

Appendix I: Citizen Commentary

(The following are generalized summaries of the citizen input that was received. Note that "Survey Findings" refer to feedback received from the 2007 Citizen Survey open-ended responses.)

Education

Community Conversation Input:

- The number of school facilities and their quality are regarded positively, including the location and quality of newly built schools.
- The schools' curriculums are considered to be a strong asset.
- Several respondents voiced a desire for more opportunities to learn industrial arts and trade skills at the high school level.
- A consistently raised issue is overcrowding, at all levels of instruction.

Other Input (CPT/Staff, Listening Stations):

- There is a desire to see continued support for the County's excellent public education services.

Survey Findings:

- There was much concern voiced with respect to overcrowding.

Public Safety

Community Conversation Input:

- Citizens applaud the low crime rate in James City County.

Survey Findings:

- Concerns about loitering and drunk driving were voiced.

Public Health

Community Conversation Input:

- Respondents would like to see more recyclable materials accepted, thus expanding the recycling program.
- Several respondents questioned the County practice of picking up and disposing of bags of leaves, suggesting that the leaves could be better used for mulch, thereby reducing dependency on water and pesticides.

General Government/General Services Comments

Community Conversation Input:

- Citizens desire to see more bike paths created throughout county.
- Public services and facility maintenance are regarded positively by respondents.

Other Input (CPT/Staff, Listening Stations):

- Several respondents voiced concerns over spending, questioning County efficiency.

Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA)

Community Conversation Input:

- Public transit system is considered a good and needed service, which supports both local employment and the public school system.

Other Input (CPT/Staff, Listening Stations):

- Would like the public transit system expanded, particularly to include a stop at the Government Center on Mounts Bay Road.

Public Utilities (Water and Sewer)

Community Conversation Input:

- Consistently expressed concerns as to the availability and costs of water with the ongoing growth being experienced in James City County.
- Many expressed the view that water conservation programs should be stronger and mandatory.

Community Conversation (2nd Round) Input:

- 57% of respondents felt that exploring alternative water sources and increasing conservation programs would aid water supply concerns caused by the increase in population and growth in the County.
- 44 out of 191 (23%) respondents felt that growth should be limited to fit the existing water supply capacity of the County.
- Several suggested negotiating reduced water use with the paper mills, and cleaning and reusing sewage and gray water.
- Suggestions were received that the County buy or claim eminent domain over Lake Powell for use as a County reservoir.

ICMA Survey Results:

Public Utilities, Stormwater Management, and Solid Waste Management

- 63% of those surveyed considered JCSA sewer services to be “Good.”
- 49% considered stormwater management to be “Good.”
- 38% of those surveyed gave recycling programs in James City County an “Excellent” rating, and 45% rated these programs as “Good.”
- 51% of respondents found garbage collection in James City County to be “Good.”
- 53% of those surveyed rated drinking water as “Good.”
- In response to the direct question, “If public officials asked people to conserve water, how likely would you as a citizen of James City County be willing to cooperate?”, 52% responded “Very likely” and 41% responded “Somewhat likely.”
- 60% of those surveyed rated power (electric and/or gas) utilities in James City County as “Good.”

Public Education and Library

- James City County public schools are rated as “Good” by 51% of those surveyed, and 52% of respondents found the County’s library services to be “Good.”
- The survey demonstrated that James City County public schools and libraries are rated higher than the national benchmarks.

Public Safety

- Crime prevention in James City County is given a “Good” rating by 60% of those surveyed, and the Williamsburg-James City County Courts received a “Good” rating by 64% of respondents.
- Emergency preparedness and fire protection services in James City County received “Good” ratings from 48% and 50% of respondents, respectively.

Virginia Tech Survey Results:

Public Education and Library

- 51.7% of respondents rated libraries “Excellent,” compared to only 0.5% who offered a “Poor” rating.
- Public school buildings and facilities are viewed as “Excellent” by 29.1%, and “Good” by 36.8% of respondents.
- 71.6% of citizens advocated creating more vocational education opportunities in James City County, which would provide the County’s workforce with an alternative to college education.

Public Safety

- Of those asked how safe they feel in James City County during daylight hours, 83.1% felt “Very safe.” Of those asked about their feelings regarding safety during evening hours, 55.9% said they felt “Very safe,” and 34.8% responded “Somewhat safe.”

Public Utilities

- 76.1% of respondents believe it is very important to invest in substantial resources now to increase the access and availability of water in the future.
- 52.5% of respondents strongly disagree with increasing water and sewage utility service fees in order to support additional services.

General County Government Services

- ◆ 43.7% are “Somewhat satisfied” with the level of communication received from the County government, while 24.8% are either “Somewhat dissatisfied” or “Very dissatisfied” with the County’s communication with its citizens.