%
65+	23.9%	36.8%	11.0%	28.2%
INCOME				
< \$60k	19.6%	41.1%	16.7%	22.5%
\$60-100k	24.5%	43.5%	9.5%	22.4%
> \$100k	28.0%	35.0%	12.7%	24.2%
EDUCATION*				
HS or Less	14.2%	46.1%	15.6%	23.4%
Some Coll.	19.9%	39.7%	12.1%	28.4%
College	29.6%	38.0%	14.1%	18.3%
College +	22.5%	37.1%	14.6%	25.8%
AREA**				
Northside	15.5%	38.0%	20.9%	24.8%
Southside	25.4%	40.1%	11.1%	23.4%
Eastside	23.8%	66.7%		9.5%
Westside	17.1%	54.3%	14.3%	14.3%
Downtown	20.8%	31.3%	12.5%	35.4%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: The plurality of residents believed that Aiken’s taxes are about the same as other cities in the area, although more residents perceived them to be lower than to be higher. Residents with greater educational attainment were more likely to perceive Aiken’s taxes as lower relative to other nearby cities compared to residents with a high school education. In addition, individuals on the Northside were almost twice as likely to say that Aiken’s taxes are higher compared to residents on the Southside of the city.

Services/Activities and Citizen Satisfaction

Overview: Local governments affect their residents' lives more on a day-to-day basis than any other level of government. While moving about daily activities and even while sleeping, residents are affected in many ways by local government. How satisfied are City of Aiken residents with the services provided by and activities undertaken by the city? Are levels of satisfaction uniform across demographic groups?

While we could not ask about all the individual city services and activities, we did ask about seventeen individual services and activities. We asked residents to rate their satisfaction with each service/activity on a 1 to 4 scale: 1) very satisfied; 2) satisfied; 3) dissatisfied; and 4) very dissatisfied. We rotated the order in which services/activities were evaluated to minimize any question order bias. We also broke down ratings by demographic groups. We also computed mean ratings for each service/activity (higher indicating greater satisfaction) and examined comparative ratings from highest to the lowest.

Those who indicated dissatisfaction with a particular city service or activity, were asked to describe what problems existed and/or suggestions for improvement. These open-ended responses were analyzed by the authors who used them to create general categories and code the responses into these categories.

We found generally positive ratings for almost all services and activities. Roads were the only area in which more residents were dissatisfied than satisfied. The five services/activities that formed a cluster at the top were public safety (fire followed by police), yard waste removal, garbage and recreation/athletics. The three that clustered at the bottom were sidewalks, safe bicycle paths/lanes, and roads (which stood out as notably lower than all other areas). We observe that all of the lowest rated services/activities were transportation related and heavily dependent on physical infrastructure. The problems and suggestions by citizens for these three services/activities all overwhelmingly indicated citizen dissatisfaction with either the repair and maintenance of infrastructure (roads, sidewalks) or a desire for additional construction (sidewalks, bicycle paths/lanes). The services/activities at the top tended to be more dependent on the actions of city personnel than on physical infrastructure, suggesting that they city has excellent personnel who generally perform their duties well.

However, in our examination of how satisfaction was distributed across demographic groups, we found significant and fairly widespread inequality in satisfaction, especially along ethnic lines. While all demographic groups were generally more likely to be satisfied than dissatisfied on most services/activities, black residents were relatively less likely than white residents to be "very satisfied" and often more likely than white residents to be on the dissatisfied side of the scale. This was particularly true in the areas of police, yard waste, roads, water/sewer, recreation/athletics, stimulating affordable housing, and stimulating economic development.

Public Safety’s Police Protection

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	33.7%	53.6%	7.8%	2.0%	2.8%
ETHNICITY****					
White	42.7%	48.6%	5.2%	1.5%	2.0%
Black	14.6%	66.7%	13.2%	1.4%	4.2%
GENDER					
Men	36.1%	52.6%	5.8%	2.9%	2.6%
Women	32.9%	53.5%	9.3%	1.0%	3.3%
AGE*					
< 36	27.7%	56.6%	8.8%	2.5%	4.4%
36-64	32.6%	55.7%	9.1%	1.1%	1.5%
65+	42.9%	45.3%	5.6%	2.5%	3.7%
INCOME***					
< \$60k	24.3%	59.0%	10.5%	2.9%	3.3%
\$60-100k	37.4%	53.1%	6.1%	2.0%	1.4%
> \$100k	44.3%	44.3%	7.6%	0.6%	3.2%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	28.2%	61.3%	9.2%		1.4%
Some Coll.	31.5%	52.4%	10.5%	3.5%	2.1%
College	36.6%	53.2%	5.1%	1.9%	3.2%
College +	40.4%	43.8%	9.0%	2.2%	4.5%
AREA*					
Northside	23.4%	53.9%	14.8%	3.1%	4.7%
Southside	36.1%	54.1%	5.3%	1.8%	2.7%
Eastside	20.0%	65.0%	10.0%		5.0%
Westside	38.9%	55.6%	5.6%		
Downtown	43.8%	45.8%	8.3%	2.1%	

Note: More *’s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: A majority (54%) feel “satisfied” with police protection, and more than three times as many feel “very satisfied” (34%) than “dissatisfied” (8%) or “very dissatisfied” (2%). Nearly nine in ten are on the satisfied side of the scale.

However, while a clear majority of black residents are “satisfied” (67%), they were less likely than white residents to be “very satisfied” (15% and 43% respectively) and twice as likely as white residents to be “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” (14% and 7% respectively). In addition we see a relationship between satisfaction with police and income as well as with area of the city (which is correlated with race). Lower income residents report a lower level of satisfaction with police service in Aiken. We also see a weak but significant relationship between age and the level of satisfaction. The oldest residents (65 or older) were relatively more likely than the younger age groups to be “very satisfied” while the younger groups were relatively more likely than the oldest group to be simply “satisfied.” Of these relationships, the ethnicity differences

are strongest and certainly need to be addressed so that Aiken has better equality in satisfaction with police protection across all ethnic groups.

Public Safety’s Police Protection Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percent of Concerns/Suggestions
Need More/Greater Presence	2.6%	32.7%
Ineffective/Too Much Crime	1.3%	16.3%
Concerns About Focus of Police	1.2%	14.3%
Unhappy with Police Behavior/Attitude	1.2%	14.3%
Administrative Suggestions to Be More Effective	1.2%	14.3%
Timeliness/Responsiveness	0.8%	10.2%
Dissatisfied With Specific Incident	0.5%	6.1%
Training/Concerns About Professionalism	0.3%	4.1%
Other	0.2%	2.0%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 49 (8.1% of sample)

Discussion: In reading these suggestions, it is important to remember that very few members of the sample expressed dissatisfaction with Public Safety’s Police and thus very few were asked for suggestions. The most common suggestion made was for greater police presence or more police, either in general or more equitably distributed. This suggestion was made by 2.6% of all survey respondents. No other suggestion was made by more than 1.3% of the survey respondents

Public Safety Fire Protection

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	32.2%	56.7%	1.3%	0.7%	9.0%
ETHNICITY****					
White	39.4%	49.8%	0.5%	0.7%	9.6%
Black	17.4%	72.2%	3.5%	0.7%	6.3%
GENDER					
Men	35.4%	53.6%	1.1%	1.1%	8.8%
Women	30.6%	57.5%	1.7%	0.3%	10.0%
AGE*					
< 36	27.5%	63.8%	2.5%		6.3%
36-64	30.8%	57.4%	1.1%	0.8%	9.9%
65+	40.1%	46.9%	0.6%	1.2%	11.1%
INCOME**					
< \$60k	25.5%	60.4%	2.8%	0.5%	10.8%
\$60-100k	35.6%	56.8%	0.7%	0.7%	6.2%
> \$100k	40.3%	48.4%		0.6%	10.7%
EDUCATION**					
HS or Less	26.2%	63.4%	2.1%		8.3%
Some Coll.	26.8%	63.4%	2.8%	0.7%	6.3%
College	39.4%	50.9%	0.5%	0.5%	8.8%
College +	35.6%	46.7%	1.1%	2.2%	14.4%
AREA					
Northside	20.3%	67.2%	2.3%	0.8%	9.4%
Southside	34.4%	55.3%	0.6%	0.9%	8.8%
Eastside	30.0%	55.0%	5.0%		10.0%
Westside	36.1%	52.8%	2.8%		8.3%
Downtown	41.7%	45.8%			12.5%

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: Virtually everyone across all groups were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with fire protection. No subgroup had more than 5% who expressed any level of dissatisfaction. This is a very positive finding! Black residents, younger individuals, lower income groups and those with less education were less likely to say they were “very satisfied” with fire protection. However, this primarily translated into more individuals in these groups saying they were merely “satisfied” and did not lead to significantly greater numbers of dissatisfied residents.

Public Safety's Fire Protection Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
Timeliness/Responsiveness	0.9%	50.0%
More Professional	0.3%	16.7%
Other	0.6%	33.3%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 12 (1.9% of sample)

Discussion: Once again, very few respondents were dissatisfied and asked for suggestions for Public Safety's Fire Protection. The most common suggestion was timeliness, which was volunteered by only 6 respondents, less than 1% of all survey takers.

Garbage

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	27.7%	62.0%	7.5%	1.6%	1.0%
ETHNICITY***					
White	32.8%	58.6%	6.9%	0.7%	1.0%
Black	17.2%	70.3%	8.3%	3.4%	0.7%
GENDER					
Men	30.7%	60.6%	6.1%	2.2%	0.4%
Women	25.7%	63.0%	8.6%	1.0%	1.7%
AGE****					
< 36	23.0%	68.3%	3.7%	4.3%	0.6%
36-64	25.3%	60.8%	12.1%		1.9%
65+	37.4%	57.1%	4.3%	1.2%	
INCOME*					
< \$60k	24.9%	63.4%	8.5%	1.4%	1.9%
\$60-100k	21.5%	69.1%	7.4%	2.0%	
> \$100k	37.3%	53.2%	7.0%	1.9%	0.6%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	25.3%	67.8%	4.8%	1.4%	0.7%
Some Coll.	22.4%	62.9%	9.1%	2.8%	2.8%
College	29.7%	61.2%	7.3%	1.8%	
College +	34.4%	55.6%	8.9%		1.1%
AREA**					
Northside	16.9%	68.5%	10.0%	4.6%	
Southside	28.9%	62.6%	6.1%	0.9%	1.5%
Eastside	25.0%	60.0%	10.0%		5.0%
Westside	27.0%	56.8%	13.5%	2.7%	
Downtown	39.6%	52.1%	8.3%		

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: Nearly nine in ten residents were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with garbage service. Similarly to fire protection, African-Americans, younger residents and lower income residents were more likely to say they were merely “satisfied” rather than “very satisfied”. Ethnicity again seems to make a difference in levels of satisfaction. Once again, this did not translate into greater *dissatisfaction* among these groups.

Garbage Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
More Frequent Pickups	3.1%	43.2%
Concerns about Reliability/Picking up Trash	1.5%	20.5%
Care/Behavior of Workers	1.0%	13.6%
Too Expensive	0.8%	11.4%
Problems with Bins	0.5%	6.8%
Other	0.5%	6.8%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 44 (7.2% of sample)

Discussion: The most common suggestion made was more for more frequent garbage pickups. However, over half of those making this suggestion (11 out of 19 or 58%) wanted weekly garbage pickup. Because the City of Aiken already makes garbage pickups weekly, it is likely that these individuals were speaking about recycling instead. When those who suggested weekly garbage pickups were excluded, more frequent pickups still tied with concerns about workers reliably and consistently picking up all garbage as the most common concern or suggestion.

Recycling

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	20.3%	54.7%	18.6%	2.0%	4.4%
ETHNICITY****					
White	22.8%	50.2%	22.3%	1.5%	3.2%
Black	15.2%	66.9%	6.2%	3.4%	8.3%
GENDER					
Men	21.8%	55.6%	15.3%	2.9%	4.4%
Women	20.1%	52.6%	21.7%	1.3%	4.3%
AGE*					
< 36	18.9%	59.1%	16.4%	2.5%	3.1%
36-64	17.8%	54.5%	19.3%	1.5%	6.8%
65+	26.8%	50.0%	19.5%	2.4%	1.2%
INCOME					
< \$60k	19.6%	56.1%	16.4%	1.9%	6.1%
\$60-100k	13.4%	56.4%	21.5%	2.7%	6.0%
> \$100k	26.8%	49.0%	19.1%	2.5%	2.5%
EDUCATION***					
HS or Less	23.3%	61.0%	11.0%	0.7%	4.1%
Some Coll.	14.7%	58.7%	16.1%	4.2%	6.3%
College	19.7%	51.8%	21.1%	2.8%	4.6%
College +	26.1%	44.3%	28.4%		1.1%
AREA**					
Northside	16.8%	57.3%	15.3%	4.6%	6.1%
Southside	19.3%	55.3%	20.8%	0.6%	4.1%
Eastside	26.3%	63.2%	5.3%		5.3%
Westside	27.0%	40.5%	18.9%	8.1%	5.4%
Downtown	31.3%	45.8%	18.8%	2.1%	2.1%

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: Four in five residents were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with recycling. African-Americans, as before were less likely to report being “very satisfied” with this service but this once again did not result in greater reported dissatisfaction.

Recycling Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
More Frequent Pickups	13.3%	62.8%
Problems with Bins	1.5%	7.0%
Concerns about Administration of Program	1.5%	7.0%
Concerns about City Commitment to Program	1.5%	7.0%
Accessibility/Availability	1.5%	7.0%
Concerns about Reliability/Picking up Recycling	0.5%	2.3%
Too Expensive	0.5%	2.3%
Other	1.0%	4.7%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 129 (21.2% of sample)

Discussion: By far the most common suggestion among those dissatisfied with recycling was a desire for more frequent pickups—most respondents suggesting this wished for recycling to return to a weekly pickup. 63% of those volunteering a suggestion and 13% of the total sample wished for more frequent pickups. Residents appear to broadly support the program and a number of residents wished for a greater commitment on the part of the city to recycling.

Yard Waste

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	27.7%	59.5%	6.6%	1.9%	4.4%
ETHNICITY***					
White	31.4%	58.0%	4.7%	1.2%	4.7%
Black	18.8%	62.5%	11.1%	3.5%	4.2%
GENDER**					
Men	29.7%	57.2%	5.1%	3.3%	4.7%
Women	26.7%	60.1%	8.3%	0.3%	4.6%
AGE**					
< 36	19.3%	63.4%	8.7%	3.1%	5.6%
36-64	28.4%	57.2%	7.6%	2.3%	4.5%
65+	35.6%	58.3%	3.1%		3.1%
INCOME**					
< \$60k	23.9%	57.7%	9.4%	3.3%	5.6%
\$60-100k	20.8%	65.8%	7.4%	2.0%	4.0%
> \$100k	37.3%	54.4%	3.2%	0.6%	4.4%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	24.1%	62.8%	6.2%	2.8%	4.1%
Some Coll.	25.2%	57.3%	7.0%	2.1%	8.4%
College	29.5%	58.1%	7.4%	1.8%	3.2%
College +	34.4%	58.9%	4.4%		2.2%
AREA*					
Northside	18.3%	62.6%	9.9%	3.8%	5.3%
Southside	29.5%	59.9%	5.0%	0.6%	5.0%
Eastside	25.0%	60.0%	10.0%	5.0%	
Westside	30.6%	52.8%	8.3%	5.6%	2.8%
Downtown	41.7%	50.0%	6.3%		2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Almost nine in ten residents were either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with yard waste removal services. In this service area, ethnicity, gender, age, and income had a significant impact of satisfaction. White residents were more likely than black residents to be “very satisfied” (31% and 19% respectively) and black residents were more likely than white residents to be either “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” (15% and 6% respectively). This suggests inequality in satisfaction across ethnic lines even though a clear majority of both groups were at least “satisfied.” The relationship with age is similar with the oldest group being more likely than the younger groups to be “very satisfied” and less likely to be on the “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” side.

Yard Waste Removal Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
More Frequent Pickups	2.0%	26.1%
Concerns about Reliability in Pickups	1.6%	21.7%
Behavior of Workers/Quality of Pickup	1.3%	17.4%
Too Many Rules and Restrictions	0.7%	8.7%
Program Should Cover More/Geographically Pick Up More	0.3%	4.3%
Other	1.6%	21.7%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 46 (7.6% of sample)

Discussion: A relatively small number of people were dissatisfied with yard waste removal in Aiken and so no one suggestion or concern was voiced by more than 2% of the sample. The most common suggestion was to increase the frequency of pickups, which was volunteered by over a quarter of those offering suggestions but only 2% of the overall sample. Also of note was concern that all waste was reliably picked up every time and related concerns about the behavior of workers and their general professionalism. However, once again, few individuals voiced such a concern.

Storm Drainage

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	13.4%	64.0%	15.1%	3.6%	3.9%
ETHNICITY*					
White	15.7%	64.6%	12.5%	3.4%	3.7%
Black	7.7%	65.7%	18.9%	3.5%	4.2%
GENDER					
Men	13.0%	64.9%	14.1%	4.3%	3.6%
Women	13.3%	63.1%	16.3%	3.0%	4.3%
AGE					
< 36	11.9%	66.9%	14.4%	3.1%	3.8%
36-64	11.8%	64.3%	17.5%	3.8%	2.7%
65+	17.0%	61.2%	12.7%	3.6%	5.5%
INCOME**					
< \$60k	10.9%	64.0%	15.6%	2.8%	6.6%
\$60-100k	10.8%	68.9%	16.2%	2.7%	1.4%
> \$100k	19.0%	60.1%	13.9%	5.1%	1.9%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	15.9%	66.9%	13.8%	1.4%	2.1%
Some Coll.	10.6%	67.4%	16.3%	2.8%	2.8%
College	15.1%	61.0%	14.2%	4.6%	5.0%
College +	6.8%	62.5%	18.2%	5.7%	6.8%
AREA					
Northside	8.7%	66.9%	17.3%	2.4%	4.7%
Southside	14.4%	65.7%	12.6%	3.2%	4.1%
Eastside	19.0%	47.6%	19.0%	9.5%	4.8%
Westside	10.8%	59.5%	24.3%	2.7%	2.7%
Downtown	16.3%	63.3%	16.3%	4.1%	

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: Almost four in five residents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with storm drainage service. The only noteworthy subgroup differences were African-Americans being more likely to be dissatisfied with storm drainage and those with the highest income group being more likely to be “very satisfied” and the lower income groups being more likely to be just “satisfied.” However, levels of dissatisfaction across income groups were very similar.

Storm Drainage Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
Repair/Modernize	5.8%	31.8%
General Concerns about Flooding in City	4.3%	23.6%
Concerns about Drainage in Specific Areas of City	3.3%	18.2%
Concerns about Drainage on Roads (General)	2.0%	10.9%
Clean Drains	1.2%	6.4%
Dislike Drainage into Hitchcock Woods	0.5%	2.7%
Too Few Drains	0.3%	1.8%
Other	0.8%	4.5%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 110 (18.1% of sample)

Discussion: The most common type of concern was flooding in the City, either generally (24% of suggestions/concerns) or in a specific area (18% of suggestions/concerns). Other suggestions asked the city to repair or modernize the drainage infrastructure. Together, these two areas of concerns/suggestions comprised the vast majority of all comments on storm drainage.

Roads

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	4.7%	42.5%	45.0%	7.6%	0.2%
ETHNICITY**					
White	6.2%	41.5%	45.4%	6.9%	
Black	0.7%	49.3%	41.5%	7.7%	0.7%
GENDER**					
Men	4.4%	48.4%	40.7%	6.2%	0.4%
Women	5.0%	36.9%	48.5%	9.6%	
AGE					
< 36	5.1%	50.6%	36.1%	8.2%	
36-64	4.6%	39.6%	48.1%	7.3%	0.4%
65+	4.8%	40.0%	47.3%	7.9%	
INCOME					
< \$60k	4.8%	43.8%	42.4%	8.6%	0.5%
\$60-100k	2.7%	40.4%	49.3%	7.5%	
> \$100k	6.3%	45.6%	40.5%	7.6%	
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	6.2%	45.9%	39.7%	8.2%	
Some Coll.	2.1%	41.1%	51.1%	5.7%	
College	4.7%	38.1%	48.4%	8.4%	0.5%
College +	5.7%	48.9%	37.5%	8.0%	
AREA ****					
Northside	2.3%	41.5%	46.9%	9.2%	
Southside	3.9%	40.2%	49.4%	6.5%	
Eastside		68.4%	26.3%		5.3%
Westside	2.7%	45.9%	37.8%	13.5%	
Downtown	18.0%	48.0%	24.0%	10.0%	

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Residents were rather evenly balanced between saying that they were “satisfied” (43%) and “dissatisfied” (45%). Including “very satisfied” and “very dissatisfied,” the edge was on the dissatisfied side of the scale (47% and 53%). This was almost uniformly true across all subgroups. Black residents were relatively more likely than white residents to be just “satisfied” rather than “very satisfied,” but levels of dissatisfaction were very similar for both ethnic groups. Women were more likely to report being dissatisfied compared to men. Area made a difference, but only because Downtown residents were far more likely than residents of other areas to be “very satisfied” and far less likely to be on the dissatisfied side of the scale.

Roads Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
Maintenance/Repair Concerns (General City)	36.7%	67.8%
Traffic Concerns (General)	3.1%	14.3%
Traffic Concerns (Specific Area(s))	2.8%	5.2%
Traffic Lights	1.5%	2.7%
Maintenance/Repair Concerns (Specific Area(s))	1.0%	1.8%
Suggested Improvements	0.8%	1.5%
Specific Areas of Concern (Problem not Specified)	0.3%	0.6%
Other	3.1%	5.8%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 329 (54.2% of sample)

Discussion: Roads measured the most dissatisfaction from residents and therefore led to the largest number of suggestions from the survey respondents. Over 54% of survey takers made a suggestion. The vast majority of these suggestions related to either road maintenance and repair or traffic (89% of suggestions offered accounting for 44% of the sample). The most common single complaint was general dissatisfaction with road repair and maintenance in Aiken. This comprised 68% of the suggestions/concerns and was registered by over 36% of survey respondents. General concerns about traffic accounted for the next most at 14% of suggestions/concerns and 3% of survey respondents.

It is evidently the case that some residents did not understand that road repair and maintenance lies largely outside the purview of the city government and this may unfairly contribute to resident dissatisfaction with the city government.

Zoning

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	4.8%	63.2%	13.9%	1.9%	16.1%
ETHNICITY*					
White	5.4%	62.4%	12.0%	2.5%	17.7%
Black	2.8%	65.5%	17.9%		13.8%
GENDER					
Men	6.6%	59.1%	16.4%	2.6%	15.3%
Women	3.3%	65.8%	12.2%	1.3%	17.4%
AGE					
< 36	6.9%	66.7%	13.8%	2.5%	10.1%
36-64	3.8%	61.8%	13.7%	2.3%	18.3%
65+	4.8%	59.6%	15.1%	1.2%	19.3%
INCOME*					
< \$60k	2.4%	66.0%	11.3%	2.4%	17.9%
\$60-100k	3.4%	61.9%	19.7%	2.0%	12.9%
> \$100k	8.2%	59.5%	13.9%	1.9%	16.5%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	6.9%	67.6%	7.6%	2.8%	15.2%
Some Coll.	1.4%	66.9%	13.4%	2.1%	16.2%
College	6.0%	59.4%	17.1%	0.9%	16.6%
College +	3.4%	57.3%	18.0%	3.4%	18.0%
AREA					
Northside	2.3%	64.6%	18.5%	2.3%	12.3%
Southside	5.0%	60.6%	14.1%	2.1%	18.2%
Eastside	5.0%	70.0%	10.0%		15.0%
Westside	2.8%	75.0%	5.6%		16.7%
Downtown	6.3%	66.7%	10.4%	2.1%	14.6%

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: A little over two thirds of all residents (68%) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with zoning services, though about one in six (16%) had no opinion on this question, which is what we should expect on a question for a more technical governmental service that most people are not aware of unless they want to build something that is not allowed under zoning laws. Views were almost uniform over all demographic groups, with only the wealthiest group being more likely than lower income groups to feel “very satisfied.” Perhaps the wealthiest group is more attuned to how zoning restrictions protect their property values.

Zoning Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
Generally Dissatisfied with Zoning	3.5%	24.1%
Overdevelopment of the Southside	2.1%	14.9%
School Zoning Issues	1.8%	12.6%
Concerns about Donut Holes	1.0%	6.9%
Zone Consistently	1.0%	6.9%
Zones Equitably/Fairly	1.0%	6.9%
Areas with Specific Issues/Zones	0.7%	4.6%
Too Much Building	0.7%	4.6%
Not Enough Zoning	0.7%	4.6%
Other	2.0%	13.8%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 87 (14.3% of sample)

Discussion: Perhaps stemming from lack of familiarity with the process of zoning, the most common open-ended response among those dissatisfied with zoning was a general reiteration of dissatisfaction, with suggestions such as “improving it” or “making it better”. This accounted for almost a quarter of suggestions among those dissatisfied. The most frequent concrete concern among those dissatisfied was a feeling that the Southside is being overdeveloped. Some residents evidently misunderstood the term “zoning” and so the next most common response was complaints about school zoning issues.

Building Inspection

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	6.0%	55.2%	5.3%	1.5%	32.0%
ETHNICITY***					
White	6.6%	51.8%	3.9%	1.7%	35.9%
Black	4.1%	65.5%	7.6%	1.4%	21.4%
GENDER					
Men	7.9%	56.0%	4.0%	2.2%	30.0%
Women	4.6%	53.3%	6.3%	1.0%	34.8%
AGE***					
< 36	8.2%	67.9%	6.3%	0.6%	17.0%
36-64	4.5%	51.9%	4.9%	1.5%	37.1%
65+	6.7%	46.1%	4.8%	2.4%	40.0%
INCOME**					
< \$60k	3.8%	55.7%	7.5%	2.4%	30.7%
\$60-100k	4.8%	59.9%	4.1%	0.7%	30.6%
> \$100k	10.7%	48.4%	3.1%	1.9%	35.8%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	6.8%	63.7%	5.5%	2.1%	21.9%
Some Coll.	6.3%	55.6%	5.6%	0.7%	31.7%
College	5.9%	49.3%	5.9%	0.9%	37.9%
College +	4.5%	53.9%	1.1%	3.4%	37.1%
AREA					
Northside	3.1%	58.8%	8.4%	1.5%	28.2%
Southside	6.5%	52.1%	4.1%	2.1%	35.2%
Eastside	5.0%	75.0%			20.0%
Westside	5.6%	61.1%	5.6%		27.8%
Downtown	8.2%	55.1%			36.7%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: On the question of building inspection services, we see similar feelings of overall satisfaction, and a third of all residents had no opinion. Black residents, lower income, and less educated residents were slightly more likely to be on the dissatisfied side of the scale and/or be less enthusiastic in their satisfaction. An even higher percentage of residents either did not know or were not sure about building inspection services than we saw with the zoning question (32% and 16%), most certainly because fewer residents have direct contact with building inspectors, even though it affects the quality of the life of every resident.

Building Inspection Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
Not Strict/Not Frequent Enough	2.3%	46.7%
Personal Bad Experience with Inspections	0.5%	10.0%
Specific Areas/Buildings in Need of Inspection	0.5%	10.0%
General Concern about Disrepair in City	0.5%	10.0%
Too Strict/Frequent	0.3%	6.7%
Other	0.8%	1.7%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 30 (4.9% of sample)

Discussion: A relatively small number of residents were dissatisfied with building inspection, providing few suggestions or concerns. By far the most common concern among those volunteered was belief building inspection was not strict or frequent enough. This seems to relate to the concerns of those that feel buildings in general are in disrepair throughout Aiken. Together these two concerns totaled over 50% of concerns and suggestions.

Water/Sewer

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	16.2%	70.7%	10.0%	1.8%	1.3%
ETHNICITY**					
White	18.9%	70.3%	7.6%	1.7%	1.5%
Black	9.7%	73.6%	13.2%	2.8%	0.7%
GENDER					
Men	20.6%	68.2%	8.3%	1.4%	1.4%
Women	12.9%	72.9%	11.2%	2.0%	1.0%
AGE					
< 36	15.0%	74.4%	8.1%	0.6%	1.9%
36-64	14.3%	70.6%	11.7%	2.6%	0.8%
65+	20.9%	67.5%	8.6%	1.2%	1.8%
INCOME					
< \$60k	14.0%	70.6%	13.6%	0.9%	0.9%
\$60-100k	13.5%	76.4%	6.8%	1.4%	2.0%
> \$100k	22.2%	67.7%	7.6%	1.3%	1.3%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	18.4%	70.1%	8.2%	0.7%	2.7%
Some Coll.	12.8%	70.9%	12.8%	2.1%	1.4%
College	16.5%	70.2%	10.6%	2.3%	0.5%
College +	16.9%	73.0%	7.9%	1.1%	1.1%
AREA					
Northside	10.8%	72.3%	13.1%	3.1%	0.8%
Southside	16.1%	72.4%	8.5%	1.5%	1.5%
Eastside	14.3%	76.2%	9.5%		
Westside	18.9%	59.5%	18.9%		2.7%
Downtown	30.6%	61.2%	6.1%		2.0%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: We see strong levels of overall satisfaction with more than two-thirds feeling “satisfied” or “very satisfied.” However, black residents relative to white residents were about half as likely to be on the “very satisfied” side of the scale (10% and 19% respectively) and twice as likely to be on the dissatisfied side of the scale (16% and 9% respectively). Though black residents were overall on the satisfied side of the scale, we see a significant inequality in satisfaction along ethnic lines.

Water/Sewer Specific Concerns/Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
Breaks/Leaks	3.0%	26.5%
Expense (General)	2.6%	23.5%
Quality of Water	1.8%	16.2%
Drainage	1.3%	11.8%
Service by City	0.7%	5.9%
Expense (Water)	0.5%	4.4%
Expense (Sewer)	0.3%	2.9%
Other	1.0%	8.8%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 68 (11.2% of sample)

Discussion: Among those dissatisfied with water and sewer service in Aiken, the most common concerns were the number of breaks and leaks in water and sewer piping as well as the general expense of these services. Combining all resident concerns about expense (unspecified, water or sewer) accounted for 31% of all water/sewer comments.

Recreation/Athletics

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	27.2%	55.5%	9.5%	3.5%	4.2%
ETHNICITY****					
White	32.8%	54.9%	6.6%	2.2%	3.4%
Black	13.9%	59.7%	13.2%	7.6%	5.6%
GENDER					
Men	29.3%	53.6%	9.1%	3.6%	4.3%
Women	25.2%	58.3%	9.9%	3.6%	3.0%
AGE					
< 36	25.2%	55.3%	10.7%	3.8%	5.0%
36-64	24.5%	58.1%	9.8%	4.5%	3.0%
65+	35.0%	50.3%	7.4%	1.8%	5.5%
INCOME**					
< \$60k	19.5%	59.1%	10.7%	5.1%	5.6%
\$60-100k	29.7%	53.4%	9.5%	4.1%	3.4%
> \$100k	35.4%	52.5%	7.6%	1.3%	3.2%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	20.5%	63.0%	7.5%	2.7%	6.2%
Some Coll.	22.5%	57.7%	9.2%	6.3%	4.2%
College	32.3%	51.6%	10.1%	2.8%	3.2%
College +	33.7%	50.6%	10.1%	2.2%	3.4%
AREA****					
Northside	13.8%	60.8%	11.5%	8.5%	5.4%
Southside	32.0%	54.5%	8.2%	2.3%	2.9%
Eastside	15.0%	35.0%	30.0%		20.0%
Westside	19.4%	69.4%	5.6%	2.8%	2.8%
Downtown	33.3%	52.1%	6.3%	2.1%	6.3%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: More than four in five residents were on the satisfied side of the scale (83%). But black residents were less than half as likely as white residents to say they were “very satisfied” with recreation/athletics” (14% and 33% respectively). Black residents were also more likely than white residents to be on the dissatisfied side of the scale (21% and 9% respectively). The ratings broken down by area had a similar pattern with those on the Northside along with the Eastside being very significantly less likely than those in the Southside and Downtown to be “very satisfied” and more likely to be on the dissatisfied side of the scale. A similar pattern exists for income between the highest and lowest income groups. As we have seen in several other service/activity areas, though overall satisfaction is widespread, the levels of satisfaction are unequal across ethnic lines, area, and income.

Recreation/Athletics Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
More for Youth/Teenagers	3.8%	32.4%
General Desire for More	2.3%	19.7%
Specific Sports/Programs You Would Like Implemented	1.5%	12.7%
Issue with Facilities	1.2%	9.9%
More for Adults	0.5%	4.2%
Other	2.5%	21.1%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 71 (11.7% of sample)

Discussion: Although it was articulated several ways among those dissatisfied with recreation and athletics, the overwhelming suggestion among residents volunteered was a desire for more offerings of athletic activities. The most common such suggestion was a desire for more recreation and athletic activities for youth and teenagers. An additional 20% of concerns and suggestions on recreation/athletics was a general desire for more recreation and athletics and 13% of suggestions made were specific sports and athletic programs that respondents would like implemented.

Safe Bicycle Paths/Lanes

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	6.7%	42.2%	31.7%	6.7%	12.8%
ETHNICITY**					
White	7.3%	39.9%	30.6%	8.1%	14.2%
Black	5.6%	51.4%	31.0%	2.1%	9.9%
GENDER					
Men	6.9%	41.6%	32.1%	5.8%	13.5%
Women	6.9%	40.9%	32.3%	7.9%	11.9%
AGE**					
< 36	8.9%	46.8%	34.2%	2.5%	7.6%
36-64	6.0%	40.4%	32.5%	8.3%	12.8%
65+	5.6%	40.1%	28.4%	7.4%	18.5%
INCOME					
< \$60k	6.6%	46.7%	28.3%	5.2%	13.2%
\$60-100k	6.7%	45.0%	31.5%	6.0%	10.7%
> \$100k	6.3%	31.0%	38.0%	8.9%	15.8%
EDUCATION***					
HS or Less	9.6%	47.9%	24.7%	2.7%	15.1%
Some Coll.	5.7%	47.5%	31.9%	5.7%	9.2%
College	7.3%	36.7%	36.7%	7.3%	11.9%
College +	2.2%	37.1%	30.3%	14.6%	15.7%
AREA					
Northside	7.1%	46.5%	29.1%	4.7%	12.6%
Southside	5.9%	41.6%	33.1%	6.5%	12.9%
Eastside	9.5%	33.3%	33.3%	9.5%	14.3%
Westside	8.1%	43.2%	32.4%		16.2%
Downtown	12.2%	44.9%	20.4%	16.3%	6.1%

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: By a ratio of about five to four (or 49% to 39%), more Aiken residents are on the satisfied side of the scale. Three demographic variables made a significant difference in ratings. Black residents were a little more likely to be on the satisfied side of the scale than white residents (57% and 47% respectively) and slightly less likely to be on the dissatisfied side (33% and 39% respectively). Age also made a little difference with the young somewhat more likely to be on the satisfied side (56% and 46% respectively), but the biggest difference with respect to age was that the oldest group was, not surprisingly, a quite a bit more likely than the youngest group to have no opinion about safe bicycle paths/lanes (19% and 8% respectively). So the impact of age on satisfaction with safe bicycle path/lanes should probably be discounted except to note that the young are more interested in this area. Those with education beyond a bachelor's degree were more likely to report dissatisfaction with Aiken's bicycle paths and lanes. No obvious explanation exists for this finding.

Safe Bicycle Paths/Lanes

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
Add Lanes	29.7%	77.6%
Improve Safety	3.1%	8.2%
Enlarge/Improve Existing Lanes	2.1%	5.6%
Fewer Lanes/Eliminate Them	1.0%	2.6%
Problems of Placement with Current Lanes	0.7%	1.7%
Not Enough Usage of Lanes	0.3%	0.9%
Other	1.3%	3.4%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 232 (38.2% of sample)

Discussion: The source of the relative dissatisfaction with safe bicycle paths and lanes is readily apparent based on open-ended responses. A large proportion of the sample (38%) expressed a concern or suggestion in accordance with their dissatisfaction. The overwhelming majority of these comments suggested adding additional bicycle paths and lanes throughout Aiken. This sentiment was expressed by 78% of those expressing a suggestion or concern and 30% of the survey respondents.

Parkways/Green Spaces

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	17.1%	62.2%	13.8%	2.5%	4.5%
ETHNICITY***					
White	20.4%	60.6%	12.6%	3.2%	3.2%
Black	8.3%	66.2%	15.2%	1.4%	9.0%
GENDER					
Men	17.1%	60.7%	13.1%	2.5%	6.5%
Women	17.2%	62.7%	14.9%	2.6%	2.6%
AGE					
< 36	15.0%	65.6%	12.5%	1.9%	5.0%
36-64	16.0%	64.3%	14.1%	3.0%	2.7%
65+	21.8%	55.2%	14.5%	1.8%	6.7%
INCOME					
< \$60k	15.0%	66.2%	11.7%	0.5%	6.6%
\$60-100k	18.9%	62.2%	14.2%	2.0%	2.7%
> \$100k	19.6%	58.9%	14.6%	3.8%	3.2%
EDUCATION***					
HS or Less	15.0%	64.6%	11.6%	0.7%	8.2%
Some Coll.	12.7%	69.7%	11.3%	0.7%	5.6%
College	19.7%	58.3%	17.0%	3.2%	1.8%
College +	22.5%	53.9%	14.6%	6.7%	2.2%
AREA**					
Northside	10.7%	67.2%	13.0%	1.5%	7.6%
Southside	18.0%	61.4%	14.2%	2.9%	3.5%
Eastside	15.0%	45.0%	35.0%		5.0%
Westside	8.6%	68.6%	14.3%	2.9%	5.7%
Downtown	32.7%	55.1%	6.1%	2.0%	4.1%

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: About four in five (79%) were satisfied or very satisfied with parkways and green spaces in the city. We see a little ethnic impact on satisfaction. But it is mostly due to differences within the two satisfaction categories. White residents were relatively more than black residents to be “very satisfied” (20% and 8% respectively), and black residents were relatively more likely than white residents to be just “satisfied” (66% and 61% respectively). Black residents were also about twice as likely as white residents to have no opinion (9% and 3% respectively). So in the area of parkways and green spaces, ethnicity does not make a very big difference. Education also made a significant difference, but most of that is due to the highest education group having relatively more extreme views on both ends, that is, being relatively more likely to be both “very satisfied” and “very dissatisfied” rather than either just “satisfied” or “dissatisfied.” Area made a small difference with those in the Downtown area having far more “very satisfied” ratings and relatively very few on the dissatisfied side. We should not be surprised at this in light of the fact that the downtown area has many rather spectacular plantings and most of the parkways.

Parkways/Green Spaces

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
Increase Amount of Green Space	6.3%	41.8%
Maintain Existing	4.1%	27.5%
Improve Existing	3.0%	19.8%
Other	1.6%	11.0%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 91 (15.0% of sample)

Discussion: The suggestions for green space in Aiken fell into only a few categories. Among those dissatisfied with green spaces and asked for suggestions, the most common suggestion was to increase the amount of green space in the city. Also important were suggestions to maintain and improve the City of Aiken’s additional green spaces.

Stimulating Affordable Housing

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	10.7%	56.6%	15.5%	2.5%	14.8%
ETHNICITY****					
White	12.8%	56.9%	12.3%	1.2%	16.7%
Black	4.1%	54.8%	23.3%	6.2%	11.6%
GENDER**					
Men	8.8%	60.1%	11.7%	1.8%	17.6%
Women	12.7%	53.9%	18.3%	3.3%	11.8%
AGE*					
< 36	9.4%	58.8%	12.5%	1.9%	17.5%
36-64	11.4%	55.7%	20.5%	2.3%	10.2%
65+	12.1%	53.9%	11.5%	3.0%	19.4%
INCOME**					
< \$60k	7.0%	54.2%	20.6%	4.2%	14.0%
\$60-100k	10.8%	59.5%	12.2%	2.7%	14.9%
> \$100k	17.1%	55.7%	11.4%	1.3%	14.6%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	9.6%	55.5%	16.4%	2.1%	16.4%
Some Coll.	7.1%	58.9%	16.3%	1.4%	16.3%
College	13.3%	53.7%	16.5%	3.7%	12.8%
College +	12.4%	60.7%	11.2%	1.1%	14.6%
AREA					
Northside	6.9%	52.3%	22.3%	4.6%	13.8%
Southside	14.1%	57.4%	12.6%	1.5%	14.4%
Eastside	5.0%	55.0%	25.0%	5.0%	10.0%
Westside	2.8%	61.1%	16.7%	2.8%	16.7%
Downtown	6.1%	61.2%	14.3%	2.0%	16.3%

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: When asked to rate their satisfaction with the city's efforts to provide affordable housing, two thirds (67%) of everyone said that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with current efforts. Moreover, majorities of all subgroups were on the satisfied side of the scale. However, again we see some significant differences in the equality of satisfaction.

Ethnicity made the most difference in relative levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Black residents were relatively less likely than white residents to say they were "very satisfied" (4% and 13% respectively), and black residents were more likely than white residents to say that they were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" (30% and 14% respectively). Gender, age and income were significantly related to satisfaction levels, but the patterns were not very worthy of note. Women were slightly more likely than men to be "very satisfied" (13% and 9% respectively), and somewhat more likely to be on the dissatisfied side of the scale (22% and 13% respectively). While differences with respect to age existed, we see no meaningful pattern. The statistical significance of income makes sense in that those in the highest income group are relatively more

likely than those at the bottom end to be “very satisfied” (17% and 7% respectively), and those in the bottom income group are relatively more likely than those at the top end to be on the dissatisfied end of the scale (25% and 13% respectively). In other words, those who need affordable housing the most are less satisfied.

Stimulating Affordable Housing Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Number of Concerns/Suggestions
Housing Prices Too Expensive	6.1%	42.0%
Housing is Low Quality	1.8%	12.5%
More Attention to Low Income Citizens	1.6%	11.4%
Rent is Too Expensive	1.2%	8.0%
Support for First Time Home Buyers	0.8%	5.7%
Affordable Housing in Specific Areas	0.7%	4.5%
Need for Senior Living	0.3%	2.3%
Other	2.0%	13.6%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 88 (14.5% of sample)

Discussion: Among those dissatisfied with the City of Aiken’s efforts to stimulate affordable housing and volunteering a concern or suggestion, the most common concern is a general sense that housing prices in Aiken are too expensive. This general dissatisfaction with the job being done (similar to zoning) seems to indicate that many Aiken citizens are not familiar with what stimulating affordable housing entails but a general dissatisfaction with the outcome among a minority of the population here.

Sidewalks

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	6.3%	54.2%	31.2%	4.2%	4.0%
ETHNICITY					
White	6.9%	55.0%	29.2%	3.9%	4.9%
Black	5.5%	49.7%	38.6%	4.8%	1.4%
GENDER**					
Men	5.9%	59.6%	25.7%	3.7%	5.1%
Women	6.6%	48.9%	36.4%	4.9%	3.3%
AGE**					
< 36	8.9%	59.5%	27.2%	1.9%	2.5%
36-64	6.0%	51.9%	33.5%	6.0%	2.6%
65+	4.3%	54.0%	30.7%	3.1%	8.0%
INCOME					
< \$60k	6.6%	55.4%	31.5%	2.3%	4.2%
\$60-100k	6.1%	56.5%	28.6%	6.1%	2.7%
> \$100k	7.0%	51.3%	33.5%	4.4%	3.8%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	9.6%	57.5%	27.4%	2.1%	3.4%
Some Coll.	2.1%	54.2%	33.1%	6.3%	4.2%
College	6.8%	54.8%	31.5%	4.1%	2.7%
College +	6.9%	46.0%	34.5%	4.6%	8.0%
AREA					
Northside	6.2%	51.5%	36.2%	4.6%	1.5%
Southside	6.5%	52.5%	31.6%	4.1%	5.3%
Eastside	5.0%	60.0%	30.0%		5.0%
Westside		66.7%	30.6%		2.8%
Downtown	10.4%	64.6%	18.8%	6.3%	

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: Majorities of residents were “satisfied” (54%) or “very satisfied (6%) with sidewalks, but about a third were on the dissatisfied side (31% “dissatisfied” and 4% “very dissatisfied”). Though we see some logical patterns among the subgroups (such as those living in the Downtown area, which as the highest concentration of sidewalks, being most likely to feel “very satisfied”), demographic groups did not have much impact with levels of satisfaction. The only exceptions were that the oldest group was a little less likely to be “very satisfied” and more likely to have no opinion in this area and women were more likely to be dissatisfied.

Sidewalks Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
Add Sidewalks	25.0%	68.5%
Placement in Particular Areas	5.9%	16.2%
Better Maintain Existing Sidewalks	3.5%	9.5%
Improve Sidewalks	1.6%	4.5%
Other	0.5%	1.4%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 222 (36.6% of sample)

Discussion: Response to this question bears a similarity to resident response to safe bicycle paths and lanes. Along with roads, these three city services and activities represented the areas where city residents were most dissatisfied. Similar to safe bicycle paths and lanes, a large portion of residents offered suggestions regarding sidewalks and most of these suggestions were to add a greater number. A smaller group of residents also felt sidewalks should be placed in different areas.

Stimulating Economic Development

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	9.5%	59.4%	21.2%	4.2%	5.6%
ETHNICITY*					
White	11.0%	61.8%	18.1%	3.9%	5.1%
Black	5.5%	56.6%	24.8%	6.2%	6.9%
GENDER					
Men	10.9%	62.0%	18.2%	4.4%	4.4%
Women	8.6%	58.1%	23.4%	4.3%	5.6%
AGE					
< 36	11.9%	62.5%	17.5%	3.8%	4.4%
36-64	8.3%	58.7%	22.7%	4.5%	5.7%
65+	9.8%	56.1%	22.6%	4.9%	6.7%
INCOME**					
< \$60k	8.1%	58.8%	21.8%	3.8%	7.6%
\$60-100k	6.7%	63.8%	21.5%	3.4%	4.7%
> \$100k	15.1%	58.5%	18.9%	6.3%	1.3%
EDUCATION**					
HS or Less	10.3%	58.9%	17.8%	2.7%	10.3%
Some Coll.	7.1%	69.5%	17.0%	2.1%	4.3%
College	12.8%	52.8%	24.8%	5.5%	4.1%
College +	5.6%	58.9%	24.4%	6.7%	4.4%
AREA					
Northside	3.9%	61.2%	24.8%	5.4%	4.7%
Southside	10.9%	59.2%	21.1%	3.8%	5.0%
Eastside	5.0%	45.0%	25.0%	5.0%	20.0%
Westside	10.8%	51.4%	24.3%	2.7%	10.8%
Downtown	14.3%	65.3%	12.2%	4.1%	4.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Seven in ten residents were on the satisfied side in their ratings on the activity of stimulating economic development, though the strong majority (60%) were “satisfied” rather than “very satisfied” (10%). On the dissatisfied side, the “dissatisfied” rating outnumbered those “very dissatisfied” by more than five to one (21% and 4% respectively).

Virtually all subgroups had majorities on the satisfied side. However, as we have seen in other areas, some inequality in levels of satisfaction exists with respect to ethnicity as well as income, education and area. Black residents were relatively less likely than white residents to be “very satisfied” (6% and 11% respectively), and black residents were more likely than white residents to be on the dissatisfied side of the scale (31% and 22% respectively). Income, correlated with ethnicity, showed similar relationships. Education had a different relationship with those having a higher level of education giving lower satisfactory scores and higher dissatisfied scores, which has no obvious explanation.

Stimulating Economic Development Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
Need More Growth in General	5.6%	21.8%
Make Development More Equal (Demographically)	4.1%	16.0%
Need More Jobs	3.6%	14.1%
Suggestions for Particular Businesses to be Added	3.3%	12.8%
Make Development More Equal (Geographically)	3.0%	11.5%
Specific Suggestions for Government	2.6%	10.3%
Improve Infrastructure	1.0%	3.8%
Increase Small Businesses	0.5%	1.9%
Other	2.0%	7.7%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 156 (25.7% of sample)

Discussion: A substantial number of people who were dissatisfied with the City of Aiken’s efforts to stimulate economic development volunteered suggestions and concerns on this topic. Unlike roads, sidewalks and safe bicycle paths/lanes, however, no one suggestion or concern dominated. Similar to stimulating affordable housing and zoning, many of the suggestions were quite general, indicating residents who were dissatisfied with the outcome of these efforts seemed unsure about the specifics of stimulating economic development. Most suggestions or concerns fell into two broad categories: either a broad desire for more growth and jobs (36% of suggestions or concerns on this topic) or a desire that growth and development be more equitable, either by benefitting all demographic groups or all areas of the city (28% of suggestions or concerns on this topic).

General City Infrastructure

Groups	1. Very Satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very Dissatisfied	DK/NS
ALL	9.5%	64.3%	19.7%	3.1%	3.4%
ETHNICITY***					
White	11.1%	62.3%	21.9%	1.9%	2.8%
Black	4.7%	74.4%	10.9%	5.4%	4.7%
GENDER					
Men	10.5%	62.8%	20.6%	3.2%	2.8%
Women	9.0%	66.0%	19.0%	3.4%	2.6%
AGE***					
< 36	12.9%	71.4%	10.0%	3.6%	2.1%
36-64	9.1%	64.2%	19.8%	2.5%	4.5%
65+	7.9%	56.4%	29.3%	4.3%	2.1%
INCOME					
< \$60k	10.6%	66.1%	14.3%	4.2%	4.8%
\$60-100k	8.2%	59.0%	26.1%	2.2%	4.5%
> \$100k	10.7%	67.9%	17.1%	3.6%	0.7%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	11.9%	61.5%	17.8%	2.2%	6.7%
Some Coll.	5.6%	70.2%	16.9%	4.8%	2.4%
College	10.9%	61.7%	23.3%	2.1%	2.1%
College +	7.7%	65.4%	20.5%	5.1%	1.3%
AREA***					
Northside	7.4%	70.5%	12.3%	4.9%	4.9%
Southside	10.3%	62.0%	24.3%	2.1%	1.4%
Eastside	10.5%	42.1%	21.1%	5.3%	21.1%
Westside	6.5%	67.7%	19.4%		6.5%
Downtown	12.8%	66.0%	10.6%	6.4%	4.3%

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: The very broad question about “general city infrastructure” shows that nearly three-fourths of all residents (74%) were on the satisfied side of the scale. Given that we also asked specific questions about roads, water and sewer, sidewalks, bike paths, we cannot be sure what respondents were thinking about when answering the question. The somewhat strange patterns among demographic groups suggests that many did not really know what exactly what the question was asking about. For example, while every subgroup showed a majority who were “satisfied” and about another one in ten were “very satisfied,” white residents were both more likely than black residents to be “very satisfied” and also “dissatisfied.” Older residents relative to younger residents were less on the satisfied side (68% and 84%) and more likely to be on the dissatisfied side (33% and 14% respectively). Perhaps the elderly are more likely to have heard discussions about infrastructure, but that does not show up in looking at education groups, where the more highly educated should be more likely to understand the term. If this question is asked again, we might be wise to make it much more specific as were other infrastructure questions.

General City Infrastructure Specific Concerns and Suggestions

Suggestion	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Concerns/Suggestions
Maintain/Fix Existing Infrastructure	6.1%	30.1%
General "Improve"	4.4%	22.0%
Help with Traffic	3.6%	17.9%
Concerns about Development/Business in General	1.8%	8.9%
City Should Be More Responsive to Residents and Changes	1.8%	8.9%
Make Infrastructure Improvements More Equitably/Help All Groups	1.5%	7.3%
Other	4.3%	21.1%

Number of people making a suggestion/concern: 123 (20.3% of sample)

Discussion: The most common type of open-ended suggestion or concern regarded maintaining and fixing existing infrastructure. Next most common was a desire to improve or upgrade existing infrastructure in the city.

Comparative Overall Ratings for City Services and Activities

The table below orders services and activities by their overall mean score on satisfaction from the highest to the lowest. The midpoint between the “satisfied” and “dissatisfied” sides of the four point scale is 2.5.

Service/Activity	Mean Score	4. Very Satisfied	3. Satisfied	2. Dissatisfied	1. Very Dissatisfied
Public Safety’s fire protection	3.32	35.4%	62.4%	1.5%	0.7%
Public Safety’s police protection	3.23	34.7%	55.2%	8.1%	2.0%
Yard waste removal	3.18	28.9%	62.3%	6.9%	1.9%
Garbage	3.17	28.2%	62.7%	7.6%	1.6%
Recreation/athletics	3.11	28.4%	58.0%	9.9%	3.6%
Water/sewer	3.03	16.4%	71.7%	10.1%	1.8%
Parkways/green spaces	2.98	17.9%	65.1%	14.4%	2.6%
Recycling	2.98	21.2%	57.2%	19.4%	2.1%
Building inspection	2.97	8.9%	81.2%	7.8%	2.2%
Storm drainage	2.91	13.9%	66.6%	15.7%	3.8%
Stimulating affordable housing	2.89	12.5%	66.4%	18.2%	2.9%
Zoning	2.85	5.8%	75.3%	16.6%	2.3%
General city infrastructure	2.83	9.8%	66.6%	20.4%	3.2%
Economic development	2.79	10.1%	63.0%	22.5%	4.5%
Sidewalks	2.65	6.6%	56.5%	32.5%	4.4%
Safe bicycle paths/lanes	2.56	7.6%	48.4%	36.3%	7.6%
Roads	2.44	4.7%	42.6%	45.1%	7.6%

Discussion: With the exception of roads, all services/activities were on the satisfied side of the midpoint of 2.5. The median rating for the seventeen areas covered in the survey was 2.97, well above the midpoint and just below “satisfactory.” Roads were the only area in which a majority of residents said that they were either “dissatisfied” (45%) or “very dissatisfied” (8%).

We can see an interesting pattern between areas that depend relatively more on personnel than physical infrastructure. More personnel dependent areas tended to be higher in their mean ratings. Five of the six areas with means over 3 (“satisfied”) were clearly highly dependent on the quality of personnel (fire and police in public safety, yard waste removal, garbage, and recreation/athletics). Four of the bottom five were more dependent on physical infrastructure (general city infrastructure, sidewalks, safe bicycle paths/lanes, and roads). All of these four areas are tied to the movement of people around the city. Arguably, the other area in the bottom five, economic development, depends equally on both physical infrastructure and promotional activities to be successful. Of course no matter how motivated, well trained, and smart the personnel, they must have proper tools and modern efficient equipment with which to work.

Nevertheless, the overall high level of ratings in the more personnel dependent areas suggest that city personnel are doing a particularly good job in providing most residents with feelings of satisfaction. Greater overall citizen satisfaction is most likely to come from improving the physical infrastructure of the city, especially in the area of transportation, and from making sure that strong personnel are rewarded and retained.

Development and Growth

Overview: Managing growth and promoting economic development are major and often controversial activities of local governments. We asked residents to evaluate the quality of current city efforts in guiding growth and development, whether they agree with where development is taking place and if not, where they would prefer it to be. Finally, we asked about the balance between maintaining Aiken’s small town character and economic development—whether they thought both were possible at the same time and what future balance they would prefer.

A clear majority of residents rated the job the city does in guiding growth and development as at least “good,” and most of the remainder rated it as “fair,” and these ratings held rather steady across all demographic subgroups.

A majority agreed with where development is currently taking place. More than a third had other preferences, with those living in the Northside, Eastside, and Westside being more likely to have other preferences.

An overwhelming majority thought that Aiken could have economic development without sacrificing its small town character. And that same majority preferred pursuing development along with maintaining a small town character in the future.

Clearly most Aiken residents expect both economic development and protection of a small town atmosphere in the future. Improved performance seems to rest on the city paying a little more attention to spreading development out across the areas of the city.

Quality of City in Guiding

13. How good a job is the city doing in guiding current growth and development?

Groups	1. Very Poor	2. Poor	3. Fair	4. Good	5. Very Good	DK/NS
ALL	3.6%	8.4%	29.9%	37.7%	17.1%	3.3%
ETHNICITY						
White	3.2%	7.9%	28.3%	38.9%	17.5%	4.2%
Black	2.8%	9.0%	31.3%	39.6%	17.4%	
GENDER						
Men	3.3%	9.5%	30.0%	37.7%	15.4%	4.0%
Women	3.9%	7.9%	28.9%	37.5%	18.8%	3.0%
AGE						
< 36	3.8%	5.7%	31.8%	38.2%	18.5%	1.9%
36-64	4.2%	9.1%	31.1%	37.9%	14.0%	3.8%
65+	3.0%	9.7%	26.1%	38.2%	18.8%	4.2%
INCOME						
< \$60k	1.4%	7.0%	31.2%	35.8%	20.5%	4.2%
\$60-100k	5.4%	8.8%	33.1%	37.8%	11.5%	3.4%
> \$100k	5.8%	8.3%	25.6%	38.5%	20.5%	1.3%
EDUCATION*						
HS or Less	3.4%	5.5%	28.8%	38.4%	20.5%	3.4%
Some Coll.		9.2%	31.0%	40.1%	16.9%	2.8%
College	4.6%	8.7%	32.4%	38.4%	13.7%	2.3%
College +	6.9%	12.6%	21.8%	31.0%	20.7%	6.9%
AREA						
Northside	3.1%	10.1%	34.9%	32.6%	18.6%	0.8%
Southside	3.2%	7.4%	29.4%	41.2%	15.6%	3.2%
Eastside	10.0%	5.0%	25.0%	30.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Westside	2.8%	5.6%	30.6%	41.7%	13.9%	5.6%
Downtown	2.1%	12.5%	27.1%	29.2%	22.9%	6.3%

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: A plurality of residents (38%) felt that the city has been doing a “good” job in managing growth and development. Moreover, a clear majority (55%) rated performance positively, as either “good” or “very good. Most of the remaining ratings were “fair” (30%) with far fewer (12%) giving “poor” or “very poor” ratings. Residents with advanced college education were more likely to say “poor” or “very poor” and less likely to say “fair” or “good” compared to those of other educational attainment, though they did not differ substantially in their likelihood to say “very good”.

Suggestions for Guiding Growth and Development

13a. How would you improve guiding current growth and development?

Suggestions	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Suggestions
Specific Other Suggestions for the City	2.5%	25.4%
Make Growth More Equal (Geographic)	2.3%	23.7%
Specific Industries/Areas of Growth Desired	1.3%	13.6%
Focus on Jobs	1.2%	11.9%
General Criticism	1.2%	11.9%
Make Growth More Equal (Demographic)	1.0%	10.2%
Other	1.2%	11.9%

Number of people making a suggestion: 59 (9.7% of sample)

Discussion: Residents who believed the city was doing a “poor” or “very poor” job of guiding growth and development were asked for suggestions on how to improve. This open-ended question prompted a variety of suggestions. Perhaps the most common single theme to emerge from these suggestions was a desire to make growth and development more equal across the city (either geographically or benefitting all demographic groups equally). This suggestion was made by a combined 34% of those offering suggestions.

Agreement with Current Location of Development

14. Do you currently agree with where development is taking place in the City of Aiken, or do you think development should be taking place elsewhere?

Groups	Agree with where taking place	Should be elsewhere	DK/NS
ALL	57.6%	38.3%	4.2%
ETHNICITY**			
White	57.9%	36.8%	5.3%
Black	57.3%	42.0%	0.7%
GENDER			
Men	55.2%	40.4%	4.4%
Women	59.2%	36.8%	4.0%
AGE***			
< 36	63.7%	35.0%	1.3%
36-64	57.4%	39.5%	3.1%
65+	52.2%	39.1%	8.7%
INCOME			
< \$60k	54.7%	41.5%	3.8%
\$60-100k	56.5%	42.2%	1.4%
> \$100k	63.6%	31.8%	4.5%
EDUCATION			
HS or Less	64.8%	31.0%	4.1%
Some Coll.	55.7%	40.7%	3.6%
College	55.8%	41.0%	3.2%
College +	53.5%	38.4%	8.1%
AREA*			
Northside	53.5%	44.9%	1.6%
Southside	61.6%	33.0%	5.4%
Eastside	40.0%	50.0%	10.0%
Westside	47.2%	50.0%	2.8%
Downtown	60.4%	37.5%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: By about three to two, residents agree with where development is taking place. The level of agreement was pretty uniformly across all groups, with the exception that those on the Northside, Eastside, and Westside—the areas where relatively less development is taking place—are less likely to agree than those on the Southside or Downtown.

Suggestions for Other Locations of Development

Residents who said growth should be taking place elsewhere in Aiken were asked where growth should be taking place:

15. In what part of the city would you like to see development take place?

Area	Percentage of Respondents*
Northside	63.3%
Southside	5.0%
Eastside	16.3%
Westside	22.5%
Downtown	12.1%
Outside City in County	5.8%
Other	15.0%
DK/NS	2.1%

Number of people making a suggestion: 240 (39.5% of sample)

*Respondents were allowed to indicate more than one suggested location for development, thus these percentages total more than 100%.

Discussion: A majority of residents dissatisfied with the current location of development wished to see development taking place on the Northside of Aiken. Significant portions of those dissatisfied also asked for more development on the Westside and Eastside. Not surprisingly, the locations with the most development—Downtown and Southside—were least likely to be chosen as a place for new development by those unhappy with current patterns.

Does Development Compromise Small Town Character

16. Do you believe economic development is possible without compromising the small town character of the City of Aiken?

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	82.2%	13.5%	4.3%
ETHNICITY			
White	84.8%	11.8%	3.4%
Black	77.9%	15.9%	6.2%
GENDER			
Men	81.7%	13.9%	4.4%
Women	83.3%	12.5%	4.3%
AGE			
< 36	79.0%	18.5%	2.5%
36-64	83.8%	11.7%	4.5%
65+	81.7%	12.2%	6.1%
INCOME***			
< \$60k	78.0%	14.5%	7.5%
\$60-100k	86.4%	12.9%	0.7%
> \$100k	88.1%	10.1%	1.9%
EDUCATION****			
HS or Less	66.2%	24.1%	9.7%
Some Coll.	83.8%	11.3%	4.9%
College	86.7%	11.5%	1.8%
College +	93.3%	4.5%	2.2%
AREA***			
Northside	73.8%	18.5%	7.7%
Southside	85.6%	11.2%	3.2%
Eastside	71.4%	14.3%	14.3%
Westside	91.7%	2.8%	5.6%
Downtown	75.5%	24.5%	

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: More than four in five (82%) see development and maintaining a small town character as possible at the same time. All subgroups had majorities on the “yes” side, though as income and education went down, the size of the majority decreased. We also see a difference by area. Those living in the Southside (and Westside—a very small subsample) had the strongest majority. This may be because the area is associated with both income and education.

Preferred Future on Economic Development (ED) and Small Town Character (STC)

17. Which option comes closest to the future you want for Aiken?

- 1) economic development while keeping the small town character of Aiken
- 2) no economic development but maintain the small town character of Aiken, or
- 3) economic development but lose the small town character of Aiken

Groups	Both ED & STC	STC only	ED only	DK/NS
ALL	83.9%	4.9%	8.9%	2.3%
ETHNICITY****				
White	88.2%	3.9%	6.1%	1.7%
Black	73.4%	7.0%	15.4%	4.2%
GENDER**				
Men	81.4%	5.8%	11.3%	1.5%
Women	87.7%	3.6%	6.3%	2.3%
AGE***				
< 36	79.7%	4.4%	15.8%	
36-64	86.7%	3.0%	7.6%	2.7%
65+	83.1%	8.4%	5.4%	3.0%
INCOME**				
< \$60k	81.2%	6.6%	7.5%	4.7%
\$60-100k	82.4%	5.4%	10.8%	1.4%
> \$100k	90.5%	1.3%	7.6%	0.6%
EDUCATION***				
HS or Less	73.8%	9.0%	12.4%	4.8%
Some Coll.	87.4%	2.8%	9.8%	
College	86.2%	5.0%	7.3%	1.4%
College +	87.5%	2.3%	5.7%	4.5%
AREA***				
Northside	78.3%	4.7%	13.2%	3.9%
Southside	87.9%	3.8%	6.8%	1.5%
Eastside	80.0%	5.0%		15.0%
Westside	75.0%	11.1%	11.1%	2.8%
Downtown	77.6%	10.2%	12.2%	

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: When asked about preferences for the future balance between economic development and maintaining Aiken’s small town character, we see a picture similar to what we saw on the previous question concerning the possibility of having both development and maintaining a small town character . Of course answers to this question were dependent on answers to the previous question—someone who thinks that both are not possible together would be unlikely to prefer a future of both.

More than four in five residents (84%) prefer both in the future, a majority almost perfectly matching the majority who though both were possible.

While ethnicity, age, income, education, area and gender made a statistical difference in the size of the majorities, no subgroup had less than 73% preferring both over either small town character only or economic development only. No subgroups had a statistically significant difference in preference for small town character only. Black residents and the youngest age group were statistically more likely than white residents and older age groups to prefer economic development only, but the percentages were still quite small (15% for black residents and 16% for those under the age of 36). This small difference may rest on perceived economic self-interests. Those with a high school or less level of education were also significantly more likely to favor economic development only, although the percentage was not large.

Downtown

Overview: Most healthy cities have a well-identified and healthy downtown area. Such would seem to be the case for the City of Aiken. Most all residents reported visiting downtown sometime in the first several months of 2017. A wide range of its residents report visiting the downtown area, though visits are a bit skewed toward those who are white, older, better educated and more affluent. While this should not be overstated, we see some hint of white gentrification. Residents most frequently suggested improved parking and adding new and different businesses as the most important things to improve the attractiveness of the downtown area.

Overall, residents would like to see more restaurants and additional retail come to the downtown of Aiken, but a major takeaway is that many residents would like new businesses to broaden the appeal of Aiken's downtown beyond traditional constituencies.

Number of Downtown Visits

20. Since the beginning of the year, about how many times have you visited downtown Aiken for shopping or entertainment? _____ (#)

Groups	Mean	SD
ALL	12.3	15.3
ETHNICITY		
White	12.8	14.9
Black	11.4	16.7
GENDER		
Men	12.0	14.8
Women	12.7	15.9
AGE*		
< 36	9.8	13.8
36-64	12.9	15.6
65+	13.8	16.2
INCOME		
< \$60k	11.1	14.8
\$60-100k	13.7	17.1
> \$100k	13.4	15.8
EDUCATION		
HS or Less	10.0	14.3
Some Coll.	12.9	15.4
College	13.8	17.2
College +	11.4	10.8
AREA**		
Northside	12.2	17.5
Southside	11.5	13.3
Eastside	8.9	16.2
Westside	13.7	15.6
Downtown	19.7	21.2

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: About nine in ten Aiken residents visited downtown for shopping and entertainment in about the first three months of 2017. Discounting outliers, the mean number of visits by residents was a little over 12, although significant variation existed among residents in their rate of visiting downtown. Among groups, older residents visited downtown more frequently while younger residents visited it an average of four times fewer. Not surprisingly, location within the city made a major difference on the frequency of visiting downtown. Those reporting to live in the Downtown region reported visiting the area most frequently, while those in other city regions visited far less.

Most Desired Change Downtown

21. If you could change one thing about downtown Aiken to make it more attractive for you, what would that be?

Change	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total Sample
Improved parking	158	26.0%
New or different businesses	92	15.2%
Roads or traffic concerns	41	6.8%
Parks and beauty concerns	41	6.8%
Broaden appeal	30	4.9%
Increase entertainment/arts options	26	4.3%
Stay open later/beyond current hours	22	3.6%
Renovate buildings	18	3.0%
Infrastructure improvements	10	1.6%
Accessibility concerns	9	1.5%
Other	19	3.1%

Discussion: When asked an open-ended question about what single thing would make downtown more attractive to visit, improved parking was the most frequently answer at 26%. The next most frequent answer was new and different businesses at 15%. All other answers were well below 10%. Hopefully the planned parking garage may address parking concerns. And perhaps some new and different businesses may be able to attract relatively more of the groups that reported lower frequencies of visits to Downtown Aiken.

Businesses Desired Downtown

19. What types of businesses would you like to see move into downtown Aiken?

Suggested Business	Percentage of Survey Respondents
Restaurants	27.8%
General Retail	16.3%
Entertainment/Nightlife	16.1%
Retail (Other Specified)	11.9%
Youth Oriented	7.9%
Small/Local Businesses	5.8%
Clothing	5.3%
Broader Appeal/More Diverse	5.1%
More Affordable	4.6%
Corporate/Professional	2.6%
Stay Open Later	1.0%
Other	11.4%

Number of respondents volunteering suggestions: 453 (74.6% of sample)

Discussion: The type of business most commonly suggested by residents as a desired addition to downtown was additional restaurants. This was suggested by 28% of survey respondents. Other popular options included general retail (type unspecified) and entertainment and nightlife options. The latter option was chosen by 16% of survey respondents and an additional 1% wished for businesses to stay open later, indicating a desire for more options in the evening in downtown Aiken.

Aside from business types, a significant number of residents wished for businesses downtown to have a broader appeal. In the survey, 8% of residents desired businesses catering to youth and teenagers, 5% wanted businesses to appeal more broadly to other groups in Aiken and cater to more diverse constituencies and 5% wished for businesses to be more affordable downtown.

Communication with City Government

Overview: Most residents feel that the level of communication between the city government and residents meets their expectations, but some room exists for improvement, especially among the black community. All of the nine sources of information we asked about are reportedly used by a majority of residents with the exceptions of neighborhood associations and elected leaders. But even these bottom two were used by more than a third.

Majorities cited each source as a preferred source, suggesting that residents like to have many different information sources for city information. Included in this preference list was an additional source not currently used, informational meetings about important issues. This was in the middle pack in its popularity, and a clear majority of those interested in this option said that they would prefer informational meetings to current city council meetings as a source of information.

Demographic breakdowns revealed that all groups use all sources and all sources are very popular with all groups. But relative popularity in use and preference did differ across some groups. For example, internet/web and social media were used relatively more and more popular with younger groups, while older groups used and preferred newspapers and information in city water bill packets. What is clear from demographic breakdowns on these questions is that no one source fits all groups. The city needs to tailor communication efforts to reach specific groups and use a range of outlets to maximize the chances of reaching all groups.

Meeting Communication Expectations

22. Thinking about the level of communication between the City of Aiken government and residents, would you say it:

Groups	Meets Expectations	Fails to Meet Expectations	DK/NS
ALL	68.2%	25.9%	5.9%
ETHNICITY**			
White	72.2%	21.8%	6.0%
Black	60.3%	34.0%	5.7%
GENDER			
Men	69.0%	24.0%	7.0%
Women	67.7%	27.7%	4.7%
AGE			
< 36	70.5%	24.4%	5.1%
36-64	66.3%	28.0%	5.7%
65+	68.3%	24.8%	6.8%
INCOME			
< \$60k	64.6%	27.3%	8.1%
\$60-100k	68.7%	26.5%	4.8%
> \$100k	70.9%	23.4%	5.7%
EDUCATION			
HS or Less	69.5%	24.8%	5.7%
Some Coll.	70.4%	23.9%	5.6%
College	68.7%	25.8%	5.5%
College +	58.6%	32.2%	9.2%
AREA			
Northside	67.9%	23.7%	8.4%
Southside	70.1%	25.4%	4.5%
Eastside	55.0%	35.0%	10.0%
Westside	58.3%	36.1%	5.6%
Downtown	62.5%	29.2%	8.3%

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: Two-thirds (68%) feel that communications with Aiken City government meets expectations. But we see slightly lower satisfaction among black residents relative to white residents (60% and 72% respectively). We would conclude that while these ratings are positive, room exists for improvement, especially across ethnic lines.

Information Sources Used

23. Which of the following do you use to receive information about City of Aiken services and sponsored events?

Source	Yes	No	DK/NS
Word of Mouth	85.3%	14.7%	
Newspapers	70.8%	28.9%	0.3%
Internet/Website	70.7%	29.3%	
City Water Bill	68.9%	30.7%	0.5%
Cable TV	54.3%	45.7%	
Social Media	53.4%	46.6%	
Newsletter	50.3%	49.3%	0.4%
Neighborhood Associations	38.5%	61.5%	
From Elected Leaders	37.8%	62.2%	

Discussion: We asked about each of these possible sources in rotation order to minimize any bias in question order bias. The table above orders the sources from the source most to least frequently used. Perhaps the most striking finding here is that all sources were used quite frequently. All but neighborhood associations and elected leaders were used by a majority of residents, and even those were used by more than a third.

Word of Mouth as Source

Groups	Yes	No
ALL	85.3%	14.7%
ETHNICITY		
White	87.2%	12.8%
Black	83.1%	16.9%
GENDER		
Men	84.1%	15.9%
Women	86.9%	13.1%
AGE		
< 36	88.7%	11.3%
36-64	85.2%	14.8%
65+	82.6%	17.4%
INCOME*		
< \$60k	82.4%	17.6%
\$60-100k	87.6%	12.4%
> \$100k	90.5%	9.5%
EDUCATION****		
HS or Less	76.4%	23.6%
Some Coll.	88.1%	11.9%
College	89.7%	10.3%
College +	85.2%	14.8%
AREA		
Northside	84.6%	15.4%
Southside	86.5%	13.5%
Eastside	77.8%	22.2%
Westside	86.1%	13.9%
Downtown	81.3%	18.8%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Word of mouth was the overall best source and was rather uniformly used by more than 80% of almost all groups. The major statistically significant differences were among those with a high school degree or less and those making less than \$60k, who may be less likely to join groups that give them as many human connections that provide information. Social scientists call this quality of connectedness “social capital.” But even the three-fourths of the least educated group used word of mouth.

Newspapers as Source

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	70.8%	28.9%	0.3%
ETHNICITY			
White	71.0%	28.5%	0.5%
Black	69.0%	31.0%	
GENDER			
Men	68.9%	31.1%	
Women	72.2%	27.1%	0.7%
AGE**			
< 36	65.8%	34.2%	
36-64	67.4%	32.2%	0.4%
65+	80.9%	18.5%	0.6%
INCOME			
< \$60k	71.4%	28.6%	
\$60-100k	72.4%	26.9%	0.7%
> \$100k	70.4%	29.6%	
EDUCATION			
HS or Less	74.3%	25.7%	
Some Coll.	70.6%	29.4%	
College	66.0%	33.0%	0.9%
College +	76.1%	23.9%	
AREA**			
Northside	77.7%	22.3%	
Southside	68.9%	31.1%	
Eastside	82.4%	17.6%	
Westside	69.4%	27.8%	2.8%
Downtown	70.8%	27.1%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Newspapers, perhaps the oldest source next to word or mouth, is a kind of mirror opposite to the internet and the web. It is widely utilized and is more frequently used by the oldest group as opposed to the youngest group (81% and 66% respectively). However, as newspapers go more and more online, the differences may begin to blur.

Internet/Website as Source

Groups	Yes	No
ALL	70.7%	29.3%
ETHNICITY		
White	69.1%	30.9%
Black	71.1%	28.9%
GENDER		
Men	73.0%	27.0%
Women	68.5%	31.5%
AGE****		
< 36	86.1%	13.9%
36-64	76.7%	23.3%
65+	47.2%	52.8%
INCOME**		
< \$60k	65.1%	34.9%
\$60-100k	75.3%	24.7%
> \$100k	75.5%	24.5%
EDUCATION		
HS or Less	70.5%	29.5%
Some Coll.	74.1%	25.9%
College	65.6%	34.4%
College +	78.2%	21.8%
AREA**		
Northside	69.5%	30.5%
Southside	72.5%	27.5%
Eastside	35.3%	64.7%
Westside	80.6%	19.4%
Downtown	66.7%	33.3%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Using the internet and websites to get information was more likely used by the youngest group than the oldest group (86% and 48% respectively). Generational replacement over time is sure to make the internet and websites used even more, unless it gets replaced by other instant electronic sources. Lower income residents reported using the internet less as a source of information. This may be due to less internet availability in such households.

City Water Bill as Source

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	68.9%	30.7%	0.5%
ETHNICITY*			
White	66.9%	32.3%	0.8%
Black	77.1%	22.9%	
GENDER*			
Men	64.5%	35.1%	0.4%
Women	73.4%	25.9%	0.7%
AGE***			
< 36	59.0%	40.4%	0.6%
36-64	69.6%	30.4%	
65+	77.4%	21.4%	1.3%
INCOME			
< \$60k	72.4%	27.6%	
\$60-100k	67.1%	32.2%	0.7%
> \$100k	68.6%	30.8%	0.6%
EDUCATION			
HS or Less	65.7%	33.6%	0.7%
Some Coll.	69.5%	29.1%	1.4%
College	70.7%	29.3%	
College +	70.9%	29.1%	
AREA			
Northside	69.8%	29.5%	0.8%
Southside	69.3%	30.1%	0.6%
Eastside	66.7%	33.3%	
Westside	72.2%	27.8%	
Downtown	72.9%	27.1%	

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Used as a source of information about city services and events by two-thirds of all residents (69%), information sent with city water bills is significantly more likely to be used by older than younger residents (77% and 59% respectively) as well as women more so than men and African-Americans more so than white residents. But as we have seen with other sources, majorities of every subgroup utilize this source.

Cable TV as Source

Groups	Yes	No
ALL	54.3%	45.7%
ETHNICITY****		
White	50.5%	49.5%
Black	67.6%	32.4%
GENDER		
Men	50.7%	49.3%
Women	56.6%	43.4%
AGE***		
< 36	43.9%	56.1%
36-64	53.9%	46.1%
65+	64.0%	36.0%
INCOME**		
< \$60k	61.4%	38.6%
\$60-100k	51.4%	48.6%
> \$100k	48.4%	51.6%
EDUCATION*		
HS or Less	61.4%	38.6%
Some Coll.	57.0%	43.0%
College	52.3%	47.7%
College +	44.8%	55.2%
AREA*		
Northside	56.9%	43.1%
Southside	51.6%	48.4%
Eastside	66.7%	33.3%
Westside	75.0%	25.0%
Downtown	54.2%	45.8%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: While cable TV is an important source used overall by a majority of all residents (54%), it is especially important for black residents (68%), older residents (64%), lower income residents (61%), less educated residents (61%), and those living in the Northside (57%), Eastside (67%), and the Westside (75%).

Social Media as Source

Groups	Yes	No
ALL	53.4%	46.6%
ETHNICITY		
White	51.3%	48.8%
Black	57.7%	42.3%
GENDER**		
Men	48.7%	51.3%
Women	58.2%	41.8%
AGE****		
< 36	72.6%	27.4%
36-64	52.7%	47.3%
65+	37.3%	62.7%
INCOME		
< \$60k	57.6%	42.4%
\$60-100k	53.4%	46.6%
> \$100k	52.2%	47.8%
EDUCATION*		
HS or Less	57.6%	43.4%
Some Coll.	60.1%	38.6%
College	49.3%	51.5%
College +	47.7%	54.3%
AREA***		
Northside	61.1%	38.9%
Southside	52.4%	47.6%
Eastside	16.7%	83.3%
Westside	62.9%	37.1%
Downtown	50.0%	50.0%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: As a relatively newer medium than the internet and web, social media is less likely to be used than the internet and web, but still a slight majority (52%) report using it. The patterns for subgroups present much the same picture as we saw for the internet and web—a generational difference. The youngest group is far more likely to employ social media than the oldest group (73% and 37% respectively). Women were also more likely than men to use social media (58% to 49%, respectively).

Newsletter as Source

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	50.3%	49.3%	0.4%
ETHNICITY*			
White	52.5%	47.2%	0.3%
Black	42.4%	56.8%	0.7%
GENDER			
Men	46.6%	52.6%	0.7%
Women	52.6%	47.4%	
AGE			
< 36	48.1%	51.9%	
36-64	49.8%	49.4%	0.8%
65+	51.9%	48.1%	
INCOME			
< \$60k	51.9%	47.6%	0.5%
\$60-100k	48.6%	51.4%	
> \$100k	47.8%	52.2%	
EDUCATION			
HS or Less	51.5%	47.8%	0.7%
Some Coll.	47.8%	52.2%	
college	47.4%	52.1%	0.5%
College +	59.1%	40.9%	
AREA			
Northside	49.2%	50.0%	0.8%
Southside	52.0%	47.7%	0.3%
Eastside	52.9%	47.1%	
Westside	45.7%	54.3%	
Downtown	45.8%	54.2%	

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Newsletters from the city are used by half of all residents (50%) as a source of information about city services and events. White residents were significantly more likely than African-Americans to report using the newsletter (53% to 42%).

Neighborhood Associations as Source

Groups	Yes	No
ALL	38.5%	61.5%
ETHNICITY		
White	39.2%	60.8%
Black	35.9%	64.1%
GENDER		
Men	39.8%	60.2%
Women	37.2%	62.8%
AGE		
< 36	38.6%	61.4%
36-64	34.4%	65.6%
65+	44.1%	55.9%
INCOME		
< \$60k	37.8%	62.2%
\$60-100k	37.9%	62.1%
> \$100k	38.4%	61.6%
EDUCATION		
HS or Less	42.4%	57.6%
Some Coll.	36.4%	63.6%
College	38.9%	61.1%
College +	35.6%	64.4%
AREA*		
Northside	36.9%	63.1%
Southside	41.2%	58.8%
Eastside	23.5%	76.5%
Westside	37.1%	62.9%
Downtown	27.1%	72.9%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Neighborhood associations are used by a little over the third of all residents (39%). Usage is fairly uniform across all subgroups.

From Elected Leaders as Source

Groups	Yes	No
ALL	37.8%	62.2%
ETHNICITY*		
White	35.0%	65.0%
Black	43.3%	56.7%
GENDER		
Men	40.4%	59.6%
Women	35.9%	64.1%
AGE		
< 36	36.7%	63.3%
36-64	34.6%	65.4%
65+	43.5%	56.5%
INCOME*		
< \$60k	33.8%	66.2%
\$60-100k	35.2%	64.8%
> \$100k	44.3%	55.7%
EDUCATION		
HS or Less	36.0%	64.0%
Some Coll.	35.7%	64.3%
College	40.8%	59.2%
College +	38.6%	61.4%
AREA		
Northside	42.6%	57.4%
Southside	33.3%	66.7%
Eastside	38.9%	61.1%
Westside	41.7%	58.3%
Downtown	42.6%	57.4%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Getting information about city services and events from elected leaders was reported to be used by a little over a third of all residents (38%). African-Americans were more likely to report getting information from elected leaders, as well as those with higher income. This may point to patterns within both of these groups of interacting with elected leaders more frequently than other groups.

Additional Sources for Information about the City

23. Is there any other way you get information about the City of Aiken?

Additional Ways	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Additional Ways
Church	3.1%	35.2%
Fliers	1.6%	18.5%
Local Civic Organizations/Chamber of Commerce	1.3%	14.8%
City Employees	0.8%	9.3%
Local TV	0.7%	7.4%
Radio	0.5%	5.6%
Other	0.8%	9.3%

Number of additional ways volunteered: 54 (8.9% of sample)

Discussion: The most common additional ways that residents received information about the City of Aiken were through what political scientists call “social capital”—the civic organizations and groups that make up civil society and we use to meet and congregate with each other. The most common such response was church, which was chosen by over one third of individuals volunteering an additional source of news. 15% of those volunteering additional sources of information chose other local civic organizations—the Aiken Chamber of Commerce was highlighted in particular. Together these sources of information totaled 50% of those volunteering additional sources of information.

Information Preferences

We asked a series of follow-up questions about each of the sources for information about city services and events to find out which sources residents would “prefer” to use. One additional source that the city is considering adding to the array of ways to reach residents was added to the list, “community information meetings about important issues.” We again begin with a summary of preferences ordered from most often to least often preferred, and then we break down each source to see if different demographic subgroups have different preferences.

24. Which of the following methods would you prefer to use to get information about city services and sponsored events?

Source	Yes	No	DK/NS
Internet/website	75.5%	24.1%	0.4%
Word of mouth	72.9%	26.8%	0.3%
Newspapers	71.3%	28.4%	0.3%
Newsletter	68.9%	30.8%	0.3%
From elected leaders	63.8%	35.6%	0.6%
City water bill	63.1%	36.2%	0.7%
Community information meetings about important issues	63.0%	36.6%	0.4%
Social media	57.9%	41.7%	0.3%
Cable TV	51.9%	47.6%	0.5%
Neighborhood associations	50.6%	49.0%	0.3%

Discussion: Ordered from most often to least often preferred, the most striking finding is that all sources were chosen as preferred by more than half of all residents. Leading the list is the internet/websites (at 76%), a relatively new and growing source. But also near the top are several traditional time-tested sources, word of mouth (at 73%), newspapers (71%), and newsletters (69%). The additional source that the city is considering adding to methods of communication, community information meetings, was right in the mix of other sources in the middle of the pack (at 63%). Its preference was not statistically different than elected leaders (64%) or city water bill (63%). We would note that elected leaders was the least used source in the previous summary table (at 38%). The disparity between actual use and preferences suggests that citizens would like more opportunities to learn about the city from their elected leaders. Finally, the bottom three sources are still quite popular sources. Social media, the newest emerging source that is likely to grow with generational change, cable tv, and neighborhood associations were all above the 50% mark in preferences. The message for the city seems to be continue what you are doing and add additional opportunities to learn. The one grain of salt in this advice rests on the human tendency to express good intentions because of their social desirability but then not follow through.

Internet/Website as Preference

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	75.5%	24.1%	0.4%
ETHNICITY			
White	75.9%	24.1%	
Black	76.1%	23.2%	0.7%
GENDER			
Men	75.2%	24.4%	0.4%
Women	76.4%	23.3%	0.3%
AGE****			
< 36	89.3%	10.1%	0.6%
36-64	81.8%	18.2%	
65+	52.5%	46.9%	0.6%
INCOME			
< \$60k	72.2%	27.8%	
\$60-100k	79.3%	20.0%	0.7%
> \$100k	80.5%	18.9%	0.6%
EDUCATION			
HS or Less	71.9%	28.1%	
Some Coll.	82.4%	17.6%	
College	72.6%	27.0%	0.5%
College +	78.2%	20.7%	1.1%
AREA**			
Northside	76.3%	23.7%	
Southside	76.0%	23.7%	0.3%
Eastside	47.4%	52.6%	
Westside	80.0%	20.0%	
Downtown	76.6%	21.3%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: As we saw with actual usage, the internet/web is significantly more preferred by younger (89%) than older residents (52%).

Word of Mouth as Preference

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	72.9%	26.8%	0.3%
ETHNICITY			
White	75.5%	24.2%	0.3%
Black	69.0%	31.0%	
GENDER			
Men	70.0%	29.3%	0.7%
Women	74.8%	25.2%	
AGE			
< 36	77.4%	22.0%	0.6%
36-64	73.2%	26.8%	
65+	68.3%	31.1%	0.6%
INCOME			
< \$60k	71.3%	28.2%	0.5%
\$60-100k	77.6%	22.4%	
> \$100k	75.9%	23.4%	0.6%
EDUCATION*			
HS or Less	66.2%	33.1%	0.7%
Some Coll.	78.9%	21.1%	
College	76.6%	22.9%	0.5%
College +	65.1%	34.9%	
AREA			
Northside	71.0%	28.2%	0.8%
Southside	74.4%	25.6%	
Eastside	78.9%	21.1%	
Westside	74.3%	25.7%	
Downtown	70.8%	27.1%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Word of mouth, perhaps the oldest way of communicating ideas, was uniformly popular across all demographic groups.

Newspapers as Preference

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	71.3%	28.4%	0.3%
ETHNICITY			
White	71.0%	28.7%	0.3%
Black	75.0%	25.0%	
GENDER			
Men	69.3%	30.0%	0.7%
Women	73.6%	26.4%	
AGE***			
< 36	66.0%	33.3%	0.6%
36-64	67.2%	32.8%	
65+	82.4%	17.0%	0.6%
INCOME			
< \$60k	70.2%	29.3%	0.5%
\$60-100k	71.7%	28.3%	
> \$100k	73.6%	25.8%	0.6%
EDUCATION			
HS or Less	74.3%	25.0%	0.7%
Some Coll.	66.7%	33.3%	
College	72.0%	27.6%	0.5%
College +	71.3%	28.7%	
AREA			
Northside	76.7%	22.5%	0.8%
Southside	69.4%	30.6%	
Eastside	78.9%	21.1%	
Westside	70.6%	29.4%	
Downtown	72.9%	25.0%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Newspapers was the preference for older residents (82%) significantly more than for younger residents (66%). However, this traditional source of information that has played a central role in American political history remains a very important source for all groups despite its recent decline relative to electronic media. This difference is becoming more and more blurred as actual paper newspapers have been moving to electronic newspapers.

Newsletter as Preference

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	68.9%	30.8%	0.3%
ETHNICITY			
White	68.2%	31.6%	0.3%
Black	70.9%	29.1%	
GENDER			
Men	70.0%	29.3%	0.7%
Women	69.7%	30.3%	
AGE			
< 36	63.5%	35.8%	0.6%
36-64	72.3%	27.7%	
65+	68.1%	31.3%	0.6%
INCOME			
< \$60k	72.7%	26.8%	0.5%
\$60-100k	61.8%	38.2%	
> \$100k	72.3%	27.0%	0.6%
EDUCATION			
HS or Less	70.0%	29.3%	0.7%
Some Coll.	69.7%	30.3%	
College	65.6%	34.0%	0.5%
College +	75.3%	24.7%	
AREA			
Northside	72.5%	26.7%	0.8%
Southside	69.6%	30.4%	
Eastside	72.2%	27.8%	
Westside	71.4%	28.6%	
Downtown	59.6%	38.3%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Newsletters as a preferred source of information was uniformly popular across all demographic groups.

From Elected Leaders as Preference

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	63.8%	35.6%	0.6%
ETHNICITY			
White	62.0%	37.2%	0.8%
Black	70.2%	29.8%	
GENDER			
Men	68.4%	30.5%	1.1%
Women	60.4%	39.2%	0.3%
AGE			
< 36	67.1%	32.3%	0.6%
36-64	63.9%	36.1%	
65+	59.5%	38.6%	1.9%
INCOME			
< \$60k	63.5%	35.6%	1.0%
\$60-100k	67.4%	31.9%	0.7%
> \$100k	66.5%	32.9%	0.6%
EDUCATION			
HS or Less	61.0%	37.6%	1.4%
Some Coll.	62.7%	36.6%	0.7%
College	66.8%	32.7%	0.5%
College +	63.5%	36.5%	
AREA*			
Northside	68.5%	30.8%	0.8%
Southside	60.7%	39.0%	0.3%
Eastside	44.4%	50.0%	5.6%
Westside	74.3%	25.7%	
Downtown	68.1%	29.8%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Getting information about the city from elected leaders was in the middle of the preferred sources and was a rather uniform preference across all demographic groups. We saw in an earlier section that it was the least used source and used relatively more by more affluent groups and African-Americans. But as a preference, all groups would like to use it more than they currently use it. This suggest communication opportunities by elected leaders.

City Water Bill as Preference

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	63.1%	36.2%	0.7%
ETHNICITY			
White	61.6%	37.9%	0.5%
Black	69.5%	29.8%	0.7%
GENDER			
Men	60.6%	38.3%	1.1%
Women	66.6%	33.1%	0.3%
AGE			
< 36	56.6%	42.8%	0.6%
36-64	63.3%	36.3%	0.4%
65+	68.1%	30.6%	1.3%
INCOME*			
< \$60k	69.9%	29.2%	1.0%
\$60-100k	62.2%	37.8%	
> \$100k	57.0%	42.4%	0.6%
EDUCATION			
HS or Less	63.6%	34.3%	2.1%
Some Coll.	66.7%	33.3%	
college	63.1%	36.4%	0.5%
College +	58.6%	41.4%	
AREA			
Northside	65.9%	33.3%	0.8%
Southside	62.7%	36.7%	0.6%
Eastside	55.6%	44.4%	
Westside	82.4%	17.6%	
Downtown	60.4%	37.5%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: The city has routinely included information about services and activities in mailed water bill packets. Its popularity is over 60% and fairly uniform across all demographic subgroups. Individuals with incomes less than \$60k were most likely to list the city water bill as a preference compared to residents in higher income groups.

Community Information Meetings as Preference

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	63.0%	36.6%	0.4%
ETHNICITY			
White	60.3%	39.5%	0.3%
Black	67.6%	31.7%	0.7%
GENDER			
Men	65.8%	34.2%	
Women	62.0%	37.7%	0.3%
AGE			
< 36	64.7%	35.3%	
36-64	63.7%	36.3%	
65+	60.8%	38.0%	1.3%
INCOME			
< \$60k	62.0%	38.0%	
\$60-100k	65.7%	33.6%	0.7%
> \$100k	67.5%	32.5%	
EDUCATION			
HS or Less	61.2%	37.4%	1.4%
Some Coll.	64.3%	35.7%	
College	62.3%	37.7%	
College +	67.8%	32.2%	
AREA ***			
Northside	72.7%	27.3%	
Southside	57.8%	41.9%	0.3%
Eastside	42.1%	57.9%	
Westside	79.4%	20.6%	
Downtown	64.6%	33.3%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Community information meetings is an option the city is considering to add to the modes of communication with Aiken residents. As a preference, it was in the middle of the pack. It was also popular among all subgroups, but especially popular for those living in the Northside and Westside of town (72% and 79% respectively). If the city does decide to utilize this option, it might create opportunities for elected leaders to actually become a utilized source of information that matches the popularity of expressed citizen preferences.

Social Media as Preference

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	57.9%	41.7%	0.3%
ETHNICITY			
white	56.3%	43.5%	0.3%
black	64.1%	35.9%	
GENDER*			
Men	54.1%	45.2%	0.7%
Women	62.2%	37.8%	
AGE****			
< 36	79.9%	20.1%	
36-64	58.0%	41.6%	0.4%
65+	37.9%	61.5%	0.6%
INCOME			
< \$60k	58.9%	40.7%	0.5%
\$60-100k	61.8%	38.2%	
> \$100k	57.2%	42.1%	0.6%
EDUCATION**			
HS or Less	54.3%	45.7%	
Some Coll.	70.4%	29.6%	
College	55.3%	43.7%	0.9%
College +	50.6%	49.4%	
AREA**			
Northside	65.6%	34.4%	
Southside	58.3%	41.4%	0.3%
Eastside	22.2%	77.8%	
Westside	60.0%	40.0%	
Downtown	54.2%	43.8%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Social media is an emerging source of information that is preferred by more than half of all demographic subgroups (with the possible exception of those living on the Eastside, though that is a very small subsample, so differences there must be taken with a large grain of salt). It is especially a preferred source by youngest age group (80%), which is no surprise. The young were the group that also stood out in actually reporting use of social media to get information about the city.

Cable TV as Preference

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	51.9%	47.6%	0.5%
ETHNICITY****			
white	47.2%	52.5%	0.3%
black	67.1%	32.1%	0.7%
GENDER			
Men	49.4%	49.8%	0.7%
Women	53.4%	46.2%	0.3%
AGE			
< 36	48.7%	50.0%	1.3%
36-64	50.0%	50.0%	
65+	57.8%	41.6%	0.6%
INCOME**			
< \$60k	61.5%	38.0%	0.5%
\$60-100k	46.9%	52.4%	0.7%
> \$100k	45.9%	53.5%	0.6%
EDUCATION**			
HS or Less	61.4%	37.9%	0.7%
Some Coll.	57.7%	42.3%	
College	46.4%	53.1%	0.5%
College +	41.9%	57.0%	1.2%
AREA*			
Northside	61.1%	38.2%	0.8%
Southside	48.9%	50.8%	0.3%
Eastside	57.9%	42.1%	
Westside	68.6%	31.4%	
Downtown	41.7%	56.3%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Cable TV was a preferred source for about 50% of everyone, but more so for several subgroups: black residents (67%), those who were older (58%), those with lower incomes (62%), the less educated (61%), and those living on the Northside (61%) and the Westside (69%).

Neighborhood Associations as Preference

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
ALL	50.6%	49.0%	0.3%
ETHNICITY			
white	47.8%	51.9%	0.3%
black	58.5%	41.5%	
GENDER			
Men	49.3%	50.0%	0.7%
Women	52.2%	47.8%	
AGE			
< 36	55.5%	43.9%	0.6%
36-64	46.3%	53.7%	
65+	52.5%	46.9%	0.6%
INCOME			
< \$60k	49.8%	49.8%	0.5%
\$60-100k	50.3%	49.7%	
> \$100k	51.3%	48.1%	0.6%
EDUCATION			
HS or Less	55.1%	44.2%	0.7%
Some Coll.	51.1%	48.9%	
College	51.9%	47.6%	0.5%
College +	41.4%	58.6%	
AREA*			
Northside	56.3%	43.0%	0.8%
Southside	51.2%	48.8%	
Eastside	44.4%	55.6%	
Westside	50.0%	50.0%	
Downtown	37.5%	60.4%	2.1%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: Neighborhood associations are a preferred source of information fairly uniformly across all groups (at about 50%), but seem to be more popular among black residents (59%) and those living in the Northside, (56%).

Community Information Meetings Versus City Council Meetings

We asked the following question to only those who said that they would prefer Community information meetings in order to see if they would be more popular than attending regular city council meetings.

25. If the City of Aiken were to schedule community informational meetings about important issues, how interested would you be in attending these meetings compared to a standard city council meeting?

5) much more interested 4) more interested 3) equally interested 2) less interested 1) much less interested 9) DK/NS

Groups	Much Less Interest	Less Interest	Equal Interest	More Interest	Much More Interest	DK/NS
ALL	4.0%	4.8%	24.3%	36.2%	29.3%	1.4%
ETHNICITY						
White	3.4%	5.2%	24.0%	41.2%	24.9%	1.3%
Black	3.2%	3.2%	24.5%	28.7%	38.3%	2.1%
GENDER						
Men	4.8%	4.8%	23.4%	35.9%	29.3%	1.8%
Women	3.8%	4.8%	24.7%	36.0%	29.6%	1.1%
AGE****						
< 36	5.2%	2.1%	35.1%	26.8%	29.9%	1.0%
36-64	3.2%	1.3%	23.6%	37.6%	33.1%	1.3%
65+	4.0%	13.0%	16.0%	42.0%	23.0%	2.0%
INCOME						
< \$60k	4.7%	4.7%	21.3%	31.5%	34.6%	3.1%
\$60-100k	3.4%	6.7%	25.8%	39.3%	24.7%	
> \$100k	2.9%	2.9%	23.8%	43.8%	26.7%	
EDUCATION*						
HS or Less	9.3%	5.8%	29.1%	30.2%	23.3%	2.3%
Some Coll.	3.4%	7.9%	22.5%	28.1%	34.8%	3.4%
College	1.6%	3.2%	23.2%	44.0%	28.0%	
College +	4.8%	3.2%	21.0%	38.7%	32.3%	
AREA***						
Northside	3.3%	1.1%	21.7%	31.5%	39.1%	3.3%
Southside	2.2%	5.4%	25.3%	39.2%	27.4%	0.5%
Eastside		22.2%		55.6%	11.1%	11.1%
Westside	17.9%	7.1%	21.4%	28.6%	25.0%	
Downtown	2.9%	5.9%	29.4%	41.2%	20.6%	

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: Three-fourths of all residents prefer community information meetings over standard city council meetings as a way to learn about issues. Age had a statistically significant impact on popularity, but mainly because the oldest group took relatively more extreme positions on both ends. However, these kinds of meetings were relatively most popular among those living in the Northside (71%).

Additional Information Preferences

24. Is there any other way you **would like to** get information about the City of Aiken?

Additional Ways	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Additional Ways
Emails	3.3%	30.3%
Broadcast	1.6%	15.2%
Text	1.3%	12.1%
Methods the City is Already Using	0.7%	6.1%
Print Media	0.7%	6.1%
Fliers/Banners/Signs	0.5%	4.5%
Other Electronic Media	0.3%	3.0%
Other	2.5%	22.7%

Number of people volunteering additional ways: 66 (10.9% of sample)

Discussion: Of those volunteering additional ways they would prefer to receive information about the City of Aiken, electronic methods dominated. 30% of those volunteering additional methods desired receiving news by email. Combined with those wishing for text and other such methods, 45% of residents desired additional electronic avenues of receiving news about the City of Aiken.

Online City Government Videos

27. In the last 12 months, how many times have you watched video of City of Aiken government meetings or other programs available online?

Groups	Mean	SD
ALL	1.52	4.2
ETHNICITY		
White	1.4	4.2
Black	1.4	3.6
GENDER		
Men	1.4	3.7
Women	1.7	4.8
AGE		
< 36	1.6	4.0
36-64	1.5	4.2
65+	1.3	4.2
INCOME		
< \$60k	1.9	5.4
\$60-100k	1.3	3.7
> \$100k	1.3	3.2
EDUCATION		
HS or Less	1.5	4.1
Some Coll.	1.5	2.8
College	1.5	4.5
College +	1.9	5.4
AREA		
Southside	1.7	5.8
Northside	1.6	3.8
Eastside	0.8	1.7
Westside	2.0	3.4
Downtown	1.1	3.4

We only asked this follow-up question to those who said that they had never watched a city government meeting online (66% of residents): 27a. Are you aware that the City of Aiken places video of city government meetings and other programs online?

Awareness	Yes	No	DK/NS
	36.3%	60.7%	2.9%

Number of residents watching 0 videos: 399 (65.7% of sample)

Discussion: The mean number of videos watched by residents over the past year was 1.5. This number is somewhat deceptive, as 66% of residents did not watch a single video over the past year. No differences between the groups are statistically significant.

When those who watched no city government videos over the last year were asked whether or not they were aware that the city places video online, over three fifths of these residents

indicated they were not aware of this service. Counting those that watched city government video, this means that approximately 40% of all residents surveyed were unaware the City of Aiken puts video online of government meetings and other programs.

Transparency and Responsiveness of City Government

Overview: In addition to clear avenues of communication, two clear expectations of Americans regarding their local government are transparency and responsiveness. Americans have grown more distrustful of government in recent decades and many believe Justice Brandeis' adage that "sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants" when it comes to the operations of their government at all levels. America has also developed a strong expectation of being listened to by our municipal government, evolving out of a tradition of citizens having their voices heard. We asked about the perceptions of openness and transparency, perceptions of willingness of city officials to listen to residents and whether city officials are working on issues important to residents.

Most residents believe that City of Aiken government is open and transparent, city officials wish to hear their concerns and views and that the city is working on problems important to them.

Openness and Transparency of City

10. To what extent is the City of Aiken government open and transparent to average citizens?

Groups	1. Not at all	2. Slightly	3. Somewhat	4. Very Much	DK/NS
ALL	7.1%	12.6%	47.7%	26.5%	6.1%
ETHNICITY					
White	6.6%	11.2%	48.3%	27.6%	6.3%
Black	6.3%	16.7%	43.8%	26.4%	6.9%
GENDER**					
Men	8.8%	12.8%	42.1%	27.1%	9.2%
Women	6.2%	12.4%	52.3%	25.5%	3.6%
AGE**					
< 36	6.3%	10.8%	48.1%	22.8%	12.0%
36-64	8.3%	14.3%	48.5%	24.4%	4.5%
65+	6.1%	11.7%	47.2%	31.3%	3.7%
INCOME					
< \$60k	4.7%	13.6%	51.2%	25.4%	5.2%
\$60-100k	9.5%	13.5%	43.9%	25.0%	8.1%
> \$100k	8.8%	11.9%	44.0%	30.2%	5.0%
EDUCATION*					
HS or Less	6.9%	9.7%	40.0%	34.5%	9.0%
Some Coll.	8.5%	13.4%	55.6%	18.3%	4.2%
College	5.5%	15.0%	46.4%	27.3%	5.9%
College +	10.1%	10.1%	50.6%	23.6%	5.6%
AREA					
Northside	7.8%	12.4%	44.2%	28.7%	7.0%
Southside	6.2%	13.2%	49.6%	25.2%	5.9%
Eastside	15.0%	20.0%	45.0%	15.0%	5.0%
Westside	5.6%	11.1%	38.9%	33.3%	11.1%
Downtown	8.3%	8.3%	47.9%	33.3%	2.1%

Discussion: The most common response among all citizens and subgroups was that the city was “somewhat” open and transparent to the average citizen with almost half of residents describing the city government this way. Most of the other responses were in the “very much” category, indicating general broad satisfaction with the level of transparency and openness of city government. Among subgroups, women were more likely than men to indicate the city government was “somewhat” transparent and older residents were more likely to report that city government was “very much” open and transparent while younger residents were most likely to indicate that they did not know or were not sure about the degree of openness and transparency.

City Interest in Hearing Residents' Concerns and Views

11. To what extent are city officials interested in hearing the concerns and views of residents?

Groups	1. Not at all	2. Slightly	3. Somewhat	4. Very Much	DK/NS
ALL	7.2%	14.7%	40.6%	29.7%	7.8%
ETHNICITY**					
White	4.9%	15.4%	42.4%	29.8%	7.6%
Black	10.6%	14.8%	37.3%	29.6%	7.7%
GENDER					
Men	8.1%	16.5%	37.4%	28.9%	9.2%
Women	7.2%	13.5%	43.8%	30.3%	5.3%
AGE					
< 36	11.3%	15.7%	36.5%	25.8%	10.7%
36-64	7.2%	14.4%	42.0%	29.5%	6.8%
65+	4.3%	13.5%	42.3%	33.1%	6.7%
INCOME					
< \$60k	6.5%	15.4%	38.8%	30.8%	8.4%
\$60-100k	11.6%	12.9%	38.8%	27.2%	9.5%
> \$100k	5.0%	13.8%	43.4%	34.6%	3.1%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	8.3%	12.4%	35.9%	34.5%	9.0%
Some Coll.	5.6%	22.4%	44.8%	21.7%	5.6%
College	6.4%	12.8%	42.2%	30.3%	8.3%
College +	11.2%	12.4%	37.1%	31.5%	7.9%
AREA					
Northside	8.5%	11.5%	42.3%	30.8%	6.9%
Southside	5.6%	14.6%	44.4%	28.1%	7.3%
Eastside	15.0%	20.0%	20.0%	25.0%	20.0%
Westside	11.1%	16.7%	30.6%	36.1%	5.6%
Downtown	12.2%	18.4%	30.6%	28.6%	10.2%

Discussion: Similar to openness and transparency, the most common response regarding the interest of city officials in hearing the concerns and views of residents was “somewhat”. Over 70% of residents felt that the city officials were either “somewhat” or “very much” willing to do so, indicating a general perception that city officials listen to residents. However, differences existed among ethnic groups, with black residents being more likely than white residents to indicate a level of interest of “not at all” among city officials in willingness to listen to residents.

City Responsiveness

12. Do you feel that current city officials are working on issues that are important to you and your family?

Groups	1. Not at all	2. Slightly	3. Somewhat	4. Very Much	DK/NS
ALL	9.4%	18.3%	40.6%	25.2%	6.5%
ETHNICITY*					
White	7.7%	18.0%	43.5%	24.7%	6.2%
Black	12.0%	21.1%	31.0%	29.6%	6.3%
GENDER					
Men	8.9%	17.0%	42.4%	24.4%	7.4%
Women	9.6%	19.5%	40.4%	25.5%	5.0%
AGE					
< 36	11.4%	15.2%	38.0%	27.8%	7.6%
36-64	8.8%	22.1%	42.7%	20.6%	5.7%
65+	8.5%	15.8%	40.6%	28.5%	6.7%
INCOME					
< \$60k	8.8%	19.0%	41.2%	23.6%	7.4%
\$60-100k	14.4%	19.2%	37.7%	21.9%	6.8%
> \$100k	8.2%	14.6%	42.4%	29.7%	5.1%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	9.6%	15.1%	37.0%	31.5%	6.8%
Some Coll.	5.0%	23.4%	44.7%	20.6%	6.4%
College	12.0%	17.5%	38.7%	24.0%	7.8%
College +	10.3%	18.4%	43.7%	24.1%	3.4%
AREA					
Northside	10.8%	16.2%	43.1%	26.2%	3.8%
Southside	9.7%	19.2%	41.0%	23.6%	6.5%
Eastside	10.0%	15.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
Westside	5.6%	16.7%	41.7%	25.0%	11.1%
Downtown	6.3%	20.8%	41.7%	25.0%	6.3%

Discussion: Once again, the most common response was “somewhat” followed by “very much”. Among residents, 66% felt that current city officials are working on issues important to them and their families. Because issues relevant to different demographic and geographical groups may differ from group to group, and the city must prioritize the issues it tackles, it is notable that there were few significant differences among demographic subgroups in Aiken in response to this question. Although slightly more black residents rated city officials’ efforts as “slightly” or “not at all”, the difference was small.

Reasons for Perceptions of Low Responsiveness

Reason	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Reasons
Lack of Communication/Responsiveness	5.8%	24.8%
Ignoring Specific Problems/Issues	5.3%	22.7%
Misplaced Priorities	5.1%	22.0%
City has its own Agenda	3.8%	16.3%
Showing Favoritism/Ignoring Certain Groups	3.1%	13.5%
General Mismanagement	2.6%	11.3%
Problems with Aiken Renaissance	1.3%	5.7%
Lack of Transparency	0.8%	3.5%
Other	2.0%	8.5%

Number of respondents volunteering reasons: 141 (23.2% of sample)

Discussion: Among those who felt that city officials were not working on issues important to them and their families, no particular reason for feeling this way dominated. The most common type of reason was a feeling of lack of communication or responsive—a feeling that city officials were out of touch. The next most common reasons held that the city had different priorities or ignored certain problems—together these explanations comprised 45% of reasons offered by those dissatisfied.

Contacts with City Government

Overview: Contacts that residents have with city government inevitably play a large role in how residents feel about government performance. We measured several aspects of these interactions. We asked about the number of contacts, the way in which the contact was made, the perceived quality of the employee responses, and finally the overall satisfaction of the resident with the contact. Among residents who had a contact with the city government, we asked the reason for the contact and the way in which the city got in touch.

A majority of residents reportedly had no contacts with city government. For those that did, phone was the most common way residents got in touch with individuals generally contacting the government to either ask a question, make a complaint or request service. We saw that high SES residents were more likely to make contacts, suggesting that lower SES residents may not feel as comfortable in making complaints or asking questions.

Those who did have contacts rated city employees quite high in courtesy, training, professionalism, and ease in getting help. Though not perfect on any of these, the area in which there was the most some room for improvement was getting help. Perhaps employees can be trained to be more attentive in making quick referrals for problems they cannot handle.

Overall satisfaction rests on many factors, some of which are heavily dependent on residents getting what they wanted from the contact whether or not they were entitled to a favorable outcome. With that in mind, we would consider the ratings on overall satisfaction to be very positive. More important, except for age, we found no differences in overall satisfaction across demographic groups. Employees do an excellent job in making sure that all residents are treated the same regardless of their ethnicity, socio-economic status, or where they live in the city. Perhaps some additional training in providing service to elderly residents is warranted.

Personal Contacts with City Government

28. In the last 12 months, about how many times have you personally contacted the City of Aiken government by phone, in person, or by email with a question, service request, suggestion, or complaint? [Interviewers were told to exclude fire/police emergency contacts.]

# of Contacts	None	One	Two	Three to Six	Seven or More
ALL	47.4%	12.4%	13.8%	21.5%	4.9%
ETHNICITY***					
White	43.5%	12.2%	16.5%	21.8%	6.1%
Black	58.9%	12.8%	9.2%	17.7%	1.4%
GENDER					
Men	47.1%	12.2%	12.9%	22.1%	5.7%
Women	48.0%	12.5%	13.5%	21.6%	4.4%
AGE****					
< 36	64.1%	12.4%	12.4%	7.8%	3.3%
36-64	40.0%	11.9%	15.4%	26.2%	6.5%
65+	42.4%	13.3%	12.7%	27.2%	4.4%
INCOME***					
< \$60k	54.8%	13.0%	13.5%	15.4%	3.4%
\$60-100k	50.0%	10.4%	15.3%	19.4%	4.9%
> \$100k	37.5%	9.9%	12.5%	30.9%	9.2%
EDUCATION**					
HS or Less	60.3%	9.2%	9.9%	17.7%	2.8%
Some Coll.	49.6%	10.8%	15.1%	21.6%	2.9%
College	41.4%	16.2%	15.2%	20.5%	6.7%
College +	36.5%	10.6%	15.3%	30.6%	7.1%
AREA *					
Northside	56.7%	12.6%	7.9%	20.5%	2.4%
Southside	44.2%	11.8%	16.7%	23.0%	4.2%
Eastside	60.0%	20.0%	5.0%	10.0%	5.0%
Westside	62.9%	8.6%	5.7%	20.0%	2.9%
Downtown	37.8%	13.3%	17.8%	20.0%	11.1%

Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results

Discussion: A majority of residents reported that they had no contacts over the last year. Those who were black, younger, lower income and education, and those living on the Northside were the most likely to have reported no contacts. Those who were white residents, older, higher income, and those living Downtown, were the most likely to report high numbers of contacts. In short, those who were white and have high socio-economic status were far more likely to have had more contacts with city government.

Reason for Most Recent Contact

29. What was the reason for your most recent contact?

Reason	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Reasons
Question/Request for Information	12.2%	26.2%
Complaint	11.2%	24.1%
Request for Service	10.4%	22.3%
Specific Department (Reason not Specified)	9.6%	20.6%
Pay a bill/fulfill obligation	4.1%	8.9%
Other	2.8%	6.0%

Number of contacts made by residents: 282 (46.5% of sample)

Discussion: Among individuals that specified a *reason* for their most recent contact with the City of Aiken, three types of contacts dominated. Relatively even numbers of city residents contacted the City with (1) a question or request for information; (2) a complaint about the City government or (3) a request for a city service. A smaller group of individuals reported that they contacted the City of Aiken to pay a bill of fulfill an obligation.

Mode of Most Recent Contact

30. How did you make your most recent contact?

Method	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Contacts
Phone	34.9%	71.1%
In Person	8.9%	18.1%
Email	3.0%	6.0%
Website	1.6%	3.4%
Social Media	0.2%	0.3%
Other	1.2%	2.3%

Number of contacts made by residents: 294 (48.4% of sample)

Discussion: Phone remains the dominant method by which residents choose to contact the City of Aiken. Over 70% of those making a contact with the City in the last year did so via telephone, with in-person methods being next most common. Electronic modes of communication lagged.

Evaluations of Contacts

We asked a series of questions to evaluate the quality of employee responses to contacts: whether the employee was courteous and professional, whether the employee showed evidence of proper training and knowledge to deal with matters pertaining to the purpose of the contact, and whether the resident found it easy to get someone to help them.

Groups	Yes	No	DK/NS
Employee Courteous and Professional?	90.0%	4.1%	5.9%
Employee have proper Training and Knowledge?	85.8%	7.3%	6.9%
Easy to Get Someone to Help You?	82.8%	12.2%	5.0%

Discussion: Those who reported contacts with city employees gave rather uniform high ratings on all three questions. Nine in ten found the employee courteous and professional. Almost nine in ten also felt that the employee had proper training and knowledge. And over eight in ten found getting someone to help them to be easy. One one could argue that these ratings could be higher. Certainly room exists for improvement, especially in getting someone to give help when a resident contacts the wrong office about some question. Additional training about quick referrals might improve this already high rating.

Overall Contact Satisfaction

34. Overall, how satisfied were you with that contact? Were you:

Groups	1. Very Dis-satisfied	2. Dis-satisfied	3. Satisfied	4. Very Satisfied	DK/NS
ALL	7.7%	10.1%	30.8%	49.8%	1.7%
ETHNICITY					
White	6.5%	10.6%	30.0%	51.2%	1.8%
Black	7.4%	9.3%	33.3%	50.0%	
GENDER					
Men	9.5%	7.3%	33.6%	47.4%	2.2%
Women	5.5%	11.7%	28.3%	53.1%	1.4%
AGE**					
< 36	3.8%	9.6%	26.9%	59.6%	
36-64	9.4%	10.7%	35.6%	44.3%	
65+	6.8%	10.2%	23.9%	53.4%	5.7%
INCOME					
< \$60k	8.9%	15.6%	27.8%	46.7%	1.1%
\$60-100k	7.2%	10.1%	34.8%	44.9%	2.9%
> \$100k	6.5%	7.6%	30.4%	53.3%	2.2%
EDUCATION					
HS or Less	3.7%	14.8%	27.8%	51.9%	1.9%
Some Coll.	9.1%	13.6%	31.8%	45.5%	
College	10.6%	5.7%	29.3%	51.2%	3.3%
College +	3.8%	9.6%	36.5%	50.0%	
AREA					
Northside	9.6%	5.8%	32.7%	50.0%	1.9%
Southside	7.3%	8.9%	31.3%	51.4%	1.1%
Eastside	12.5%	25.0%	12.5%	37.5%	12.5%
Westside		15.4%	30.8%	53.8%	
Downtown	3.7%	14.8%	33.3%	44.4%	3.7%

*Note: More *'s indicate stronger statistical significance: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; **** significant at 0.1%. For more details, see the section on Interpreting the Results*

Discussion: When residents who reported contacts with the city were asked about their overall satisfaction with those contacts, almost half (49%) said that they were “very satisfied.” An additional 31% were “satisfied,” resulting in a total of eight in ten being on the satisfied side of the scale. Just under one in five (18%) were on the dissatisfied side of the scale.

Whether “satisfied” residents outnumber “dissatisfied” residents by four to one is good or not rests on what we can reasonably expect from bureaucracy. We should certainly expect courtesy, respect, knowledge of rules, processes and lines of appeals, and speed in decision making. But satisfaction includes getting the outcome we want when we make contact. If our case is that we want an interpretation or application of rules that favors us even when they do not, as is certainly sometimes the case, then “satisfaction” suffers. The notion of bureaucratic justice rests on a paradox. We all say we want rules to equally apply to all, but at the same time we want

individual treatment in which our unique situation is taken into account in applying those rules, which often asks bureaucrats to make exceptions. Allowing discretion to bureaucrats to treat cases that truly are exceptional is one thing. But this same discretion also allows arbitrary discrimination. The dilemma arises when bureaucrats hear phrases like, “Yes, I know that my payment was late, but” So perhaps four to one is good in overall “satisfaction.”

Looking at differences in reported satisfaction across groups may be more important than the levels of satisfaction. If everyone gets treated equally, one of the two most important goals in bureaucratic justice is fulfilled. We see only one breakdown where a subgroup makes a statistically significant difference—age. For some not readily apparent reason older residents were relatively less likely to be satisfied (77% of the oldest group on the satisfied side of the scale versus 87% of the youngest group) and relatively more likely to be dissatisfied (17% of the oldest group on the dissatisfied side versus 12% of the youngest group). Perhaps older people are less likely to understand the rules, or more likely to not hear what the city employee is saying, or more likely to call the wrong office. Perhaps some additional training in serving the elderly might reduce this difference.

Aside from the age differences, what is certainly positive is what we did not see. We saw no differences with respect to ethnicity, gender, income, education, or area in which people lived.