



James City County Citizens Survey

Summary of Results

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Introduction

In an effort to gather information regarding the opinions of James City County, Virginia citizens regarding County services and initiatives, the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research (CSR) was contracted by James City County to conduct a citizens telephone survey. The CSR conducted a parallel survey in 2001 for the County. The series of telephone surveys was designed to measure citizen opinions regarding County services and projects and to assess the initiatives of the County government for use in planning. The overall objective of the survey process is to garner public input that will guide the use of James City County resources and foster continual improvement in the services provided to citizens. Additionally, the results will be used as part of the comprehensive planning process for the County.

For the administration of the 2007 James City County Citizens Survey, the CSR conducted a telephone survey of 623 residents of James City County. This report summarizes the data collection procedures and results of the 2007 survey. Section 1 provides an overview of the sampling design, survey instrument development and data collection procedures utilized by the CSR for the collection of the data. Section 2 provides a demographic profile of the survey respondents. Section 3 describes citizen ratings of a variety of aspects of James City County. Section 4 provides an overview of findings related to land use issues in the County. Section 5 discusses survey findings regarding citizen feelings of safety in the County. Section 6 provides the survey findings regarding educational and youth programs in the County. Section 7 provides an overview of findings regarding perceptions of importance of funding a variety of cultural and

recreation opportunities. Section 8 includes information regarding the survey findings related to the citizens' preferred sources for the funding of additional services. Section 9 includes an overview of the survey findings related to County communication with citizens. Section 10 provides information on the data storage for the survey project.

The 2007 survey instrument is included in *Appendix A*. *Appendix B* provides tables of response frequencies to all close-ended survey items. *Appendix C* provides responses to the open-ended survey items. *Appendix D* provides the additional comments made by respondents during the interview process along with the survey question asked at the time each comment was made.

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Methodology

Sampling Design

A random-digit dialing (RDD) method was employed by the CSR for the administration of the 2007 survey. Both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were included in the sample for this project. CSR worked with Survey Sampling, Inc. of Fairfield, CT, to define the parameters of the sample. The survey sample was randomly generated from numbers available to James City County residents. Because some exchanges border areas outside James City County and because survey respondents sometimes report residing in a neighboring geographic area to the target area, a screener question was also included in the survey. The screener question

confirmed James City County residence prior to beginning the survey with a potential respondent. Sample members reporting residence in a locality other than James City County were eliminated from the eligible sample pool for calling. There were 264 sample members with this final call disposition code.

The 2007 survey sample was chosen in an RDD fashion in order to provide a representative, random cross-section of adults residing throughout James City County. Based on a total of 623 completed interviews, the survey has a sampling error of ± 3.91 percent. Therefore, in 95 out of 100 surveys completed with this number of interviews using the same sampling methodology and parameters, the results obtained would fall in a range of ± 3.91 percent of the results that would be achieved if interviews were completed with every potential respondent (in households with working telephones) residing in James City County. Smaller sampling errors are present for items on which there is polarized response (e.g. 90 percent identical response on an item).

Survey Instrument Design

The instrument used for this study was developed by the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research in conjunction with staff members in the James City County Planning Office. Some of the survey items were also included in the 2001 administration of the survey (also conducted by the CSR). The telephone survey is designed to gather information about the opinions of James City County citizens regarding a variety of County initiatives, services and issues. After the initial telephone survey draft was developed, an instrument pre-test was conducted by the CSR in

order to test the position of each survey item within the instrument, the wording of each item and the length of the interview. The survey pre-test was conducted with a small sample of randomly selected James City County citizens. It was established during the pre-test that the average interview length was around 14 minutes. After minor modifications to the wording of several survey items, the instrument was tested again with a random sample of James City County citizens and was subsequently deemed to be suitable for data collection. The final version of the survey was approved by the James City County Planning Office for data collection purposes.

The survey instrument includes an initial screening question to ensure that the respondent currently resides in James City County. Interviews were ended after the initial screening question for those respondents who reported that they did not reside in James City County. All survey respondents were asked how many years they have lived in James City County and where they lived before moving to James City County if they moved to the County less than six years ago. Initial survey items include measures of citizen ratings of the quality of a broad variety of community aspects of the County. An open-ended survey item is included to gather information about the services, businesses or recreation and cultural opportunities that citizens would most like to see in James City County or have the County invest in and focus on in future years.

A variety of items regarding land use are included in the survey instrument. Specifically, the majority of the land use items gauge citizen preferences and ideas regarding the types and future of commercial and residential development in the County. Two survey items address citizen feelings of safety in James City County. Additionally, two closed-ended survey items are

included which address youth-specific programs and facilities in the County and one open-ended survey item requests that citizens name the new activities, programs or facilities they would like to see for youths in the County in the future. Additional survey items explore citizen opinions regarding educational issues in the County.

A section is included in the survey which addresses the importance placed on various cultural and recreational opportunities by citizens in terms of the use of tax monies to fund those opportunities. Additionally, a section of the survey measures the level of agreement among citizens with a variety of statements posing different funding sources for supporting programs and services in the future. Several survey items regarding County government communication levels and mechanisms are included near the end of the survey. The final section of the survey includes items requesting respondent demographic information and an open-ended item requesting information from the respondent about what they would most like to see change in the County in the future. The 2007 survey instrument took 13.1 minutes on average to administer. A copy of the survey instrument is located in *Appendix A*.

Data Collection Procedures

All telephone calls for the survey were made by CSR staff members utilizing a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system at the Blacksburg, Virginia location of the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research. All calls were made during September 2007. CSR wrote a calling program to be used with CATI for administering the James City County

Citizens Survey 2007. The program provides scripted survey items, precludes out of range responses and facilitates real-time data entry of all responses gathered on the telephone.

Each interviewer collecting data for the survey project participated in a project-specific training session for the project. All interviewers working on the project have worked on a variety of survey projects (indeed, some of the interviewers for this survey worked on the administration of the James City County Citizens Survey in 2001) and have participated in multiple training sessions in both interviewing techniques and CATI. All interviews were monitored by a CSR Phonebank Supervisor in order to ensure accuracy and proper interviewing protocol. Clarifying notes for specific survey items appeared on the CATI screens for interviewers to ensure that identical prompts were used for respondents requesting additional information about survey items or response categories.

CSR programmed all call scheduling such that each sample member remaining as a non-respondent was attempted to be reached at least six times at different times of day on different days of the week. A total of 2,346 telephone numbers were attempted during the survey administration. Sample members reporting residence in a locality other than James City County were excluded from the eligible sample pool (N=264); likewise, respondents who indicated a language or hearing barrier such that they could not respond or request that another adult in the household respond, were also excluded from the eligible sample pool (N=18). Non-working telephone numbers (fax tones, out of service/disconnected numbers, automated disconnect

services) were also excluded from the eligible sample pool (N=377). Non-residential numbers (N=252) were excluded from the eligible pool of sample members as well.

After the elimination of all the ineligible records described above, the remaining number of eligible sample members was 1,435. A total of 623 interviews were completed for this study. **Table 1** provides an overview of the final call dispositions for all sample members. Many sample members were never reached after numerous attempts and a final disposition of “no answer” was assigned. Therefore, the residency rate among these households is unknown. It may be assumed that a number of these households are indeed, ineligible sample members due to non-residence.

CSR utilizes a standard conversion calling protocol in which all calls that are coded as “soft refusals” are re-attempted utilizing more senior interviewing staff. A call is coded as a “soft refusal” when the potential respondent refuses but does not indicate a reason for exclusion from the calling pool (i.e. refusal due to illness, request to be removed from calling pool, etc.). Likewise, all telephone numbers deemed to be temporarily disconnected are attempted periodically throughout the duration of the study.



Table 1	
Total Initial Sample	2,346
Ineligible Sample:	
Residence outside of James City County (264)	
Non-working telephone number (fax tones, out of service/disconnected numbers, automated disconnect services) (377)	
Non-residential telephone number (252)	
Hearing/language barrier (18)	
Eligible Sample	1,435
Total Number of Completed Interviews	623
Non-respondents:	
Final disposition of no answer, busy, answering machine or callback after six attempts (660)	
Refusals (152)	812

2

Respondent Demographic Profile

Among the 623 citizens responding to the survey, almost half (49%) have lived in James City County more than ten years. Only five percent of respondents reported residence of less than one year in the County. An open-ended survey item asked those respondents who moved to the County less than six years ago to indicate where they lived before coming to the County. The majority of the responses to this open-ended item indicate that respondents overwhelmingly relocated from other locations in Virginia.



Slightly fewer than two percent of respondents (1.8%) reported that they were younger than 25 years of age at the time of the survey, with 14 percent reporting that they were 26 to 40 years of age, and 40 percent reporting that they were between the ages of 41 and 60. Forty two percent of survey respondents reported that they were over 60 years of age at the time of the survey.

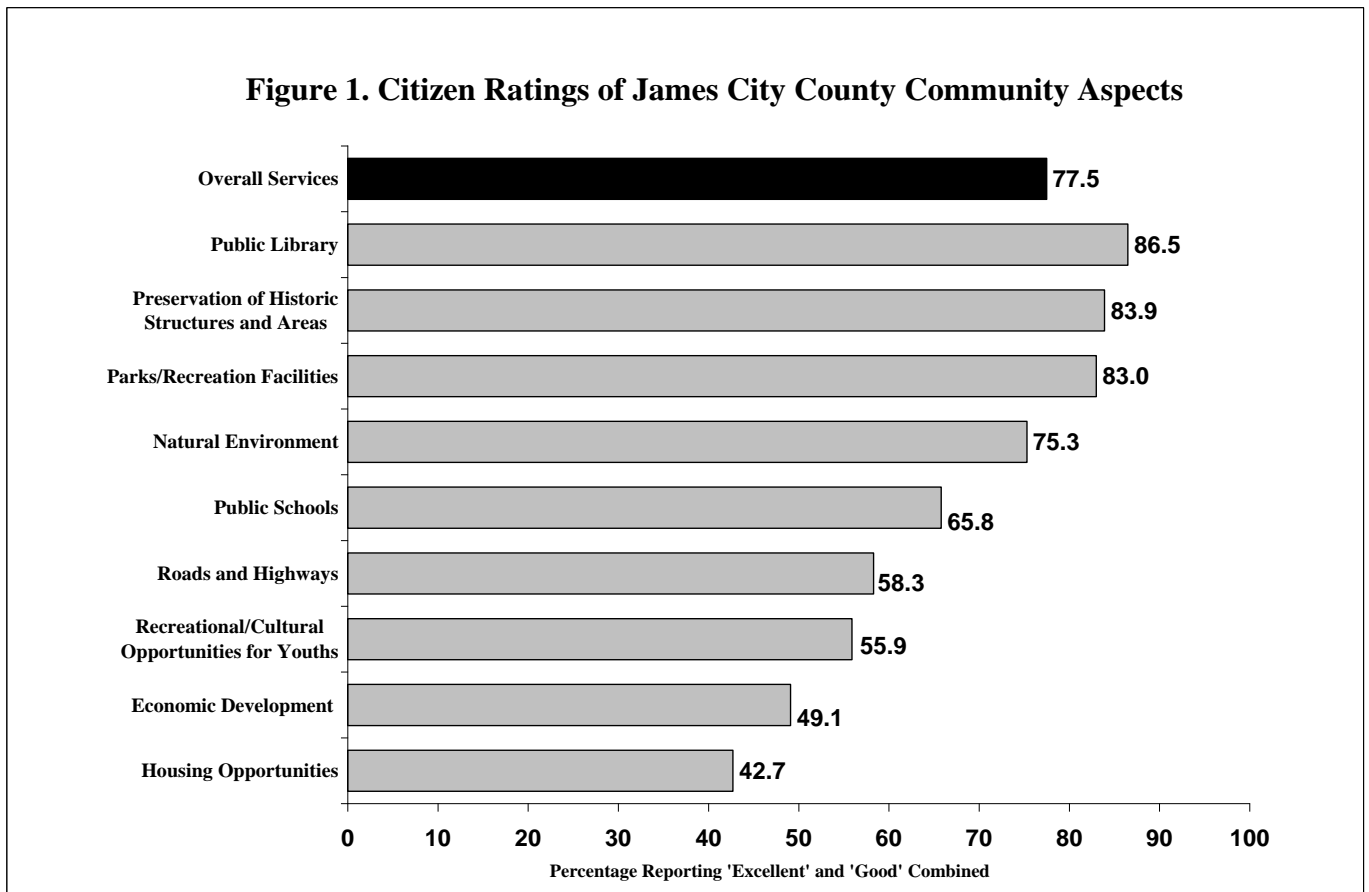
A substantial majority of respondents (89%) reported that they currently own or are buying their home. Regarding full-time employment for pay outside the home, 42 percent of respondents reported having such full-time employment, with 50 percent of those respondents reporting that this employment is within James City County. The majority of respondents (86%) indicated having only one to two adults living in their home and the majority of respondents (67%) also reported having no children under the age of 18 living in their home.

More women than men responded to the survey (65% women and 35% men) -- this is a consistent finding in public opinion research using general population samples. Almost one quarter (24%) of survey respondents refused to report their household incomes. Among those respondents reporting incomes, 14 percent reported a household income under forty thousand dollars per year, 35 percent reported a household income between forty and less than one hundred thousand dollars, 17 percent reported a household income between one hundred thousand and one hundred fifty thousand dollars per year. Ten percent of respondents reported a total household income of one hundred fifty thousand dollars or more before taxes last year.

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Citizen Ratings of James City County Community Aspects

More than three-quarters of James City County citizens rate the overall services provided by the County as either ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. Among the other community aspects or services included in the survey, the public library received the highest rating. Housing opportunities were rated the lowest by citizens among the community aspects included in the survey. **Figure 1** depicts the findings for the survey items regarding citizen ratings of selected aspects of James City County.





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Citizen Opinions Regarding Land Use Issues

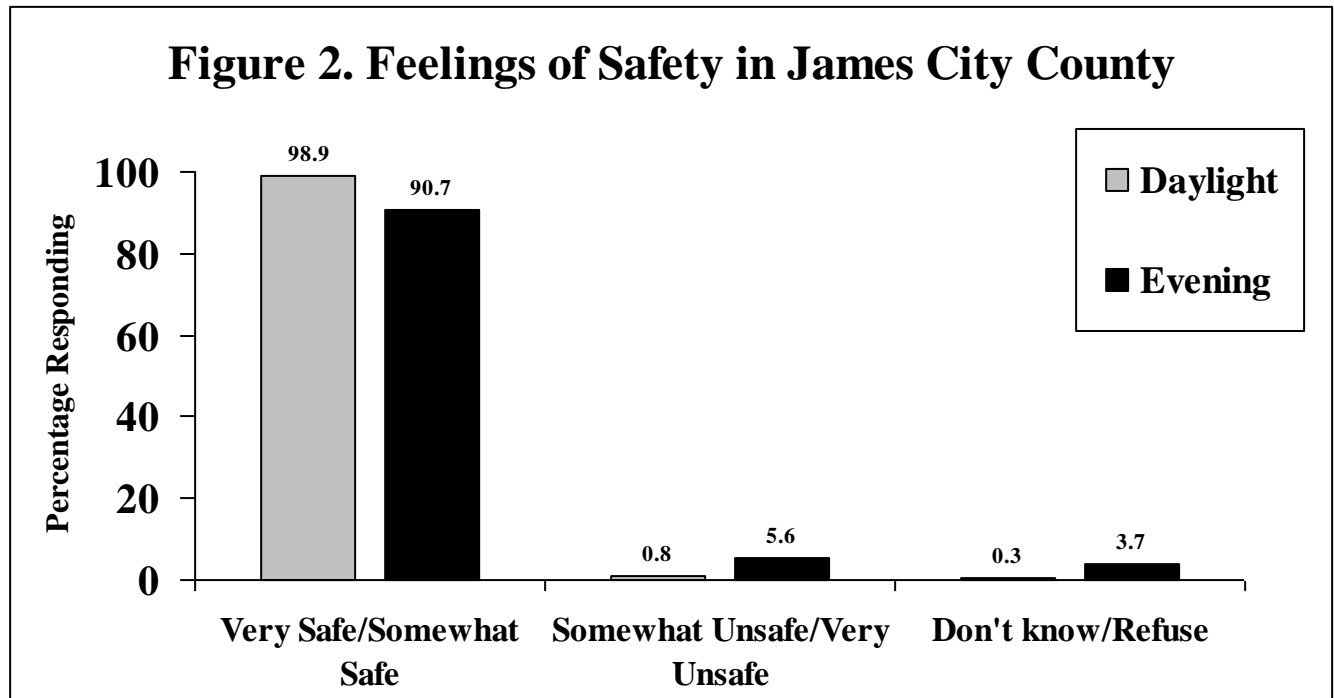
A number of survey items regarding land use issues in James City County were posed to survey respondents. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement regarding land use made by the interviewers. The findings regarding the survey items related to land use appear below combining responses of ‘strongly agree’ and ‘somewhat agree’.

- Development of the land in James City County is happening too quickly (83% agreement)
- There should be restrictions on the amount of land that can be sold for residential and commercial development (83% agreement)
- It is more important to preserve farmland in the County than it is to have more development (79% agreement)
- Developers should always be required to pay a fee to the County to offset public costs even if it means increases in the prices of services and housing for citizens (69% agreement)
- It is better to have neighborhoods in which there is a mix of low, middle, and high income housing options (68% agreement)
- It is important to slow development in the County even if it means increasing taxes (61% agreement)
- It is better to have more homes on smaller lots and set aside areas for open space in order to permanently preserve land and maintain the character of the community (57% agreement)

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Citizen Perceptions Regarding Safety in the County

Residents of James City County provided highly favorable ratings of their feelings of safety in the County. Indeed, nearly all of the survey respondents (99%) said that they feel either ‘very’ (83%) or ‘somewhat’ (16%) safe during daylight hours in the County. Likewise, more than nine in ten citizens (91%) in the County said they feel either ‘very’ (56%) or ‘somewhat’ safe (35%) during the evening in the County. **Figure 2** depicts the findings for the survey items regarding feelings of safety.





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Findings Related to Educational and Youth Programs

The majority of the survey respondents (67%) had no children residing with them at the time of the survey. This may have shaped the findings regarding opinions on educational and youth programs in the County. More than half of the respondents (56%) rated the current recreational and cultural opportunities for youths in the County as either ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. The majority of respondents (85%) also felt that the County should continue to spend ‘about the same amount’ or ‘more’ on youth-specific community programs and facilities.

The majority of respondents (66%) rated the public school buildings or facilities in the County as either ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. Opinions regarding spending on public schools in the County in relation to other things varied among respondents. Specifically, 44 percent of citizens think the County is spending ‘about the right amount’ on public schools, with 10 percent reporting that they think the County is spending ‘too much’ on public schools, and 28% saying that the County spends ‘not enough’ on public schools.

A question regarding the importance of the County creating more vocational education opportunities for youths that would prepare them for the workforce rather than just for college was also asked of respondents. More than nine in ten respondents (94%) reported that they think

the creation of such opportunities is either ‘very important’ (72%) or ‘somewhat important’ (22%).

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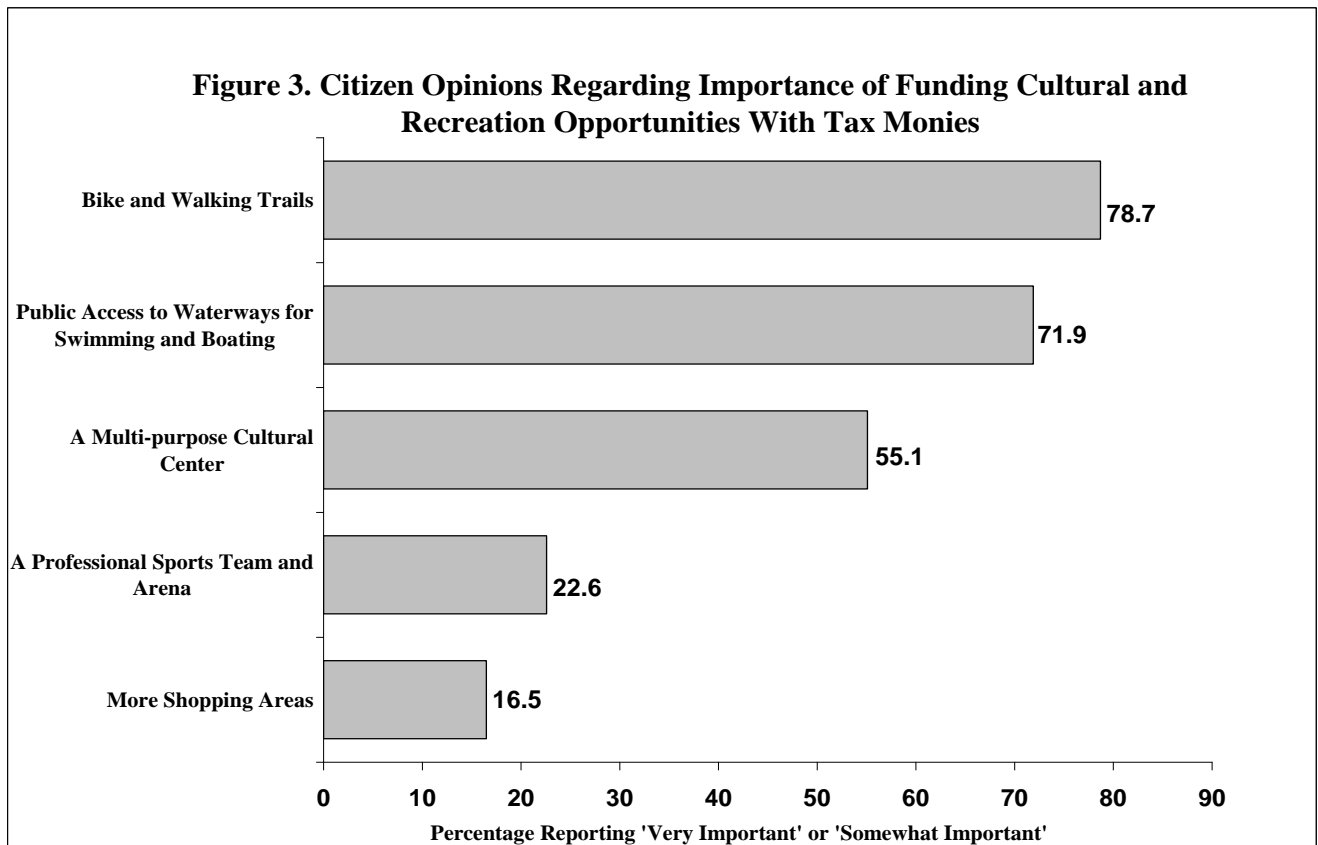
Opinions Regarding Tax Money Funding of Programs

The survey included items regarding the importance of using tax monies to fund a variety of cultural and recreation opportunities. Among the cultural and recreation opportunities included in the survey, bike and walking trails for all age groups were rated as the most important among respondents. The development of more shopping areas was rated as the least important to respondents among the opportunities included in the survey.

In addition to the perceived importance of using tax monies on the cultural and recreation opportunities included in the survey, a separate survey question asking how important respondents think it is for the County to invest substantial resources now to increase the access and availability that citizens will have to water in the future was also included. A full 95 percent of respondents said that it was either ‘very important’ (76%) or ‘somewhat important’ (19%) to invest substantial resources now to increase the access and availability to water in the future.

Another survey item asked respondents their perceptions on the amount of time and resources the County devotes to historic preservation in the community. The majority of respondents (66%) think the County is spending ‘about the right amount’ of time and resources on historic preservation in the community, with 11 percent reporting they feel the County spends ‘too much’ time and resources on this, and 9 percent indicating that ‘not enough’ time and resources on this.

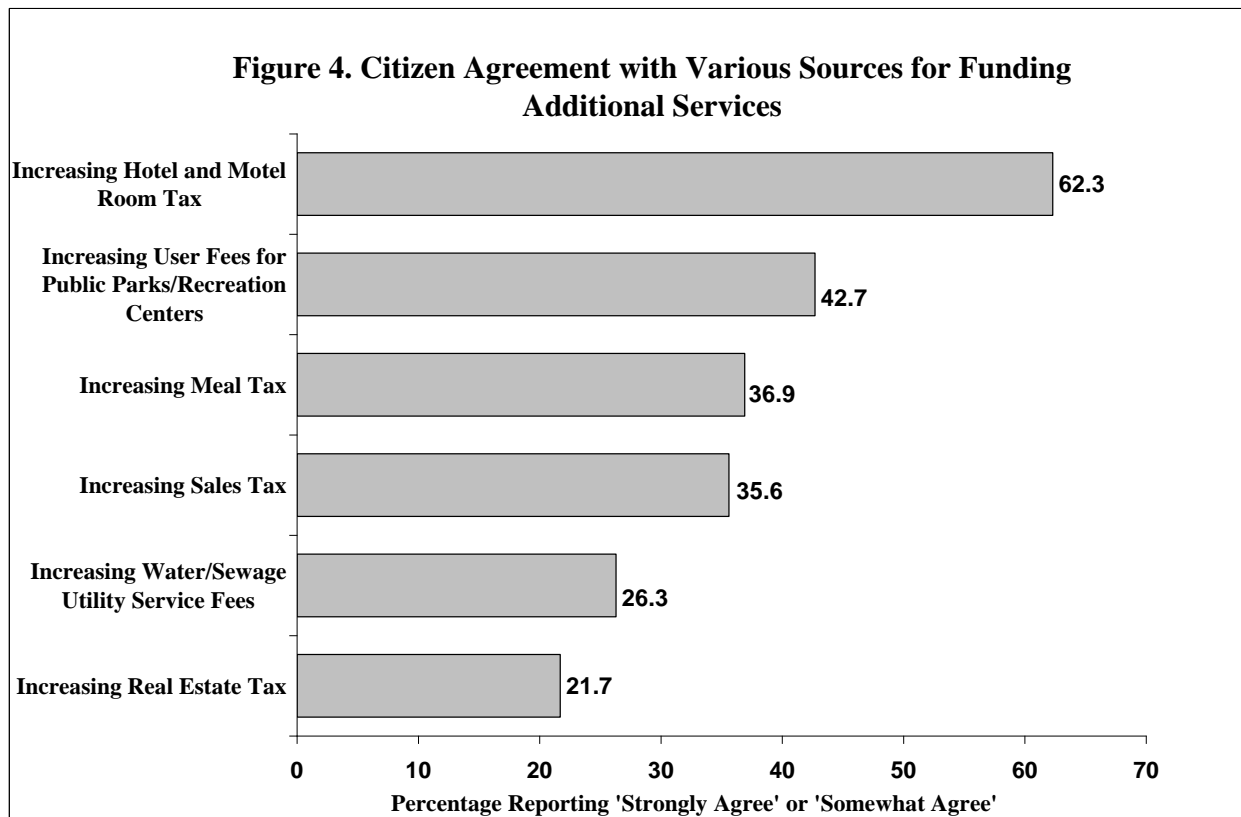
Figure 3 depicts the findings regarding citizen ratings of importance of each of the cultural and recreation items included in the survey.



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Opinions Regarding Funding Sources for Services

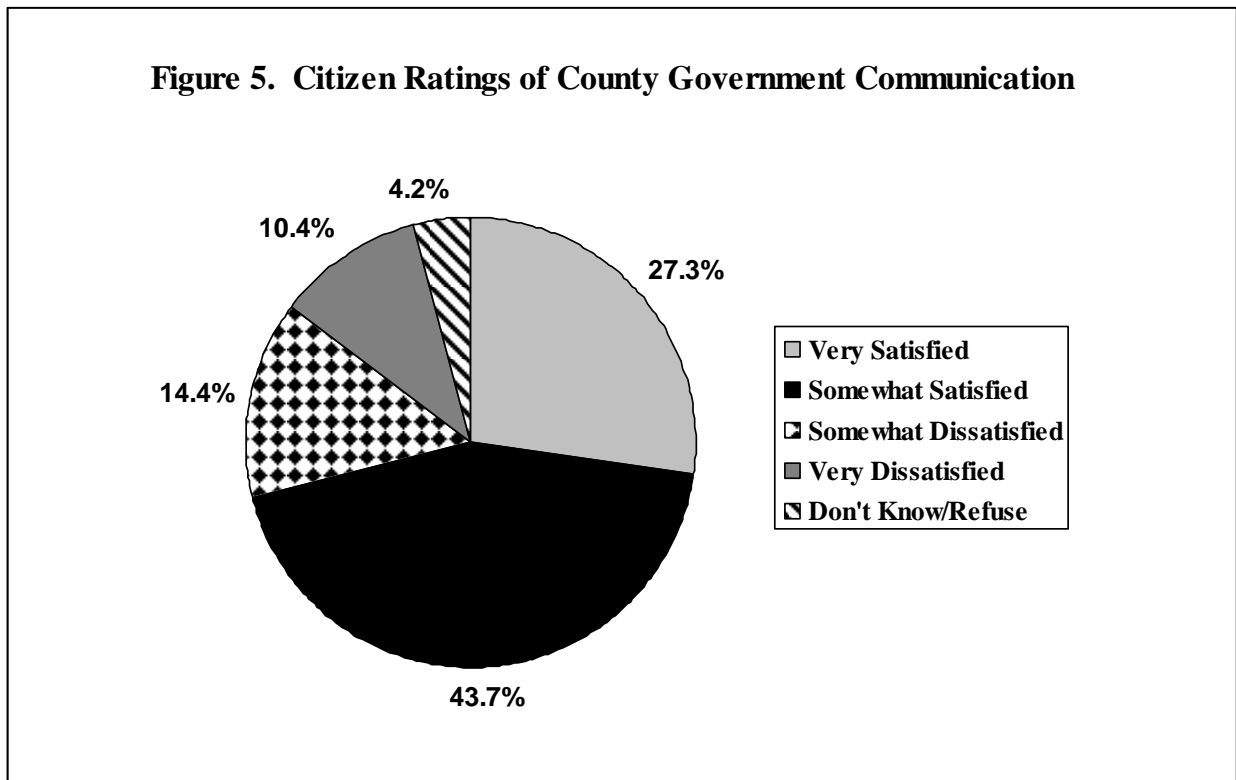
Survey respondents were asked about their levels of agreement with a variety of statements regarding a number of funding sources that could be used to support additional services for the citizens of the County. **Figure 4** depicts the findings regarding citizen levels of agreement with each of the funding sources proposed in the survey.



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Citizen Perceptions Regarding County Communications

A number of survey items regarding mechanisms used by the County for communicating with citizens were included in the survey. The level of satisfaction among citizens with the level of communication they receive from the County government regarding services and other community issues is depicted in **Figure 5**.





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Citizens were also asked if they have visited the County's Internet site to which 53 percent of respondents reported that they have visited the site. More than three-fourths of citizens (77%) rated the quality of the Internet site as either 'excellent' or 'good'. While more than half of survey respondents (53%) reported that they currently receive the County's citizen newsletter called "FYI", a third of respondents (33%) reported that they do not receive the newsletter and 13 percent of respondents did not know whether they receive the newsletter. Among those respondents who reported receiving the newsletter, more than three quarters (77%) rated the newsletter as either 'excellent' or 'good'.

Regarding the local government meetings and programs on cable Channel 48, there were mixed reports regarding viewing patterns. Specifically, 49 percent of respondents reported that they watch local government meetings and programs on cable Channel 48, with 50 percent reporting that they do not watch the meetings and programs. Among those respondents indicating that they watch local government meetings and programs on Channel 48, 70 percent of respondents rate the content as either 'excellent' or 'good'.

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Data Storage

A CD containing the SPSS dataset from which the 2007 data in this summary report were derived accompanies this report. All variable and value labels are provided on the SPSS dataset.



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An electronic copy of this report summary is also included on the disk. All electronic files of the survey instrument, report, data, or any html output or PowerPoint presentations of the data are the property of James City County. However, the Center for Survey Research will retain copies of all project materials for a period of at least one year. No information from this survey will be shared by the CSR with anyone other than project team members from the James City County Planning Division without the express permission of that office.