



# Citizen Survey

Input for Auburn's future

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City of Auburn, Alabama |

February 3, 2022



# AGENDA

- **History**
- **Science behind the survey**
- **Purpose**
- **Guidance**
- **Trends & benchmarking**
- **Importance-Satisfaction Matrix**
- **Takeaways**





# Survey history

- **First conducted as a phone survey by the Planning Department in 1985.**
- **Conducted annually from 1987-2018.**
- **Now conducted every two years to better align with the City's budgeting process, which occurs biennially (and to deter survey fatigue).**
- **Overseen by ETC Institute, a marketing and research firm specializing in community surveys for local governments across the country.**

**ETC Institute**  
**A National Leader in Market Research  
for Local Governmental Organizations**  
...helping local governments gather and use survey data to enhance organizational performance for more than 35 years

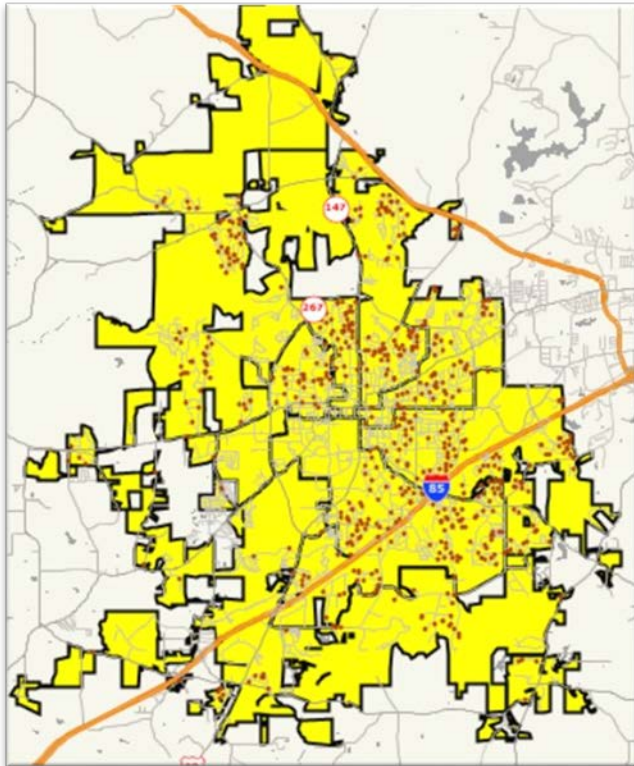


**More than 2,200,000 Persons Surveyed Since 2010  
for more than 900 communities in 49 States**



## Science behind the survey

- **Designed to be statistically valid, with a sample size of at least 600 (usually more), a confidence level of 95% and a small margin of error (+/-3.8%).**
- **If the survey were conducted the same way 100 times, the result would be within the margin of error 95 times.**
- **Distributed by mail to a random sample of City residents. The 7-page survey takes about 15-20 minutes to complete and can also be completed online.**
- **A random sample of citizens ensures statistical significance as well as good demographics and geographic distribution.**



*Red dots indicate survey responses, showing representation throughout the city*



# The purpose is to...

- **Assess citizen satisfaction with City services.**
- **Learn citizen perception.**
- **Determine priorities of the community.**
- **Measure trends from previous years' surveys.**
- **Compare City's performance with others across the country.**





# The survey covers...

- Overall perceptions of City.
- Overall satisfaction with City services.
- Feelings of safety.
- Satisfaction with specific services:
  - Code enforcement
  - Garbage, recycling, sewer and water services
  - Development & redevelopment in city
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Library services
  - Traffic flow and transportation
  - City maintenance
  - Downtown Auburn
  - City communication



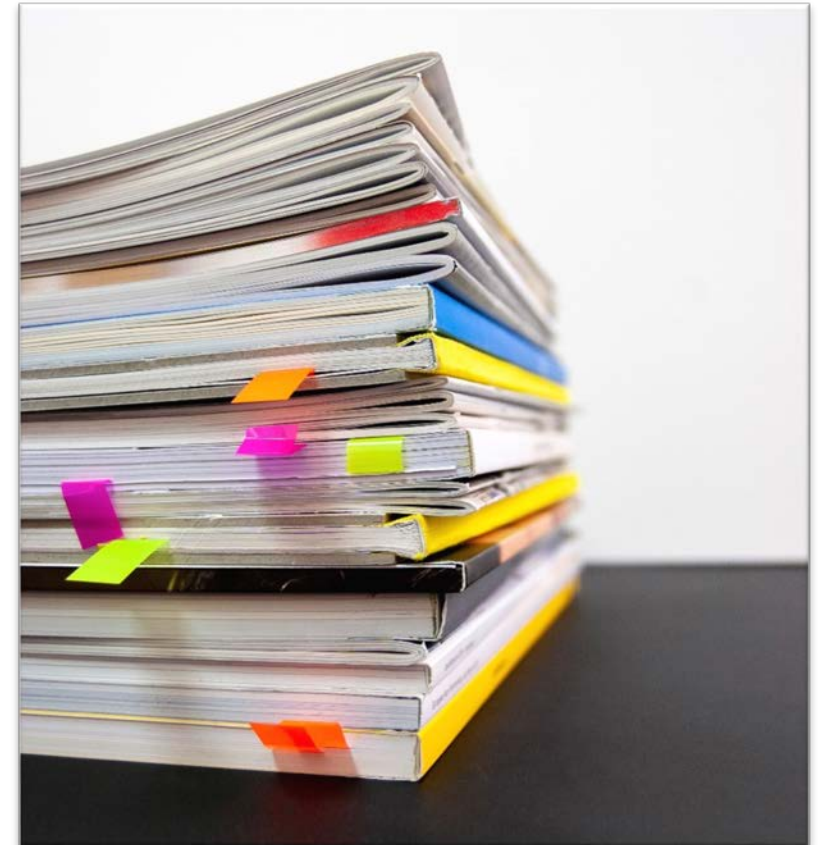
*Nearly 80% of citizens were very satisfied or satisfied with the overall cleanliness of streets/public areas*



# A guiding document

## Survey results:

- **Provide big-picture feedback to City departments and City Council, compared to individual, case-by-case input City hears regularly.**
- **Guide departmental strategic planning and initiatives**
- **Influence City's budgeting process & determine community interest in major capital projects.**
  - **A decrease in satisfaction of parks, facilities led us to create a Parks, Recreation & Cultural Master Plan and prioritize parks and recreation projects in our recent budgets and borrowing**





# A guiding document, cont'd

## Survey results:

- **Assist the Auburn City Council in policy decisions.**
- **Influence messaging.**
  - **Results have shown a perception of limited senior programming. This and other perceptions led us to reevaluate our messaging and work on a separate social media account for Parks & Rec to promote its programming and events without being overshadowed by general City announcements.**

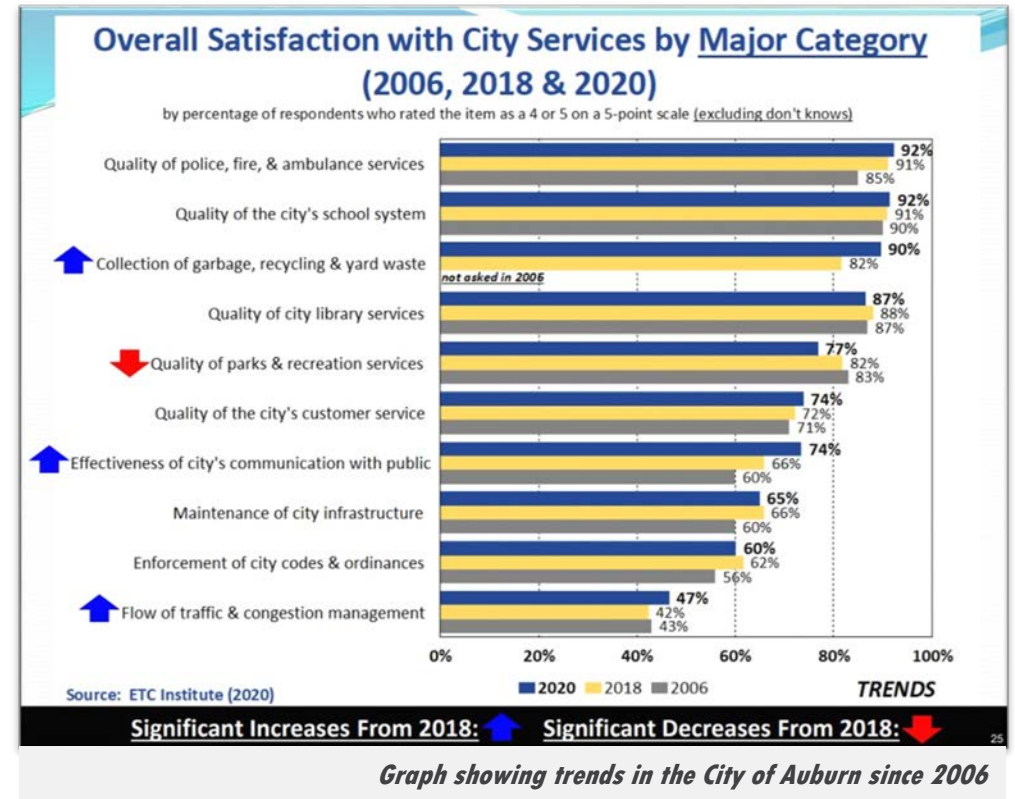






# Trends & Benchmarking

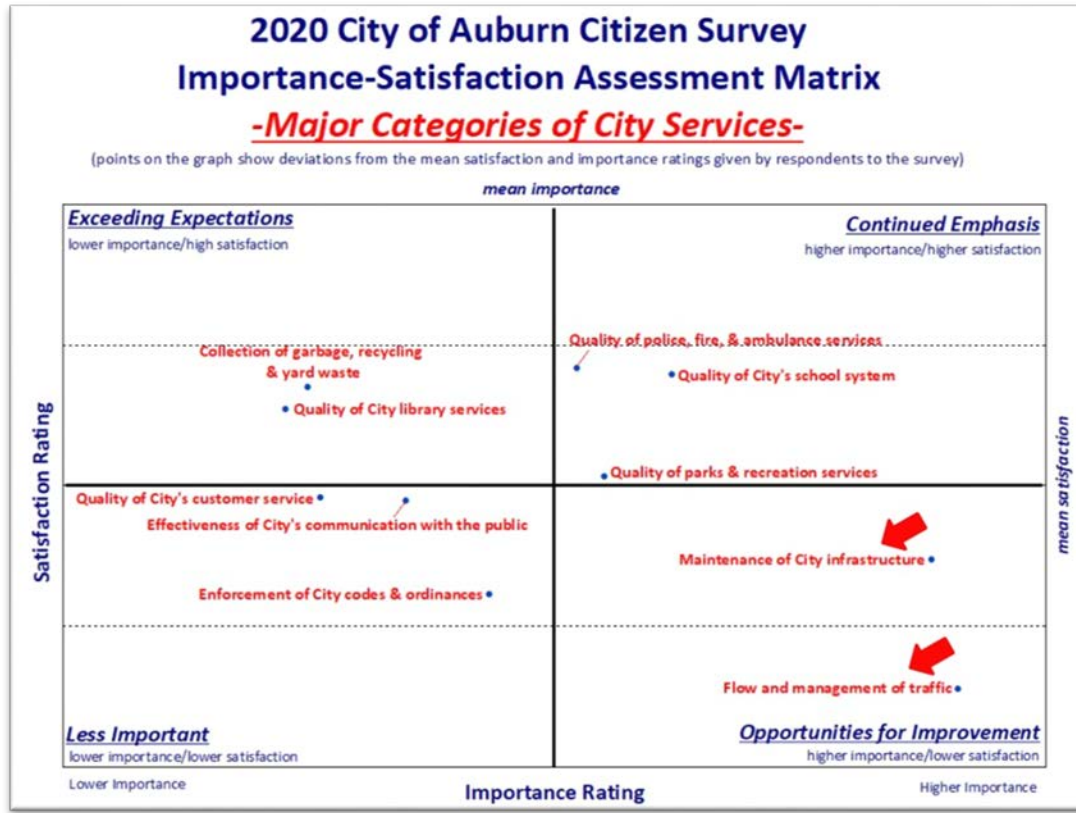
- We are able to compare our performance with national averages. ETC has performed surveys in 900 communities & 49 states.
  - Example: 76% of Auburn residents very satisfied or satisfied with overall value received for city tax dollars compared to the national average of 37%.
- We observe trends over time to see effects of City projects, planning, initiatives.
  - Past results indicated concerns about neighborhood speeding. City increased patrol in certain areas, used speed detection trailers & added new police officers dedicated to traffic enforcement. These led to positive impacts on future survey results.





## Importance-Satisfaction Matrix

- Results include assessments of satisfaction and importance, allowing City to see items it may want to prioritize (bottom right).
- The right shows the items rated most important. As you move left, rated level of importance decreases.
- Top of the chart shows areas with highest satisfaction and as you move down, satisfaction decreases.





# Takeaways

- **Citizen Survey has helped guide the City's planning and budgeting processes since the '80s.**
- **It gives departments and elected representatives statistically valid data to look to on community priorities, perception and satisfaction.**
- **The survey gives a glimpse into how the City is doing compared to other communities.**





# Thank You

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